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**WITH AND DESPITE THE STATE:
DOING WOMEN'S MOVEMENT POLITICS
IN LOCAL SERVICE GROUPS IN THE 1980s
IN QUÉBEC**

by

Dominique Masson

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
November 1998

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and Research acceptance of the thesis

**With and Despite the State: Doing Women's Movement
Politics in Local Service Groups in the 1980s in Quebec**

submitted by Dominique Masson, B.A., M.A.

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Chair, Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Thesis Supervisor

External Examiner

Carleton University
November 27, 1998

ABSTRACT

This dissertation inquires into the fate of feminist politics in state-funded women's service organizations. Drawing on post-structuralist views of feminism as historical and diverse, on conceptions of the state as the contingent product of socio-political struggles, and on the multi-dimensional approach to movement politics advocated by social movement theory, the study contests the theoretical foundations and conclusions of dominant analyses of state-funded women's service organizations. The politics of women's service groups, it is argued, are not necessarily determined by state funding, but are shaped by more complex historical interplays between movements and states, and in which women's agency offers the possibility of more open-ended outcomes.

The study explores the socio-political processes at work in the constitution and changes in the feminist politics of five shelters, four women's centers, and one rape crisis center funded by the Québec Ministry of Health and Social Services in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region (Québec) over the 1980s. The following dimensions of movement politics are examined: the mobilization of resources, struggles for political inclusion, the discursive construction of representations, transformative politics in civil society and everyday life, and organizational dynamics.

The study demonstrates that struggles for inclusion by provincial coalitions of women's service groups and alliances with state feminism shaped state funding in a substantial manner. Although state-funded, local women's services, the study shows, became increasingly rather than less politicized and more clearly identified with feminism. If state funding shaped some aspects of movement activity, the study concludes, internal factors related to organizational choices and decisions, movement traditions, the politics of provincial coalitions of women's services and the strength of feminist discourses proved determinant in the genesis and the transformations of feminist/women's movement politics in local service groups over the 1980s. Implications of the analysis for a further understanding of feminism, the state, and movement politics are drawn.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

- AFEAS: *Association féminine d'éducation et d'action sociale*
- CALACS: *Centre d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel*
- CCFC: *Centre communautaire féminin de Chibougamau*
- CEGEP: *Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel*
- CLSC: *Centre local de services communautaires (MSSS)*
- CMHC: *Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation*
- CRSSS: *Centre régional de santé et de services sociaux (MSSS)*
- CSF: *Conseil du statut de la femme*
- CSS: *Centre de services sociaux (MSSS)*
- FDR: *Femmes et développement régional*
- L'R: *L'R des centres de femmes du Québec*
- MAS: *Ministère des affaires sociales*
- MEQ: *Ministère de l'éducation du Québec*
- MSSS: *Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux*
- NSM: *New social movements*
- OVEP: *Organismes volontaires d'éducation populaire*
- PDCC: *Programme de développement communautaire du Canada*
- PDE: *Programme de développement de l'emploi*
- PSCC: *Programme de services communautaires canadiens*
- RECIF-02: *Représentation, Entraide, Concertation, Information, Femmes, région 02 (Table de concertation des groupes de femmes)*
- RMT: *Resource mobilization theory*
- SLSJ: *Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean*
- SMO: *Social movement organization*
- SOC: *Soutien aux organismes communautaires (Programme de)*

Marcela was visiting the snowy North. One night in Oslo, she met a woman who sang and told stories. Between songs, she would spin yarns, glancing at slips of paper like someone telling fortunes from crib notes.

This woman from Oslo had on an enormous dress dotted all over with pockets. She would pull slips of paper out of her pockets one by one, each with its story to tell, stories tried and true of people who wished to come back to life through witchcraft. And so she raised the dead and the forgotten, and from the depths of her dress sprang the odysseys and loves of the human animal for whom speech is life.

- Eduardo Galeano, *The Book of Embraces*, 1991

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1: The topic, the problem

From the second half of the 1960s to the mid-1970s, an organized women's movement re-emerged in Québec after a period of abeyance (Jean 1979, Collectif Cléo 1982). The fledgling women's movement was marked by a great diversity in ideology, action and organizing. New national organizations, such as the *Fédération des femmes du Québec* (1965), were created at the provincial level to promote the status of women and to lobby governments for change. "Traditional" women's organizations such as AFEAS¹ (J. Lamoureux and al. 1993) and *Cercles de Fermières* (Cohen 1990) started moving towards modernized representations of "the feminine". Feminism officially entered unions and the administrative apparatus of the Québec state². An array of small women's groups arose in the effervescence created by the spreading of feminist ideas. Some were strongly influenced by Marxism, radical feminism, and popular organizing, and oriented their action towards politico-ideological struggles (see Lanctôt 1980, D. Lamoureux 1986). Others were founded by women with no experience of political organizing (Beaudry 1982, Fournier and Gagnon 1991, see also Côté 1994), but who were eager "to do something for women", building on

¹ AFEAS: *Association féminine d'éducation et d'action sociale*.

² Status of Women Committees were created in major Québec unions in 1972 (*Fédération des travailleurs du Québec*), 1973 (*Centrale de l'enseignement du Québec*) and 1974 (*Centrale des syndicats nationaux*). Feminism entered the Québec state in 1973 with the creation by the Liberal government of the *Conseil du statut de la femme* (see Collectif Cléo 1982, Maroney 1988).

the emancipatory perspectives embodied by the new discourses of gender and of feminism³.

From the mid-1970s onwards, it is argued, the Québec women's movement underwent a series of transformations. "Revolutionary" forms of feminist activism retreated, and with them the highly visible, confrontational politics based on public demonstrations and mass mobilizations⁴ (D. Lamoureux 1986, Fournier and Guberman 1988). Transformative politics in the Québec women's movement increasingly took two routes⁵ (D. Lamoureux 1992:705-706). One was an engagement in institutional change through political representation and lobbying in the conventional arenas of mainstream politics. The other was the route of "women's services", which I minimally define as small-scale organizations directed by women that shared a project of providing immediate and concrete responses to "women's problems" and "women's needs" as these were experienced locally (see Chapter 5). As women's services grew in numbers, they also increasingly relied on the state for funding - in particular on monies from the Québec *Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux* (MSSS).

After 1975, the number of women's movement organizations grew at a pace that reached its peak in the first years of the 1980s. International

³ For a vision of the variegated strands of the 1970s movement see in particular Brodeur et al. (1982), and Maroney (1988).

⁴ This retreat from "revolutionary" strategies inspired by the Marxist Left was part of a more general trend termed "*la crise du militantisme*" that affected the whole movement sector (on this see Favreau 1992, also Hamel 1991:102-112).

⁵ For an earlier version of this argument see Juteau-Lee and Laurin Frenette (1983).

Women's Year played a key role in diffusing concerns for "women's issues" in the public arena, and acted as a catalyst for the expansion of the movement outside its berth in the cities of Montréal and Québec (Collectif Clio 1982:492-493, Maroney 1988:274-280, D. Lamoureux 1992:705). A survey by the *Conseil du statut de la femme* (CSF) in 1984-85 of 558 women's organizations⁶ revealed that most of the new groups were local or regional in scope and that most were "service groups" (CSF 1986b, see also Ouellette 1990). Shelters, rape crisis centers, women's centers, health centers, and groups to help women re-entering the job market conventionally fall within this category⁷ (CSF 1986a, 1986b). Other service groups organized to provide legal aid or to offer help on issues of divorce, childbirth and motherhood.

This expansion of the organized women's movement through the creation of local service groups was facilitated by their access to state funding (CSF 1986b:119). While many different programmes were drawn upon, mainly Federal employment programmes, the Secretary of State Women's Programme, the OVEP programme of Québec's *Ministère de l'Éducation*, financial support was increasingly obtained from Québec's *Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux*. From 1978 onwards, a growing number of women's shelters, rape crisis centers and women's centers were granted funding through its programme of support to voluntary organizations (SOC programme). In 1984-85, a "women's sector" was especially defined in the

⁶ 314 of these organizations responded to the survey.

⁷ As noted in CSF (1986b:55) and as will be apparent in this dissertation, women's centers do not define themselves solely in terms of "services". Historically, however, they fall within the broad definition of Québec "women's service groups".

programme for these groups. In 1985, MSSS' *Politique d'aide aux femmes violentées* further formalized its funding as a new partnership-in-women's-welfare. Women's shelters eventually won a three-year, standardized funding plan in 1987, followed by women's centers in 1989, and rape crisis centers in 1990. By the end of the 1980s, MSSS was these groups' main funder (see Chapter 4).

As Québec women's movement service organizations increasingly relied on state funding, and in particular on MSSS funds, feminist politics, it is generally contended in the academic literature, weakened and waned. According to this argument, the radicalism and feminist ideals that inspired the creation of services "by and for women" were eroded by state funding. Couillard, in particular, argues that a "technocratic" logic penetrated women's groups through funding, creating a "gap" between feminist ideals and groups' practices, leading to their professionalization and bureaucratization, de-politicizing their action, and sending them into a purely "utilitarian drift" (1994, 1995a, 1995b). Funding requirements themselves, according to Ouellette, held in check the movement's social change capacities (1990:93). Similar arguments stress a combined interplay of internal factors and state funding, with the effects of the latter predominating. In this fashion, D. Lamoureux blames a decline in activist politics and the quest for state funding for altering the initial objectives of social change of services and for the demise of their alternative aspects (1988, 1990). According to Michaud (1995), a similar combination of factors is responsible for the abandonment of a larger project of self-help in Québec women's health centers in favour of abortion services. For Fournier and Guberman (1988), the heavy

requirements of service provision proved detrimental to feminist reflection, thus making groups vulnerable to the specialization, professionalization, bureaucratization and institutionalization induced by state funding.

Arguments according to which state funding is a determining - and debilitating - factor in the fate of feminist politics find an echo in the broader literature on the funding of women's organizations. From the now classical studies by American feminist scholars on the funding of shelters (see Johnson 1981, Morgan 1981, Tierney 1982), to more recent analyses of the recourse to state funds by women's movement organizations in the Canadian scholarly literature (Barnsley 1985, 1988; Randall 1988, Adamson, Briskin and McPhail 1988, Ng 1988, 1990; Hilton 1989; Schraeder 1990; Heald 1990; Transken 1994), the conventional position is to maintain that state funding alters, if not irremediably thwarts, the development of feminist politics in women's movement organizations. Such funding, it is argued, deflects the initial goals of the movement, leads groups to compromise on feminist principles and steers women's organizing towards state-coordinated service provision to the detriment of autonomy, advocacy and political action. "Doing services", in these accounts, comes to be defined in opposition to "doing politics". In addition, funding-induced tendencies towards a professionalization of services and activism, as well as towards bureaucratization, co-option and integration to state apparatuses are seen as antithetical to the feminist project. State funding, it follows, can only negatively affect the potential for "changing power relations here and now" and for "constructing women's autonomy" through women's services.

Dissenting voices, however, propose more nuanced interpretations. Early examples include the work of Schechter (1982), Simon (1982), and Gornick, Burt and Pittman (1985). These perspectives remained isolated until recent developments in feminist theory and state theory provided new grounds for questioning the premises of the predominant approaches. Drawing on these theoretical advances, new contributions from American (see Martin 1990, Dobash and Dobash 1992, Ferree and Martin 1995, Matthews 1994, 1995, Reinelt 1995) and Australian scholars (see Auer 1990, McFerren 1990) challenge the more pessimistic arguments. They underline the diversity of feminisms "in practice", and of feminist politics in state-funded women's organizations. They also stress the historical, non-unitary and changing character of the institutional reality of the state. Pointing to the productive exercise of women's collective agency in both arenas of movement politics and state politics, they suggest that the outcome of the funding relationship between women's movement organizations and state agencies is best seen as contingent - that is, as non-deterministic and non-necessary. Elements of a scholarly debate over the possibilities for doing women's movement politics in state-funded service groups have gathered that can no longer be ignored.

It is my argument that the possibilities for doing women's movement politics in state-funded women's service organizations have been greatly overlooked in the Québécois academic literature. For one thing, claims about the waning of feminist politics in service groups throughout the 1980s are greatly exaggerated. Such claims contrast sharply with the vigour and the enduring commitment to changing gender relations of power expressed "in the field" by these groups at the end of the 1980s, locally

(for example *Femmes en tête* 1990⁶), regionally (for example *Table de concertation des groupes de femmes de l'Est du Québec* 1987) and provincially (for example *Comité de travail* 1990).

Discerning the socio-political meaning of the transformations in women's services, I also argue, is an interpretive process that rests on specific theoretical and political understandings of "feminism" and feminist politics, of "the state", and of "the political" in movement action. Without making light of the issues raised by the Québec literature on state-funded women's services, it is my contention that both their historical and their theoretical interpretations of the transformations of women's services need to be profoundly revised. As I see it, three major theoretical obstacles impede a better understanding of the ways in which movement politics can be effectively pursued in state-funded service groups. First is a grounding in univocal visions of feminism and feminist politics; second is a reliance on deterministic theories of the state that leave no space for agency, variability and politics; third is a narrow conception of the political, and of what constitutes movement politics. Re-visioning these theoretical dimensions, no doubt, will beget a very different story...

1.2: Research questions and central thesis

As its substantive topic, this dissertation aims at providing a better understanding of state-funded local women's service organizations,

⁶ And also witnessed through my own fieldwork as a researcher in the Women and Regional Development Research Team, in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, between 1988 and 1992.

one of the main forms taken by collective action in the Québec women's movement in the 1980s. The academic literature on state-funded women's organizations directs the inquiry towards the issue of the fate of women's movement/feminist politics in the context of state funding. I propose, however, to de-center this question. It is my contention that external factors related to funding are insufficient to account for the transformations of women's movement/feminist politics in Québec's local women's service groups in the 1980s. Understanding state-funded local women's service groups, it follows, cannot be limited to examining the effects of state funding, but requires a better theoretical and empirical understanding of the larger ensemble of processes and factors that enter into the genesis of movement politics. Recasting, in this perspective, the issue of state funding, the three following research questions thus guide this dissertation.

1: How have women's movement/feminist politics (i.e., discourses and practices) been constituted and transformed in state-funded local women's service groups in Québec in the 1980s?

2: What socio-political processes and factors, internal and external, have entered into the generation and changes in women's movement/feminist politics in these groups?

3: How must the conceptualizations of "feminism", of "the state" and of "movement politics" that still dominate in the literature on state-funded women's organizations be revised for such an understanding?

The central thesis defended in this dissertation is that movement politics in local women's service groups are shaped both by internal factors - i.e., factors related to organizational and movement histories and choices through which women's collective agency is expressed - and by

external factors related to the context, conditions and requirements of state⁹ funding⁹. Internal and external factors, I will further contend, are "partially mutually constitutive": they mutually contribute to shape each other within traceable historical interplays (see Chapters 2 and 3). Finally, I will argue that in the case at hand, internal factors - the creative exercise of their own agency by women's service organizations - are pivotal for accounting for the (diverse) constitution of their politics under state (MSSS) funding.

This dissertation proposes an alternative reading to the Québec literature on state-funded women's services that flows from a different theoretical analysis of feminism, the state, and "the political" in movement action. Understanding state-funded women's movement services, I will argue, begs for a more complex answer than structuralist and other deterministic perspectives have proposed. More precisely, I will hold that an adequate understanding of this complexity requires a more diverse vision of feminist politics and a more dynamic vision of the state than some would - still - have it. It also requires broadening our understanding of "the political" in movement action to incorporate the multi-dimensional conception of movement politics developed in social

⁹ I acknowledge the influence of other "external factors" in shaping the substance and forms women's movement politics in the 1980s. The context of gender politics in Québec and Canada, for instance, shaped the terrain of "women's" issues. Trends in the broader movement sector influenced choices regarding forms of collective action and organizing. The Québec state routed issues of battery and rape to MSSS rather than, as in the U.S.A., to Justice Departments. My dissertation does not aim at mapping all the conditions that affected the work of Québec women's service groups in the 1980s. Rather, it aims at counter-balancing what has been considered so far the determinant factor in their evolution - state funding - with a concern for the capacity of women's movement actors to be creative of their own histories (even if not always in circumstances of their own choosing...).

movement theory.

1.3: Methodological orientations

a) Listening to movement actors

It is fair to say that social movement scholars who contextualize, in one way or another, their object of study all share the notion that collective actors are not totally self-constituted (Maheu 1995:11). On the other hand, the very focus of social movement studies on the diversity and productivity of collective action renders the field particularly receptive to issues of agency, and contingency. No collective action is totally determined, that is, totally constrained by "outside forces" and macro processes. "Collective action," Maheu sums up, "is inherently dialogical" (11), adding that inquiries must make place for both movement-centered and system-centered modes of analysis (12).

Collective action, I agree, has to be situated in its larger socio-historical context. The transformations of the welfare state, for example, are important to the case at hand. Yet it is the Québec women's movement and its service organizations, and not state restructuring or changing modes of regulation that constitute the object of my dissertation. Analyses focusing on "the state", I argue in the next chapter, are too often theoretically flawed. They are, moreover, uselessly disempowering for academic and grassroots feminists alike. One of the ways to move beyond a language of "structure" and macro processes towards a language of "agency and strategy", Carroll suggests (1997:7), is to start "listening to the movements themselves". Leaving space for women's service groups'

and activists' own accounts of their broader and immediate goals, of their interventions, actions and forms of organizing is one avenue for "*listening to movements*". Taking seriously the diversity of ways in which women's movement politics and strategies are articulated in practice is the other.

Pivotal to understanding state-funded women's service groups of the 1980s is *acknowledging the diversity* of ways in which "feminism in practice" was constructed in women's movement organizations. *Developing a historical perspective* on the interplay of internal and external factors entering in the genesis of these constructions and of their transformations is an intrinsic part of theoretical and methodological design of this dissertation. That women's movement politics are not constituted and recomposed in complete abstraction from the interfacing of women's service groups with specific state projects, discourses, policies and procedures should direct us towards a *more nuanced appraisal* of the historical intertwining of feminist and state politics. Recent work on popular and urban service organizations in Québec advocates such a nuanced analysis of the difficulties, ambiguities, and possibilities encapsulated in the efforts at social change undertaken by state-funded service groups of the anti-poverty, urban, youth, and women's movements of the 1980s and early 1990s (Lamoureux and Leemann 1987, Shragge 1990, Hamel 1991, 1993a, Cloutier and Hamel 1991, Favreau 1992, Lustiger-Thaler and Shragge 1993, J. Lamoureux 1994, Panet-Raymond 1994, Vaillancourt 1994, Lustiger-Thaler and Maheu 1995). My own work is located within this tradition.

From current concerns in social movement theory, I retain the importance of specificity, variability, and ambiguity in understanding the

ways in which movements and movement organizations do politics. Preoccupations with agency, history and contingency constitute the other dimensions of the overall methodological design of this dissertation.

b) The case

This dissertation is based on empirical material drawn from ten women's service groups in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean (Québec), and their provincial Regroupements. These ten groups - five women's shelters, four women's centers and one CALACS¹⁰ - constituted the total population of "women's service groups" funded by the Québec *Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux* (MSSS) in the region at the end of the 1980s. Women's shelters (66¹¹), women's centers (75) and rape crisis centers (22¹²) were the three main types of "women's service groups" to be found in the Québec women's movement at that time. MSSS had become the main funder, both in terms of total amounts of funding and in number of grants, of "state-funded women's service groups" in the Québec women's movement.

The data on SLSJ local women's service groups was collected between 1988 and 1991-92 through a SSHRC-funded project on "Women and Regional Development" at Université du Québec à Chicoutimi. Along with Marielle

¹⁰ CALACS: *Centre d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel* (rape crisis center).

¹¹ This number represents the total of 46 members of the *Regroupement provincial des maisons d'hébergement et de transition pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale* in 1990 (Lacombe 1990) and about 20 other shelters for battered women or for "women in difficulty" (unaffiliated shelters or members of the *Fédération des ressources d'hébergement pour femmes violentées et en difficulté*) (MSSS 1992-93).

¹² Out of 22 rape crisis centers, 17 were members of the *Regroupement québécois des CALACS* and 5 were unaffiliated.

Tremblay, Pierre-André Tremblay, and Marta Anadon, I was one of the co-researchers in this project. We argued that gender-based alternatives to dominant forms of regional development could be traced through the actions of women's movement organizations (see Masson, Tremblay and Tremblay 1989). We drew on social movement theory to operationalize our research questions and to design our research tools. We were interested in systematically gathering information on the following: the origin and history of the organization; its organizational structure and decision-making process; its financial, human, material and informational resources; its activities (both regular and more occasional) and its formal and informal networks.

A first, preliminary data collection phase took place in 1988, producing eight "exploratory interviews" of representatives of women's organizations in the region, including four local women's service groups. A second phase consisted in four case studies (1989) which entailed six weeks of fieldwork in two different women's centers and in the CALACS, and one year of observation at the monthly meetings of the regional *Table de concertation des groupes de femmes RECIF-02*. I carried out the research in one of the women's centers and at RECIF; two research assistants carried out the others. Data collection took the form of interviews with present and former members of the organizations, fieldwork diaries, and document-gathering (charter, rules and regulations; annual reports, funding applications, minutes; flyers and other documents about specific activities). The third and final phase of the research (1990-91) was a three-hour, structured but mostly open-ended questionnaire to

representatives of 34¹³ local and regional women's organizations. I conducted about half of these interviews. On this occasion, various documents were also collected, including rules and regulations, pamphlets, and the year's annual activity report.

During this period, I was also active as a member of local women's organization *Pan-Terre-Rose*¹⁴, and in 1991-92 as a member of the collective of CALACS La Maison ISA. Although I resisted bringing research concerns into my activism (I did not take fieldnotes, but I filed documents), this involvement provided me with "insider knowledge" of these two organizations and of the regional women's movement milieu. Coupled with my fieldwork and with my previous involvement in two popular groups in Québec City, these experiences certainly helped shaping my own political investment in the present research, my suspicion of canonical or too abstract judgements about movements and their organizations, and my desire to produce knowledge "from the position of movements".

c) A brief overview of the groups

The ten women's service groups on which this study is based are CALACS La Maison ISA, shelters Le Centre féminin, L'Auberge de l'amitié, L'Aquarelle, Maison Halte-Secours and La Chambrée; women's centers Le Centre communautaire féminin de Chibougamau (CCFC), La Source, La Maison au Quatre-Temps, and Centre de femmes du pays de Maria Chapdelaine. The following overview introduces the reader to the case.

¹³ Out of a total of 35.

¹⁴ A group aiming at raising public awareness about women and international development issues.

Le Centre féminin du Saguenay (Chicoutimi) was one of the first women's shelters in Québec. It was created in 1975 in the wake of International Women's Year, with a *Projets d'initiatives locales* (PIL) grant. The shelter opened in 1976 in the basement of the convent of the *Bon Pasteur* (nuns). It operated with the support of volunteers, Canada Works and *Travail Québec* grants. In 1978, Le Centre féminin joined the emerging *Regroupement provincial des maisons d'hébergement*. It obtained funding from MSSS (at the time, the *Ministère des affaires sociales*) in 1979 (\$60,000), and created the "rape unit" that became CALACS La Maison ISA. By 1990, Le Centre féminin had moved out of the *Bon Pasteur* convent and was no longer affiliated with the *Regroupement*. It was board-led, and employed one director, two administrators, and eleven unionized employees¹⁵.

CALACS La Maison ISA (Chicoutimi) began as a rape unit created on paper by shelter Le Centre féminin in 1979, and put into service in 1983. Its funding came from the supplementary funds made available by MSSS for shelters to set up rape units. The rape unit demanded its own charter and funding in 1985, but remained under the control of the Board of Le Centre féminin. After a "struggle for autonomy", Maison ISA became an independent organization in 1988. In 1990, La Maison ISA was led by a collective, was member of the *Regroupement québécois des CALACS*, and employed 3 workers.

Shelter L'Auberge de l'amitié de Roberval was created by representatives of local women's organizations in 1979 (date of incorporation). It opened in 1981 with the support of an Employment

¹⁵ Please note: in this case as in those that follow, I use the groups' own terminology to refer to staff's job positions.

Development grant. At first, the organization existed only as an emergency phone line for "women in difficulty". Later, an emergency shelter was set up in a rented apartment. A first house was bought in 1984, and in 1990 L'Auberge was constructing a new house with CMHC funding on land donated by the *Augustines* nuns. L'Auberge was board-led, member of the *Regroupement provincial des maisons d'hébergement*, and employed one co-ordinator, one secretary-bookkeeper, and twelve "animators".

Women's center *Les Elles du Nord* was created in 1980 in the remote Northern town of Chibougamau following a local colloquium on "*la condition féminine*". The group's objectives were drafted by an "*animatrice*" from the Adult Education Service of the local schoolboard. The center was housed in a local school. Adult Education and an OVEP grant provided initial funding. Incorporation was sought in 1981, and in 1982, the center was re-named "Centre communautaire féminin de Chibougamau" (CCFC). The center was first funded by MSSS in 1988-89. In 1990, the women's center had reverted to a board-led structure after unsuccessfully experimenting with a collective. It was member of *L'R des centres de femmes du Québec*, and employed one co-ordinator and one "animator".

Women's center La Source (St-Félicien) was founded in 1981 by a group of women from St-Félicien, Roberval, and neighbouring villages on the basis of a "survey of local women's needs" financed by a summer project. The "*Maison des femmes*" was first supported by an Employment Development grant (PDCC) employing seven women, in an old school provided by the local schoolboard. Incorporated in 1982 under the name of Centre féminin La Source, the center obtained a three-year PSCC grant from Employment and Immigration Canada. Funding by MSSS started in 1985-86

after two unsuccessful applications. In 1990, La Source was collective-led, was a member of *L'R des centres de femmes du Québec*, and employed two co-ordinators.

Women's center La Maison au Quatre-Temps (Alma) was created at the end of 1982 by representatives of local women's organizations and a nun from the *Fraternité des hospitalières*. Incorporated in January of 1983, the center opened in March 1984 in a house purchased with money lent by the *Fraternité*. In the first years, Maison au Quatre-Temps was both a place where local women's groups met, and an emerging organization leading its own activities with the support of small grants. After 1986, the women's center had its own board and organizational identity. It was first funded by MSSS in 1988-89. In 1990, the women's center was led by a board that included two nuns from the *Fraternité*¹⁶. Quatre-Temps was member of *L'R des centres de femmes du Québec*, and employed four co-ordinators.

Shelter L'Aquarelle (Chibougamau) was created through the efforts (1982 to 1985) of women's center Le centre communautaire féminin de Chibougamau (CCFC). A survey on "women's situation" provided the incentive; the Adult Education Service provided technical support. L'Aquarelle opened in 1985 with MSSS funding. It was housed in a disused rectory. In 1990, the shelter was board-led, un-affiliated, and employed one director, one administrator, and ten "*intervenantes*".

Shelter Halte-Secours (Dolbeau) emerged from an early initiative of the Dolbeau women's center (1983) on conjugal violence. The women's center and the shelter shared the same Charter, the same board and the same

¹⁶ The two nuns had veto power, and had used it so far to forbid the center to take position on abortion and new technologies of reproduction.

premises. Although there were two different "teams", both focused on violence against women and their activities overlapped. Listed as a women's center (L'R 1986), Halte-Secours benefited from Women's Programme and OVEP grants in 1985-86, but was not accredited at MSSS. The shelter and the women's center remained entwined until Centre de femmes du pays de Maria Chapdelaine became officially autonomous in 1988, and moved into an old school housing other community organizations. In 1990, the shelter was board-led, a member of the *Regroupement provincial des maisons d'hébergement*, and employed one director, one secretary-bookkeeper, and eleven unionized "*intervenantes*". Women's center Maria Chapdelaine received its first funding from MSSS in 1989-90. In 1990, the center was collective-led, member of *L'R des centres de femmes du Québec*, and employed one co-ordinator.

Shelter La Chambrée (Jonquière) emerged from a project initiated in 1982 by two students in "Techniques of Social Work" at the Jonquière CEGEP. They enlisted the support of other interested women, as well as from the local *Centre de services sociaux* (CSS) and *Centre de bénévolat*. La Chambrée was incorporated in 1984. A committee of nine women first operated an emergency hotline. The shelter opened in October 1985 in a rented house. Functioning with volunteers, donations, and the occasional Employment Development project, the shelter finally obtained funding from MSSS in 1988-89. In 1990, La Chambrée was led by a collective composed of four shelter workers and four "external members". It was member of the *Regroupement provincial des maisons d'hébergement*, and employed eight "*intervenantes*", originating mostly from the local CEGEP's social work technical programme.

1.4: Outline of the chapters

Chapter 2 provides the theoretical framework for the dissertation by laying out alternative conceptions of "feminism", of "the state" and of "movement politics" drawn from recent developments in feminist theory, state theory, and social movement theory. Feminist politics, I propose, are constructed in changing and diverse ways by taking "women" as a position from which to act within political imaginaries of emancipation. "The state" and its agencies I understand as historical and contingent outcomes of socio-political struggles. The relationship between movements and states, I propose, is a two-sided, rather than a one-sided affair. A merger of the main approaches in social movement theory provides the multi-dimensional framework needed to study "the doing of movement politics" in state-funded women's service groups.

Chapters 3 and 4 inquire into the ways movement struggles and politics of representation entered into the genesis of the very "external factors" - state projects, policies and funding protocols - that some see as determinant in "shaping" movement politics. Chapter 3 analyses the emergence of "service groups" in Québec's movement sector and of "state funding" in relation to the processes of formation of the Québec welfare state. I draw on existing studies to attribute the increase and formalization of this funding to a convergence of movement and state dynamics in a conjuncture of "crisis of the welfare state". The chapter traces the development of state-funded partnerships with the community sector, giving particular attention to the way this strategy unfolded at MSSS (women's service groups' main funder).

Chapter 4 relates women's service groups' "battle for funding" at MSSS. This chapter is also the occasion for a closer inquiry into women's service groups' engagement in a "politics of inclusion". I provide an historical account of these struggles, focusing on the part played by the provincial *Regroupements* of women's services, and stressing the substance of their representations and claims, the structure of political opportunities, and the role of allies. Analysing the outcomes of this battle, I show that significant inclusions were effected by MSSS. I argue that struggles by women's service groups and their feminist allies shaped "state funding" in a substantial manner.

In the remaining four chapters, I turn my attention to the ways in which feminist politics were constituted and changed in SLSJ local women's service groups over the 1980s. Chapter 5 inquires into the substance of the "representations of the project" in local service groups, and in the discursive politics at work in their constitution and transformations. I show that constructing formal representations of the project occurred as distinctive and sparse "events" in the life of women's service organizations. I also show that, from initial projects that were limited to "answering women's needs", local service groups moved towards representations of "the position of women", goals, and identifications that were increasingly politicized and identified with feminism. MSSS funding, I argue, largely favoured, rather than impeded such transformations. These were due to organizational learning and change, as well as to the development by *Regroupements* of what I call "intermediate structures of accountability".

Chapter 6 explores the substance and workings of the "politics of

influence" and "politics of inclusion" undertaken locally by women's services. While SLSJ groups began with limited action repertoires, by the end of the 1980s they had considerably broadened and politicized their transformative politics, adopting approaches to direct services, to outreach and to advocacy that were increasingly informed by "feminism". MSSS funding facilitated the development of feminist approaches to services. Factors internal to the groups, their *Regroupements*, and the larger movement sector were largely responsible for these changes. The chapter also analyses women's services' "politics of influence" in terms of a "struggle for changing subjectivities".

Chapter 7 considers women's services' organizational politics. I underscore that SLSJ women's services did not initially adopt forms of organizing identified with "feminism". Transformations included the development of formalized decision-making and administrative procedures, the adoption of "mixed" collectives models by some groups, and the growing presence of paid, relatively educated staff. The requirements of MSSS funding as well as organizational choices and imperatives played a role in these transformations. Yet, MSSS funding did not hinder the formation of collectives, and its "bureaucratizing effects" remained minimal. Chapter 7 also takes a position in current debates by refusing to assume a direct link between "feminist projects" and specific modes of organizing, and by raising questions for further inquiry on issues of "professionalization" and representation of diversity.

Chapter 8 examines the politics of resource mobilization strategies aimed at multi- state sources. I demonstrate that shelters, the CALACS and women's centers responded differently to MSSS pressures for the

diversification of their funding base, and that the political meaning of diversifying varied among groups. A real margin of manoeuvre, I argue, was gained from exploiting the opportunities offered by the grant economy. Shelters and the CALACS used their margin of manoeuvre to pursue an agenda that was insufficiently funded by MSSS. Women's centers "played the state" by mustering grants in support of the different aspects of their polyvalent repertoire.

Chapter 9 concludes the dissertation. First, I lay my claim to an alternative, and more theoretically and historically adequate reading of the transformations of women's services in Québec. Second, I review the evidence and conclude that if state funding did, partially, shape movement activity, internal factors related to organizational choices and decisions, movement traditions, *Regroupement* politics, and the strength of "feminism" were central. Third, I draw the implications of the analysis presented in the dissertation for a further understanding of "feminism", "the state" and "movement politics".

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL ORIENTATIONS: UNDERSTANDING FEMINISM, THE STATE, AND MOVEMENT POLITICS

Introduction

This chapter lays out the theoretical framework of the dissertation. First, I draw on post-structuralist feminist theorizing, on the one hand, and on empirically-grounded studies of women's movements, on the other hand, to propose a vision of "feminism" that is historical rather than ideal-typical, changing rather than fixed, and plural rather than univocal. It is more accurate to speak of "feminisms" and to attend to the substance and processes whereby particular feminist politics are constructed by movement actors.

Second, I draw on recent feminist theorizing of the state that see "the state" and its elements as historical, and contingent outcomes of socio-political struggles. Thus, the interaction between movements and states has to be understood as two-sided, rather than one-sided. Movement actors' engagement in a politics of representation, I propose, can "shape the state", including funding conditions and the state projects in which the latter are embedded.

Third, I draw on frameworks and debates provided by social movement theory to approach the notion of "movement politics". I advocate a multi-level inquiry that takes into account the following dimensions of movement action: the mobilization of resources, struggles for political inclusion, the discursive construction of representations, transformative politics in civil society and everyday life, and politics of organizing.

2.1: Rethinking feminism and feminist politics

Seeking to understand "the doing of movement politics" in state-funded women's movement service groups raises the question of what counts as "feminism" and as "feminist politics". Underlying the pessimistic strand of the literature on state-funded women's organizations are assumptions about feminism and feminist politics and about what constitutes the demise of feminism in women's organizations. Pre-set versions of how and in which direction the agency of women's organizations should be exerted if it is to be recognized as feminist are proposed. The literature is replete with references to "radical" or "political" goals, awareness-raising and confrontational modes of action, and informal or egalitarian decision-making. Anti- or non- bureaucratic stance, opposition to professionalism and to hierarchies, and refusal of institutionalization further characterize truly feminist agendas¹. Standards of feminist purity that refer to ideal-typical visions of "feminism" are upheld, and sometimes explicitly invoked as the criteria for evaluating the politics of women's organizations. D. Lamoureux's appeal to "the initial feminist objectives of the movement" (1988, 1990) and Couillard's conjuring up of "feminist ideals" (1994) or "the feminist philosophy" (1995a) are good examples.

More recent contributions on women's service and women's organizations point to problems with such assumptions. Reinelt (1995) convincingly demonstrates how ideal-typical representations of feminist

¹ I will present these arguments and positions in a more detailed manner in the substantive chapters of this dissertation.

politics are based on the creation of rigid discursive dichotomies between radical feminist and "mainstream" or "masculinist" practices. These representations assume one set to be unquestionably emancipatory and the other irremediably oppressive, a position that is, needless to say, highly debatable. In addition, such a dichotomization is largely a myth that does not correspond to the more varied picture found in actual women's movements (see Schechter 1982, Gornick, Burt and Pittman 1985, Dobash and Dobash 1992). Ideal-typical conceptions, as Ferree and Martin highlight, prejudge certain sets of practices as more "central" or "effective" than others, while refusing to explore how different types of practices may also "play important and distinctive roles in the movement in which they are part" (1995:10, also Martin 1990).

Setting up ideal-typical notions of feminist practices, it is important to note, creates a false equation between "feminism" and what are in fact proposals originating from specific feminist positions located in time and space. Doing so, one must realize, is to effect a "discursive coup". It is making a performative statement that attempts to realize what it enunciates: fixing the meaning of feminism. The diversity of feminist traditions of theorizing and organizing is dismissed. Feminism is reduced to one of its variants. Yet, influences from liberal, radical, socialist, maternal, and other "hyphenated feminisms" coexist, sometimes intricately intertwined in the everyday life of women's movement organizations, with different consequences for goal determination, action, and organizing. Canonizing an ideal-type delegitimizes all the actions and actors that do not fit the ideal, even though these actors may identify themselves and their actions with feminism or women's movement politics.

Post-structuralist feminist theorists Butler and Scott (1992) argue that definitions of "what qualifies as feminism" are the result of historically located processes of "differentials and exclusionary means" (xiv). Hence, we should understand debates about what feminist politics are or should be, who is feminist and what are the best ways to attain movements goals as part of an internal politics of exclusion and inclusion that always entails the enunciation of "truth claims" about feminism, movement membership, issues, strategies, and the like. To paraphrase Nicholson, "any claim about such must be viewed as a political intervention" (1994:102). Making these claims is necessarily, as McClure points out, "to speak from within" and not from outside the divisions and contestations that occur in the movement. It is also taking a position in its power relations and struggles, with possible consequences for their outcome (1992:343).

Conjuring up feminism as an "ever-already" constituted position thus presents both the problems of being a mythical construct, and a prescriptive, totalizing political intervention in disguise. Such univocal conceptions of feminism are usually grounded in a given, stable, and relatively unified conception of gender relations and of "women" as the subject of feminist politics. Women have an objective existence as a social group defined by the existence of gender relations of power. Power relations beget a specific agenda of objective, or long-term interests. "Women's interests" can be deduced structurally (from women's position in power arrangements), or essentially (from the experience of being female). Likewise, a specific agenda for feminist politics can be read-off from these interests, or from the various forms of women's exploitation and

oppression. Work founded upon these arguments assumes that feminist politics involves definite sets of goals, modes of intervention, forms and strategies. Divergences from the ideal in women's organizations either reflect a lack of feminist consciousness of the "objective interests" to be defended, or a lack of sophistication in their analyses.

Series of challenges posed by post-modern, post-structuralist and post-colonial feminist theorists have destabilized these foundations of feminist theory. To the universality of gender oppression and the coherence of "women" as a group, posited by structural and essentialist analyses, has been opposed the variability of women's experiences, the instability of the very category of "women", and a conception of "gender" entwined in a web of multiple, intersecting relations of power (see Riley 1988, Alcoff 1989, Franzway, Court and Connell 1989, Pringle and Watson 1990, Walby 1992, Mohanty 1992).

If the lived experience of social subjects is criss-crossed by different types of power relations, then the subject of feminist politics is heterogeneous and fragmented rather than unified. This fragmentation, contemporary feminist studies assert, is what gives rise to the diversity of women's lived experiences. "Experience", however is not accessible immediately, but through historically patterned meanings (Nicholson 1994:101). In other words, it is mediated through representations in language and discourse. "What it means to be a woman", it follows, is changing and diverse (Riley 1988, Barrett and Phillips 1992). Moreover, "woman" "must be historically interpreted and theorized if it is to become the basis of feminist solidarity and struggle" (Mohanty 1992:77). What then gets defined as "women's interests" and as "feminist politics" is

bound to vary (Nicholson 1994, Yeatman 1994).

There is ample empirical evidence to support the argument of the non-homogeneous character of "women's interests" as these are diversely articulated among and within women's movements in different places and times (see in particular Jenson 1990, Dahlerup 1987, Pringle and Watson 1990, Masson 1994b). A similar diversity in the conduct of "feminist politics" has been underlined, in the case of women's services by Schechter (1982), Gornick, Burt and Pittman (1985), Dobash and Dobash (1992), and in the case of feminist organizations by Freeman (1983), Katzenstein (1987), Martin (1990), Ryan (1992), Buechler (1993), Ferree and Martin (1995) and many others. Feminist goals and priorities, organizational forms and practices, means of action and alliances are the object of variable, and often dissenting constructions. As women's movement organizations increasingly engage with institutional and state actors and as even "mainstream" social services develop feminist goals (Gornick, Burt and Pittman 1985), the question of "who we are" and "what constitutes feminist politics" re-surfaces (Reinelt 1995:101).

Most social movement scholars, from Gerlach and Hine (1970) to Melucci (1989) and followers, acknowledge that movements are neither unified nor integrated. As Yeatman aptly argues, movements "are subject to an internal politics of multiple and conflicting representations of why they exist, what it is that they should do, and how they should operate" (1994:114). As a diverse, "multi-faceted mobilization", women's movements are involved in ongoing processes of negotiation on issues of identity and membership, goals and strategies (Ferree and Martin 1995:7, Dobash and Dobash 1992:18). Michaud (1992) points to the power relations implicated

in this process of "internal hegemony", whereby some positions become shared by movement actors and come to define the unifying core of the movement while others remain on the margins.

These reflections are meant to imply that doing "women's movement politics" or, alternately, of "feminist politics" cannot be reducible to one (right) way of doing things. Whatever unification exists has then to be considered a practical, political and discursive unification, created around always particular definitions of "who we are, why we exist, what it is that we should do, and how we should operate." This unification is necessarily incomplete, non-static, and provisional. "Any description of goals, strategies and membership is always a tentative, rather than a definitive characterization." (Dobash and Dobash 1992:18) The researcher must account for the history, diversity and variability of concrete understandings of the subject and project of feminist politics.

To what extent is it still possible to speak of feminism and of feminist politics if the grounds of "the feminist project" have been destabilized in such ways? It is not possible, I contend here, to conceive abstractly of feminist politics in other than very general terms. I have argued so far, and in various ways, against conceptions that speak from an essentially or structurally pre-given political subject with definite sets of goals, practices, and strategies. Taking a more post-structuralist tack, I propose that contemporary feminist politics are diversely constructed from taking "women" as a position from which to act (Alcoff 1989:325) within political imaginaries of emancipation. These constructions, it is important to bear in mind, occur in contexts where neither what "women" (as a category, position, or identity) nor

"emancipation" mean or entail are "understood as necessarily singular in meaning and commonly agreed upon"² (Nicholson 1994:102).

In this minimalist conceptual sense, then, not all movements composed of women are feminist, but all "women's" movement politics are feminist politics providing they draw on political imaginaries of emancipation³. More precise definitions of feminism or of feminist politics cannot be divorced from and cannot replace "the discursive political history" of the category⁴. Asking "what is feminist politics?" then involves a questioning of how, and under which conditions, historically specific and diverse "deployments of discourses", embedded in particular political projects (Butler and Scott 1992:xiii) have come to determine what counts as feminist politics in a particular place and time. Determining if a particular women's movement, or women's movement organization, or intervention is feminist in this sense requires that we ask, Scott, Kaplan and Gates suggest, "What meanings have women given to their efforts?" (1997:2) Or, more exactly: How are these meanings connected to (the various) discourses of feminism? And how are these women and their organizations connected to, or identifying with a self-defined feminist movement?

Feminism, Scott, Kaplan and Gates further propose, "is a site of local, national and international political and cultural conflict." (1997:2) Different versions exist (or co-exist) in various locales

² For an empirical example in the French case see Jenson (1990).

³ There is thus a distinction to establish between these and "reactionary" women's movements, which historically arose in reaction to feminism (i.e., counter-movements).

⁴ I owe this formulation to Yeatman (1994).

(McBride Stetson and Mazur 1995:15). In these versions, I propose, elements of feminism are appropriated and rejected, recomposed and re-signified⁵ in different ways and put to work by women in different ways. Through this process, "feminism in practice" is produced and changed. Anna Tsing's great contribution, Scott, Kaplan and Gates underline, is to "urge us to attend to the process instead of trying to locate the original [feminist discourse] and analyse the faithfulness of the copies." (1997:2)

"Feminist politics", it appears, needs to be historicized and located (Mohanty 1992). It should also be clear by now that "to speak of feminist politics", as McClure writes "is to speak not of *feminism* but of *feminisms*" (1992:343). If one is to speak of feminism in the singular at all, McClure suggests, it should be as an arena of contention "fissured by the ongoing controversies over the meaning of feminism itself: by debates over goals, strategies, tactics, and agencies" (1992:343).

In addition, the historicity and "locatedness" of feminisms cannot be understood in abstraction from the "positionality" of the very political subjects that define and enact what counts as feminist politics. Feminist subjects are differently positioned in the shifting webs of social relations of power, socio-political contexts, and discourses⁶ that

⁵ "Signifying" and "re-signifying" are technical terms used in discourse analysis that refer to the processes whereby people assign meanings to their world, or alter (re-signify) existing meanings. For an accessible introduction to the study of meaning-making practices, see Lemke (1990). For a view of the contribution of discourse analysis to social movement studies see Masson (1997b).

⁶ This conception of "positionality" I derive from Alcoff (1989:324). I am trying to work with something that says at the same time that more "structural" positions in power relations do matter, but that the way people work from it is contingent, not ascribed. Against essentialism and hardcore structuralism it is saying that people are not "bound" to their class, gender, and race positions. Against free-floating post-

give rise to the diversity of interpretations of "what it means to be a woman" and "what should be done about it". Diverse versions of feminism are articulated from different socio-enunciative positions and are articulated in various ways to discourses of sexuality, class, and race that they may or may not contest. Feminist activists and organizations also operate within societal assumptions - or hegemonic discourses - about women, the family, politics, etc., which they challenge only unevenly. Doing emancipatory politics from the position of "women" can be articulated to widely different discourses. It can also be embedded in a diversity of political projects.

As Laclau and Mouffe (1985:168-169) point out, such a variety of discursive articulations may very well bear divergent, if not contradictory implications in terms of the direction of struggles. Most movement initiatives, as Starn aptly remarks, "defy neat categorization as hegemonic or counterhegemonic" (1992:95). As feminism is conceptualized as criss-crossed by relations of power, contingent rather than ascribed, diverse rather than univocal, historical rather than fixed, and as the variety of its possible discursive articulations is underlined, women's movement/feminist politics acquire a more ambiguous outlook. Feminism, it appears, bears no guarantees.

Does recognizing the historical, located, "positioned" and therefore diverse and changing substance of feminism necessarily lead into the trap of a "celebration of political difference", relativizing and equalizing political positions in the very tradition of liberal (or neo-liberal)

structuralism, it is saying that people's lived experience of relations of power, although there may be various ways to interpret it, makes a difference.

pluralism? (Mohanty 1992, Jhappan 1996) For some, it may be so. Arguing the plurality of feminisms, McClure however contends, "is also to insist that the plural/ism thus inscribed demarcates a site of political difference and contestation rather than a neutral zone of benign diversity." (1992:343) One of the ways of "negotiating diversity" is to posit, as Yeatman does, the irreducibility of power/political differences, an "irresolvably complex polyphony of voices" that remains the object of ongoing debate and can be resolved in only pragmatic and provisional agreements within particular women's movements (1994:2).

Yet, one could still legitimately ask, then, "Can we afford to leave unexamined the question of our political differences?" (S.P. Mohanty, cited in Chandra Talpade Mohanty 1992: note 3, 90-91). How do we negotiate or arbitrate between my politics and yours? Or between different women's movement/feminist politics? Does this necessarily mean that there can be no answer to the question of arbitration, only conflictual positions in a power field? Although rejecting transcendent standards of validity or criteria for arbitration, Yeatman accepts "certain standards of validity in respect of what conduces to an open, democratic politics of voice and representation." (1994:2) Another set of criteria relevant to arbitration and the practical negotiation of conflict refers to the different "effects of power" of different feminist politics. Who speaks on behalf of "women" and which "women" are we talking about? What is achieved by these different politics and for whom? What avenues of struggle do they make possible? What is foreclosed? Arbitration, however, remains on political ground. Deprived of absolute references, it always interrogates the positionality of the arbiter: "How do we perceive effects? and who are

'we'? According to what criteria? Based on whose political culture?" (Escobar 1992: 85, note 15)

2.2: Re-visioning the state

How "the state", its nature and its workings are understood is of major importance in analysing the issue of state-funded women's service groups. Although not all studies make use of elaborated theoretical frameworks, the following conceptions of the state predominate in the major interventions on the topic. The state is variably seen: as an inherently conservative force (Johnson 1981), as an agent of social control within a pluralist (Johnson 1981, Tierney 1982) or Marxist understanding (Morgan 1981), as a central site for the (re-)production of hegemony (Barnsley 1988), as the main manager of welfare policies and programmes (Tierney 1982, D. Lamoureux 1990), as the vehicle for "textually-mediated relations of ruling" (Ng 1988, 1990; Schraeder 1990, Heald 1990, Transken 1994) and of other bureaucratically organized processes of normalization and surveillance (Couillard 1995a, Couillard and Côté 1995).

These visions of the state rest on a series of assumptions that are very likely to produce pessimistic readings of the possibilities for women's movement politics in women's service organizations. The state is assumed to be an agent (or vehicle, or site) of domination and rule, monolithic and unitary in its workings, and with overwhelming and immutable power. Funding programmes, their requirements and the representations they embed are fully imposed on beneficiary organizations.

They render women's service groups powerless as the latter become integrated (co-opted) into the social control, hegemonic, welfare, ruling, or bureaucratic apparatuses of the state. The very nature of the state prevents its use as an instrument for social change: whatever gains are made by women's movement organizations may bring solace to women's immediate problems and needs but only result in renewed forms of domination.

Speaking of the state, or of state institutions, practices and discourses as one-sidedly and unambiguously instruments of social control, regulation, ruling or governance - be it in the name of Patriarchy, Capitalism, or other *dispositif de pouvoir* - has been amply criticized. Such theorizing has been found guilty of structuralism and functionalism, of not capturing the diversity of power relations and struggles that define the state, and of making it difficult to account for change (Piven 1984, Dahlerup 1987, Jenson 1986, Connell 1987, Franzway, Court and Connell 1989, Gordon 1990, Watson 1990, Rhode 1994). Making the state into a sole agent of domination cannot explain variability among and within states regarding their treatment of gender. Such treatment, comparative studies by Jenson (1986, 1987a, 1989) demonstrate, can vary significantly among states.

The states may or may have not assumed that women provide free labour in the family. They may or may have not have discouraged women's work outside the home. They may or may not have tried to establish equality between female and male workers. They may or may not have encouraged childbearing in a way that would subordinate women to men, to the state, or to both. (Jenson 1986: 22)

Franzway, Court and Connell (1989), Pringle & Watson (1990), and Watson (1990) also insist that states display little internal unity, and are even "erratic" in terms of gender politics. The state, it seems, does not occupy "a clear-cut and fixed place in the structure of gender or in the field of sexual politics" (Franzway, Court and Connell 1989:41). We also have to acknowledge and to explain, Franzway, Court and Connell contend, "the extent to which the state has been a vehicle for advancing the position of women." (1989:29) What we see now, they further suggest, is a very different state than the one that confronted second wave feminists: "a state which manages some legislation, provides some resources, and employs some feminist advocates, directed towards the interests of women." (161) How do we account for variability and for the enabling qualities of the state regarding gender politics? A new feminist scholarship on the state has emerged that offers answers to these questions (see Jenson 1986, Dahlerup 1987, Pateman 1988, Fraser 1989, Franzway, Court and Connell 1989, Pringle and Watson 1990, Connell 1990, Yeatman 1990, Allen 1990, Watson 1990, Brenner and Laslett 1991, Pringle and Watson 1992, Rhode 1994).

The state, admittedly, is a central site, and a powerful mode of institutionalization of unequal relations of power. What distinguishes more recent approaches is the recognition of the intertwining of gender with other social relations of power, and the idea of power as a relation in tension. Power relations are best understood as "balances of forces", whose geometries are inherently variable and open to challenge rather than being essentially pre-given and unmovable. To the extent that the state reflects and participates in these power relations, it has to be conceived

as the contingent, variable, and historical product of constrained but open-ended socio-political struggles. In other words, the state may be historically "marked as masculine", but "the gender order is not static", dominance is unevenly institutionalized in the state, and "outcomes are open and ambivalent" (Franzway, Court and Connell 1989). As a result of these struggles, specific patterns of relations of power are embodied - i.e., institutionalized - in the concrete forms taken by the collection of arenas, practices and discourses that we have come to call the state (see in particular Jenson 1986, Franzway, Court and Connell 1989, Pringle and Watson 1990, Watson 1990, Brenner and Laslett 1991; see also Bright and Harding 1984, Abrams 1988). As products of history and politics and the target of further struggles, these forms are inevitably changing and variable in time and space. "The analytic challenge" that follows from this type of theorizing is, to borrow from Jenson, to assume that agency and politics can make a difference "even if real effects of institutionalized practices and structural constraints exist" (1991:49).

Another proposition made by this new scholarship is that the state is "disunited". The state, it is argued, cannot be thought of as a single unity with a single purpose. Feminists, Marxists and Neo-institutionalists alike underline the fragmented and potentially contradictory picture of state intervention that results from the uneven deployment of institutionalized power relations, actors and capacities between branches of the state and among policy areas (Piven 1984, Connell 1987, Franzway, Court and Connell 1989, Pringle and Watson 1990, Watson 1990, Yeatman 1990; also Mahon 1977, McLennan 1984, Bright and Harding 1984, Skocpol 1985). "This sort of disunity and imbalance is of course just what one

would expect to find in an institutional field that is primarily a field of struggle." (Abrams 1988:79) Disunity implies that there is no one "state position" from which to answer feminist demands but fragmented and potentially contradictory positions. Yeatman (1990) proposes to see in the differentiation and increased complexity of the state-system a multiplication of "partial governments", each with its own project of governance, favoured modes of operation, and vision of its relationship to civil society. Such an explanation may help account for the empirical variations that exist, in practice, among the funding protocols through which women's organizations are funded.

One of the main contributions made - although more often than not unintentionally - by the literature on state-funded women's services is that the state is not unitary in its funding programmes and requirements. Dobash and Dobash (1992) show important differences in the treatment of women's shelters in Britain and the United States. Ng contends that Canadian funding programmes, requirements, administrative procedures, etc., vary considerably (1990:180). An examination of the American literature shows a diversity of programmes and requirements, some more stringent, some more lax. Funding programmes may or may not formally impose hierarchical structures, membership criteria, staff qualifications, clientele, services or mandate on women's organizations. The extent to which specific forms of action are allowed or prohibited (for example, education vs direct services) also varies widely.

Moreover, if funding comes with strings attached, it also opens up possibilities for women's movement action. Making projects of services more viable, validating women's service groups "as legitimate community

institutions" (Schechter 1982:94), providing "access to policy-making and opportunities for educating many people" on women's issues (Reinelt 1995:101), among others, can be seen as improving the potential of women's services to make a difference in the wider socio-political struggles in which they engage (Dobash and Dobash 1992). State funding, it appears, is not always/forever the same *vis-à-vis* women's service groups, and entails both limits and possibilities. Speaking of state-funded women's services, it follows, does not in itself indicate the nature of the relationship between movement organizations and states, nor does it bear ascribed political meanings and consequences. Generalizing about state funding is a difficult enterprise. What is possible is to make an argument for a fine-grained, institutional analysis of specific funding policies, programmes, and protocols, of what they entail, constrain, and permit.

The fragmentation of the institutional reality of the state into partial governments, themselves the product of larger socio-political struggles, alliances and compromises, and with their own sedimentation of institutionalized power relations can account for the variability of funding protocols. Another part of the explanation is to suggest that women's movements may directly contribute to shape their relationship with the partial governments, or particular state agencies, that fund them. The consequential involvement of women's movements in "shaping the state" and public policy is widely recognized in the literature (Andrew 1984, Turner 1986, Jensen 1986, 1987a, 1989b, Gordon 1990, Brenner and Laslett 1991, Skocpol 1992, Hobson 1993). Furthering this line of inquiry, I want to propose that the political representations and socio-political struggles of women's movement actors and their allies may "make a difference" in

shaping the conditions in which state-funded women's groups are operating. Women's movements may productively contribute to shaping the particular state projects (for example the organization of welfare), assumptions and "inscriptions of power" regarding gender, as well as the programmes, policies, and requirements in which specific funding relationships obtain.

To understand how this can happen, we need to stress the particular processes of state-making at work in the constitution of the state projects, programmes and politics that regulate funding relationships. More precisely, we need to analyse these policy outcomes "as the result of social processes that include feminist mobilization." (Reinelt 1995:97) A "politics of representation", it can be suggested, plays a major role in these processes. Following Jenson (1989b, 1991), such politics have to be understood as involving "representation" in both senses of the concept: as discursively constructed collective meanings, and as the liberal democratic process of political representation on behalf of designated constituencies that occur in the arenas and sites of formal politics, and where these meanings themselves are struggled about.

Why are struggles over collective representations central? It has been argued in various ways that representations (i.e., meanings constructed through language and discourse) are an intrinsic element of the exercise of power, and of struggle over power (see Masson 1997b; see also Jenson 1989b, Yeatman 1990, Pringle and Watson 1990). Particular representations of gender express particular balances of forces and institutionalize particular forms of gender relations of power. Part of the politics of representation in which women's movements engage with the state are attempts to debunk the previously institutionalized

representations and assumptions about gender that have shaped state policies in order to replace them by alternative meanings that encapsulate different forms and balances of power.

The struggles over which meanings are incorporated in state policies are also struggles over practical arrangements: the meanings encoded in representations are acted upon. It is through institutionalized representations "that certain claims, and not others, are valorized" (Yeatman 1990:ix), that certain actors, and not others, gain access to state institutions, that claims are routed (Jenson 1993), and that what is to be the object of state intervention is defined (Yeatman 1990:153). The terms of discourses inscribed in state institutions and policies "channel political thought and action in certain directions" (Yeatman 1990:162), and "determine who gets what, when, where and how" (Jenson 1989b:238). More fundamentally, the wars of interpretations in which women's movements are engaged can be viewed as battles over the power to establish authoritative definitions of issues, rights and needs that imply "acts and interventions" (Fraser 1989:166). Walker's analysis of the struggle over representations waged on the issue of wife-battering in Canada is telling in this regard.

Women's movement activists struggled with professionals for control over the terms in which the issue was to be recognized and acted upon, [...] the struggle [became] one of contestation over whose knowledge will define the situation, who is to be held to blame, and what kind of action will be taken by whom. (Walker 1990:18).

These struggles are waged on the terrain of "the universe of political discourse" (Jenson 1989b, 1991), a terrain constituted outside

the state in the public spaces of civil society, and within the state in the multiplicity of arenas of policy-making of its partial governments. These arenas are "defined by both their own systems of representation and decision-making" (Yeatman 1990:170). Each displays a particular combination of actors, networks, and potential alliances and conflicts; of issues and options to be debated and of styles of claims-making; of discourses and practices; of struggles and politics (Watson 1990: 10; Pringle & Watson 1990: 237-239, also Jenson 1986, 1987a, 1989b). The ability of women's movements to shape the state and policy-making depends on their ability to be recognized as legitimate actors in these arenas, on their relationships with the other players and their strategies, on "localized powers and resistance, and on the strength of 'feminisms' within and outside the political structure." (Watson 1990:19)

The outcome of these politics of representation takes the form of a variegated incorporation (or, conversely, exclusion) of the demands and claims, assumptions and representations put forward by women's movement actors. State formation, as Lustiger-Thaler and Shragge (1993) recall, follows a process of inclusions and exclusions. In Western liberal democracies, political pressures to maintain state and governmental legitimacy require a certain level of incorporation of claims and representations made by other political actors, including social movements. "The use of state power must be balanced with the search for legitimation as a whole." (Franzway, Court and Connell 1989:53)

Adopting such a perspective does not mean reverting to a liberal-pluralist conception of politics. Encounters between movements and states in the politics of representation are "encounters between groups and

institutions with histories, priorities and practices that form a backdrop and set conditions upon the negotiations." (Dobash and Dobash 1992:99) "Social struggle" and previously institutionalized relations of power are already "inscribed in the organization, administration and policies of the state." (Held 1984:70) Agency and struggles can make a difference, but not everything is possible. Policy-making mechanisms "tend to be balanced towards the status quo" and "familiar participants" (Dobash and Dobash 1992:143). They also tend to favour existing solutions and other established ways of doing things.

State response to politically organized demands is never a flat response or a mirror of the play of power relations. Policy-making, Quadagno (1987) notes, builds upon and is shaped by the legacy of anterior policies, discourses and practices (118-119). Fashioning this response, however, goes beyond the simple defense of the sedimentation of past power struggles in the organization of the state. For the state is not simply a set of arenas in which politics of representation are played out. Although "fragmented", the state is an actor in its own right in these politics, and in the production of their outcomes. Marxist and Neo-institutionalist scholars hold that the state has its own interests, concerns, and power bases (see Held 1984, McLennan 1984, Hall 1984, Skocpol 1985; see also review in Pal 1993). These arguments suggest the existence, in the state, of a distinct form of agency. This agency is embodied in concrete "state players" (i.e., departments, offices, policy experts, bureaucrats, politicians, courts, etc.). It is also shaped by the bureaucratic-administrative character of state functioning.

Regarding the latter, feminist scholars identify the existence of a

series of "mediation effects". These operate to alter and re-signify the outcomes of the politics of representation in which women's movements engage. They may account for the various forms taken by the incorporation of movement representations, from straightforward inclusion to, as is more often the case, a variety of mediated accommodations. Mediation effects stem from different sources. First, they may be related to preferences for particular forms and modes of discourse. At the core of the mediation effects produced by the bureaucratic-administrative character of the state lies a process of *rewriting*. Incorporated claims and representations are translated (i.e., renamed, redefined, altered) in the state's own discursive modes, the latter being historically organized in the terms of an administrative, legal, therapeutic and technicist rationality (Fraser 1989:174, Yeatman 1990:153-173, Walker 1990:8, Findlay 1993:6, Couillard and Côté 1995).

Second, mediation effects may be fostered by the segmentation of the state in sub-units with distinct styles of operation. The segmentation of the state-system into diverse areas of jurisdiction routes and fragments the treatment of issues into components that can be absorbed into "existing areas of concern" (Walker 1990:18). There they also get redefined according to established principles and modes of operation, priorities, and organizational practices (see Fraser 1989). Finally, other mediation effects may follow from the predominance of bureaucratic procedures. Findlay (1993) argues that the use of administrative categories (for example: "minorities", "disabled persons") shapes representation in a way that naturalizes and obscures relations of power. Standardizing practices, where issues are redefined in universal terms,

also mediate representations (Fraser 1989:174). A preference for management through documentary evidence, mainly through the production of statistics and budget figures, transforms the lived experience of individuals and groups into measurable and quantifiable terms (Ng 1988, 1990).

Nevertheless, how much and to what effect state structures, discourses, and favoured modes of operation mediate the outcome of women's movements encounter with state players and other actors in the arenas of representational politics remain empirical questions. Their answers, I propose, are bound to vary in time and space. They will also vary in relation to the specific politico-administrative conjunctures of specific state institutions and agencies, and in relation to the balance of forces women's movements and their allies are able to establish in these contexts.

From a theoretical position for which power relations, socio-political struggles and politics are central to the processes of state formation, I have argued so far that movements may shape the state. Yet, it must also be recognized that the state may also shape movements. States (or regimes) have intentionally repressed, tolerated, encouraged or favoured some movements or movement organizations and not others (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1988, Foweraker 1995). States also "matter," Skocpol points out, in other, largely unintentional ways.

Their organizational configuration, along with their overall patterns of activity, affect political culture, encourage some kind of group formation and collective political actions (but not others) and make possible the raising of certain political issues (but not others). (1985:21)

The determination of movement goals, Jenkins contends in this perspective, is shaped by "the state's general approach to dealing with citizens." (1995:31) Exclusionary practices as well as inclusionary ones influence the formation of movement goals, movement mobilization and strategies. Yet they do so in indeterminate directions. Movement trajectories, identities, and capacities are constructed through interaction with the state (Foweraker 1995), although the ways in which and the extent to which this is so warrants more attention. Understanding the shaping of movements by the state is not a simple endeavour because, first, movements have agency, and second, the "movement/state relationship" is essentially dynamic.

Thinking in terms of power relations and of politics implies that the nature and outcomes of the relation between states and movements, although asymmetrical, are not determined by *fiat*. Political actors, such as movements, are *agents*: they are "simultaneously *subjects of structures* and *acting subjects*" (Jenson 1989b:236). "If actors," Jenson further argues, "are endowed with the ability to act strategically, then their actions must be seen as creative of the different histories which they live." (1991:50) The extent to which movement self-definitions, capacities, actions and trajectories are shaped by the state and its agencies becomes an empirical question.

This question is made more complex, I want to propose, by the two-sided nature of the movement/state relationship. We must, Hamel argues, "*tenir compte de l'interaction entre l'Etat et les mouvements sociaux dans les deux sens de la relation.*" (1991:53) Movements' influence on public policies and their effect in shaping the state transforms the institutional terrain. The latter becomes "the accumulated result of both

popular strategy and state policy." (Foweraker 1995:62) State configuration and intervention, discourses and legislations, its degree of support of movement action "subsequently influence movements' capacity and the meaning and direction of their action" (Hamel 1991:53, my transl.). "*La configuration des relations entre l'Etat et les mouvements sociaux*," Hamel contends, "*résulte donc d'une série d'ajustements itératifs, de part et d'autre (...)*" (52) The relationship between movements and the state is thus "mutually constitutive", albeit only in a partial manner, since each is shaped by other forces. This complex, "partially mutually constitutive" relationship poses a challenge to social movement analysis. It becomes difficult to draw a clear line, Hamel notes, between the initiatives and agency of movements and their organizations, and the effects of state structures, or action (1991:82-83). The way out, I would suggest, is historical, and involves an appraisal of the sequence of twists and turns that find movements shaping the state and in turn being further shaped by it. It also demands a nuanced analysis of these processes of appropriation and redefinition through which movements are made, "with and despite" a state they have often helped to shape.

2.3: "Doing movement politics": a multi-dimensional inquiry

Describing and analysing movement politics requires a multi-level analytical framework that takes into account the various dimensions of movement action. Elements of both resource mobilization theory (RMT) and the more recent "new social movement" (NSM) approach, I propose, have to be combined to provide the framework for the dissertation's inquiry into

"movement politics". Such a convergence is strongly advocated in recent work⁷ (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1988, Klandermans and Tarrow 1988, Melucci 1989, Diani 1992, Canel 1992, Morris and McClurg Mueller 1992, Starn 1992, Escobar and Alvarez 1992). None of the existing schools of thought alone, it is increasingly argued, succeeds in capturing the complexity of collective action. Some degree of integration is necessary between varying perspectives. An integrative approach would have to focus on (1) the mobilization of resources by movements, (2) their struggles for inclusion in formal politics, (3) movement representations and their construction, (4) their transformative action in civil society and everyday life, and (5) their politics of organizing.

"Doing movement politics" in women's movement organizations, I want to argue for this dissertation, is not just about setting radical goals, raising women's awareness and organizing as a "collective". Doing movement politics, I contend, encompasses all the aspects of the above list. Theoretical contributions to debates and questions about each of these dimensions provide the general framework that organizes the evidence presented in this dissertation. I will present the elements of this multi-level framework in turn.

a) Mobilizing resources

⁷ There are, however, some dissenting voices. Mayer (1991), for one, has argued that a merger between RMT and NSM approaches is impossible because their basic assumptions about society, the political, and social change are incompatible. Far from giving in to pure eclecticism and being aware of the debates and disagreements between these schools, my position recognizes the existence of different levels of inquiry and analysis of movement politics, and attempts to develop a framework to articulate these levels in a productive coexistence.

From the seminal work of McCarthy and Zald (1977), resource mobilization theory has focused on the constitution of collective actors' capacity to act in the pursuit of shared goals. Constructing this capacity by organizing a constituency, and by gaining access to, securing and managing organizational resources, is central to movement politics. No matter what grievances exist, "If one lacks the capacity to act, it hardly matters that one is afforded the chance to do so." (McAdam 1982:48) Resources, however, are unevenly distributed. Access to them is guarded and constrained within a web of institutional and social power relations. Contending for resources thus becomes part of contending for power. The building of organizational resources has thus to be seen as an intrinsic part of "the doing of movement politics."

Social movement organizations, McCarthy and Zald write, "must possess resources, however few and of whatever type, in order to work toward goal achievement." (1977:1220) There is considerable variation in the conceptualization of resources in RMT⁸. Resources, nevertheless, can be said to be of two types: material (or tangible) and non-material (or intangible). Two types of material resources are central for contemporary movement work: "people's resources" (participants, labour, skills, access to networks) and money. There are two sources of material resources, which are, according to McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (1988) equally problematic. "Either it [the SMO] can seek to obtain most of its resources from among its grassroots base or from sources outside its natural 'beneficiary constituency'." (725)

⁸ See Canel (1992:51, note 1) and Jenkins (1983) for examples. See also different models by McAdam (1982) and Freeman (1983).

Contemporary movement organizations, at least in Western democracies, have shifted to modes of organizing that rely more extensively on monetary resources than on volunteered "people's resources" (Jenkins 1983:533). As a result, Pal (1993) remarks, the problem of mobilizing resources has become "entwined with the problem of the state." (271) Especially in the Canadian context, he contends, social movement organizations have little choice for securing financial resources except to seek funding from public authorities. "Canadian companies and foundations have historically been considerably less generous than their American counterparts, and so the real choices are between small individual donations and government grants." (277)

Most argue that there are downsides to both strategies. Because poor and relatively powerless constituencies cannot provide much in the way of financial resources, organizations are forced into endless rounds of resource-generating activities (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1988:725). While some studies assume that institutional support can be enlisted unproblematically in the pursuit of movement goals (see in Jenkins 1983:533, 535), others affirm that such support is likely to be "fleeting and more politically conditioned", and that it entails real dangers of co-optation and control (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1988:725). However, issues of funding of movement organizations by state and non-state agencies, McCarthy, Britt and Wolfson (1991) note, "have been largely neglected by scholars of social movement organizations" (47). The work of Canadian political scientist Leslie Pal (1993) convincingly shows that there is space for further research.

Pal identifies two main theses in the Canadian literature on the

funding of movement organizations. The pluralist thesis sees state funding mostly as "a sordid patronage ploy" (7); the Marxist-influenced thesis stresses co-option, control, and the inherently "conservatizing" effects of state funding (42-58). How one analyses state funding, Pal underlines, depends on how one conceptualizes the state, collective action, and politics (11). Such theoretical conceptualizations vary. They are also the object of debates. Yet Pal's main criticism is empirical. The evidence presented by existing studies is too often "scattered and anecdotal": it lacks specific studies of specific programmes. Moreover, it ignores the politics of their genesis and development, and their effects on the state itself (56-57). Examining the Official Language, Multiculturalism and Women's programmes of the Secretary of State of Canada, Pal concludes that the theses of patronage and co-option do not adequately capture a relationship that is both more complex and more open to the play of politics and of collective action. Pal's study, however, remains at the level of governmental projects, administration and programmes, with only an indirect grasp on the actual impact of state funding on Canadian movement organizations. My study contributes to this debate by shedding more light on the latter.

b) Struggling for inclusion in formal politics

Contrary to the claims of more culturally-oriented NSM theorists (Cohen 1983, Offe 1985, Touraine 1985, 1988, Melucci 1989), contemporary social movements have not abandoned the arenas of the state and mainstream

politics⁹. An important part of what movements and movement actors do is to seek inclusion in the field of institutionalized politics. This is the main argument of the "political process model" popularized by Tilly (1978), McAdam (1982), and Tarrow (1989) among others. Anchored in elite theory, this version of the model presents social movements as "outsiders" striving to gain membership in "the polity" (i.e., seeking entry into institutionalized structures of interest representation), and to routinize their access to decision-making. Another version of this argument explains movements' involvement in institutionalized politics by the failure of the conventional mechanisms of interest intermediation (i.e., electoral and party politics) or of technocratic approaches to social problems (Maier 1987, Scott 1990, see also Dalton, Kuechler and Burklin 1990).

In both versions, the central task of movement actors is to represent, in the arenas of mainstream politics, a series of demands, issues and concerns on behalf of social groups that lack established avenues of political representation. In this perspective, the "integration" of movement actors and issues signals the success of movement politics, rather than their demise. Scott, in particular, opposes explanations that "equate integration with movement failure" or co-option (1990:11). According to Scott, the success of movements should be evaluated in terms of their capacity to enter formerly closed processes of interest intermediation and negotiation, and to gain inclusion for their issues (131-156). Such integration, Scott contends, "is social and political change" (151, my emphasis). "The dualistic view of radical

⁹ For a critique of new social movements as "politics away from the state" see Foweraker (1995:42), also Canel (1992).

change versus integration is not helpful in identifying social movement effects." (151) Rather, integration, many argue, is productive: it opens up decision-making to new actors, broadens the substance of political agendas and contributes to the creation of new institutional mechanisms. Movements' struggles for inclusion in formal politics have thus been analysed as important mechanisms for the democratization of the state, public policies, and institutional politics (Maier 1987, Dalton, Kuechler and Burklin 1990, Scott 1990, Foweraker 1995, Hamel 1995, Lustiger-Thaler and Maheu 1995). Different frameworks are available for this type of analysis. My own preference lies with the theorizing on "politics of representation" presented earlier in this chapter. The following considerations about "movement tactics", the "political opportunity structure", and coalitions are also useful.

Movements do belong to the field of normal politics even if they may use extra-institutional tactics. "Rebellion, in this view, is simply politics by other means." (Gamson 1975 cited in McAdam 1982:2-3) Although some attach the very definition of "movements" to disruptive, or unconventional forms of action, tactics are not exclusive (Scott 1990:132). Movements have been seen to borrow the "insider practices" of interest groups and to use the institutionalized tactics of mainstream politics (Jenkins 1997). Movements, it seems, play on both "institutional" and "movement" repertoires (see Dalton and Kuechler 1990). Dobrowolsky (1997) shows, for example, that feminist constitutional activism in Canada has used insider as well as outsider routes, combining "the tactics of conventional lobbyists, such as the presentation of briefs and meetings with political officials, bureaucrats, and party members" (4) with intra-

movement networking, conferences and meetings, debates in feminist newsletters and press, the occasional protest, and phone and letter campaigns. That "protest" itself has become regulated and may no longer be disruptive is an issue that is increasingly raised (see Zald 1997).

Finally, the outcome of movement claims is a contingent matter that depends not only on the substance of the claims themselves and on the strength of the challenge, but also on the features of the "political opportunity structure" (Tilly 1978). The latter is understood as the receptivity of the political-institutional system to movement demands. According to Tarrow, four different variables affect this receptivity: the degree and extent to which "formal political institutions are open or closed to participation by groups on the margin of the polity," "the stability or instability of political alignments," elites' attitudes towards protest, and "the presence or absence of influential allies" (1989:32-35). Political opportunity structures are permeable to the play of movement, governmental and electoral politics; they shift and change¹⁰.

Involvement in formal politics, it is also argued, requires specific approaches, resources and skills that may not be available to individual movement organizations. In this sense, Diani (1990) points out, structures of co-operation and coalition in movements are important, as they influence the capacity "to exert pressure on the political system." (6) Hathaway and Meyer (1993-94) contend that more attention should be given to the "external effects" of coalition work on the terrain of policy and formal politics (157).

¹⁰ For all these reasons, and because movement pressures can themselves create opportunity, the identification of favorable political opportunity structures is often a post-hoc affair.

c) Constructing movement representations

Since the beginning of the 1980s, "neo-" resource mobilizationists, new social movement theorists and political scientists have converged to give greater weight, if not a central role to movement representations. RM scholars have turned to the study of "collective action frames" and other "schematas of interpretation" (Snow and al. 1986, Benford 1987, Donati 1992, Benford 1993, McCarthy 1994, McAdam 1994). NSM theorists have directed attention towards movement identities, "alternative meanings", and oppositional discourses (Cohen 1983, 1985, Laclau and Mouffe 1985, Touraine 1988, Melucci 1989). Political scientists have shifted away from the study of "ideologies" towards issues of political representation and identity politics (see Young 1990, Jenson 1989b, 1993).

New developments in Marxism and in post-structuralism in particular, favour a closer look at movement representations: at movement identities, claims, analyses, and goals. Tilly (1978) summed up the dilemma of Marxist analyses nicely. Imputing movement interests and goals *a priori* from the social structure often conflicts with the self-understandings of movement actors. Yet the latter, Tilly argued, have to be taken seriously (118-119). More "fluid" versions of Marxism now argue that the existence of "objective" relations of power and domination is insufficient to specify the ways in which these will be resisted or opposed by real-life actors. Interests - as well as goals and identities, for that matter - have to be considered historical, and relative, rather than objective (Hall 1984:26, see also Jenson 1991). Further de-linking identities and projects from "objective positions" in power relations, scholars influenced by post-structuralism stress the discursive politics through which claims and

projects get constructed *via* their articulation to different discourses (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, see also Starn 1992, Slater 1994).

While the symbolic and the discursive are increasingly understood as an intrinsic dimension of the exercise of power, and of struggles for change (see Masson 1997b), the meanings developed by actors to define themselves and make sense of the world acquire a new saliency. "Meanings are acted upon" in ways that have implications for movement constitution, the direction of collective action, the political system, and the daily life of people (Tilly 1978:61, McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1988:727-728, Tarrow 1992:196, Jenson 1993:339-340, Poletta 1994:91-92) Attention must turn to the substance of collective actors' representations, their material force and workings in fields of power relations and struggles, and their variability in time and space (see in particular Escobar and Alvarez 1992, Jenson 1993, Poletta 1994).

How are we to describe movement representations? How are we to trace the processes and politics through which they are produced, deployed, and changed? Regarding issues of substance, social movement theory still lacks adequate methodological frameworks to inquire into the specifics of movement representations. For all the talk about identities, "frames" and "discursive struggles", social movement analysis has tended to bypass the specifics of movement meanings. In an earlier contribution (Masson 1997b), I have suggested that European traditions of language studies, and in particular the work of scholars identified with Critical Discourse Analysis can be helpful in this task.

Issues of process can be examined by setting the inquiry at the level of informal networks, organizations, and intra- and inter-movement

coalitions as the main sites involved in the discursive construction of protest (Melucci 1989, Klandermans 1992, Tarrow 1988, Meyer and Whittier 1994). The politics of these processes of meaning-making and meaning-altering, however, need more empirical attention, notably those involved in the constitution of "internal hegemonies" (Michaud 1995), and those arising from movement interaction with the state. In addition, understanding the constitution and diffusion of specific identities could benefit from Foucauldian-inspired theorizing about the production of "subjectivities".

d) Transforming civil society and everyday life

Contemporary social movements, it has been argued in various ways, redraw the traditional boundaries of the political (Cohen 1983, Laclau and Mouffe 1985, Offe 1985, Melucci 1989, Maier 1987, Cohen and Arato 1992, Alvarez and Escobar 1992, Slater 1994). "The political", in this sense, is no longer attached to struggles directed at state power or mainstream politics. There are two different, sometimes coexisting, understandings of this expanded notion of the political.

First, the political and political struggles are conceptualized to encompass the constitution, exercise, and contestation of a vast array of social relations of power. "Politics", then, are seen to "permeate all social relations" (Alvarez and Escobar 1992:325). Within this type of theorizing, the sites of political struggles are multiplied. "What we wish to point out is that politics, as a practice of creation, reproduction and transformation of social relations, cannot be located at a determinate level of the social" (Laclau and Mouffe 1985:153). There is no need to

subscribe to Foucauldian-inspired perspectives on power as "dispersed and multiple" to hold this position. As feminists of various stripes have long argued, male dominance concretely operates through a variety of sites, discourses, and forms of social relations, all of which are potential objects of feminist struggles and politics. Neo-gramscian analyses, Carroll (1992, 1997) notes, also adhere to a dispersed conception of hegemonic practices, and counter-hegemonic struggles.

This type of theorizing sees movements as struggling to alter the discourses and practical arrangements, cultural codes and social relations through which power relations are exercised and stabilized at the "molecular" level (Melucci 1989), in "micro" processes and sites. In this perspective, daily activities and interventions at the level of everyday life - i.e., of "ways of living and forms of social and personal relationships" (Melucci 1989:77) - are an essential part of the "politics of transformation" led by contemporary movements (Melucci 1989, Alvarez and Escobar 1992, Carroll 1992, Slater 1994). The notion of change in power relations also becomes incremental, contingent, and generally ambiguous rather than massive (i.e., revolutionary), teleological, and straightforward.

Second, movements' "redrawing of the boundaries of the political" is understood as the expansion of movements' political struggles outside the arenas of the state and into civil society. Movements struggle to create, revitalize and defend the democratic public spaces of civil society against the state (Cohen 1983); they act from an "intermediate sphere" to politicize the institutions of civil society and deprivatize social conflicts (Offe 1985). Producing new identities, solidarities, and

categories of public and political discourses, movements bring new issues and actors into the democratic spaces of civil society (Cohen 1983, Laclau and Mouffe 1985, Melucci 1989).

This conceptualization emphasizes movements' transformative action at the level of institutions and public spaces in, or being created in civil society. It is also useful to understand the "politicized", and "politicizing" character of collective action. Movement actions can be said to be politicized or politicizing when they reveal the power relations underlying social arrangements (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, Melucci 1989), or when they bring into public view what was previously private or outside the accepted realm of politics. From this perspective, Sandilands (1997) argues that bringing issues and actors into the public, democratic spaces of civil society and the state for contesting and debating established meanings, social relations and public interventions is what constitutes the politicizing work of movements.

Cohen and Arato (1992) merge in a powerful synthesis these two understandings of "the political" with movements' struggles for inclusion. Contemporary movements, they argue, possess a dual logic (504, 560). First, "an organized, strategically rational *politics of inclusion and reform* that is aimed at political and economic institutions", and second, "a communicative, discursive *politics of identity and influence* that targets civil and political society" (560, my emphasis). "In the case of feminism," they write, this dual politics entails a

focus on overturning concrete forms of life based on male dominance and reinterpreting gender identity [which] complements attempts to secure the influence of new, more egalitarian gender identities within the public spaces of

civil and political society and to attain political inclusion
on these terms. (548)

How these changes in the social relations and public spaces of civil society are achieved, however, remains obscure. In the case of NSM theorists, the production of meta-narratives has too often superseded the analysis of movements themselves. "None of the major new social movement researchers," Tarrow notes, "gave much attention to the empirical forms of collective action" and to the ways of bringing about such changes (1989:65, 71). This kind of top-down theorizing, Adams also writes, "fails to do its homework concerning its object of analysis," that is: "the concrete struggles of new social movements organizations." (1997:40) A closer look at movement action in civil society and on the terrain of "everyday life" is thus advocated.

e) Politics of organizing

The organizational dimension of movements and the dynamics at work in its transformations have been the object of much attention and controversy. The main debate bears on the organizational forms characterizing contemporary movements. Theorists attached to the NSM strand claim that the organizational structures of the "new" social movements embody their political project. New movements, they contend, have rejected "the instrumentally rational patterns of organization of modern capitalist society" (Klandermans 1989:29). From this principled stance, new organizational forms are adopted that include: informality, spontaneity, a refusal of hierarchies, a minimal division of labour and bureaucracy, a preference for small-scale, local organizing, as well as

for collectivist, democratic participatory structures (Offe 1985; Melucci 1989; see also Canel 1992:34, Scott 1990:30-31). The form of the organization is in itself part of the message (Melucci 1989:60): organizing differently, it is proposed, is integral to new movements' practice of prefigurative politics.

Empirical studies, however, demonstrate a much wider range and mix of organizational forms in the so-called new movements (Canel 1992:38, 43, see also Jenkins 1983:542, Staggenborg 1988:590, Buechler 1990:62). If the features highlighted by NSM theorists are characteristic of anything, it has been pointed out, it is of movements' emergence phase, which they unduly reify (Foweraker 1995:44), or of the more radical or "fundamentalist wing" of the movements, with which they are erroneously equated (Scott 1990:154). RM and other scholars suggest that the link between movement projects and organizational forms may be more tenuous. Other variables can play a role in the choice of organizational forms: the substance of goals, preferred strategies and traditions, the influence of third parties (for example, the state), resource levels and sheer scale (Buechler 1990:45, Canel 1992:44).

Part of this debate entails a controversy over the meaning of the formalization and bureaucratization of movement organizing. The Weber-Michels model (or "Iron Law of Oligarchy") contends that, as social movements develop and age, they display bureaucratic structures that concentrate power into the hands of a minority, lead to a shift to organizational maintenance, and to the conservatizing of goals, strategies and tactics. Variants of this position underlie many NSM claims about new movements' organizing, and can also be found in Marxist-influenced work

(for instance, Piven and Cloward 1979). There is strong opposition to this understanding. To be maintained over time, insurgency needs an enduring structure (McAdam 1982:54). Formalized organizations, RM scholars argue, "are better able to maintain themselves" and to carry on "the job of the movement" over a long period of time than informal SMOs, especially in unfavourable contexts (Staggenborg 1988:597-599). Different organizational forms have different strengths and weaknesses (Jenkins 1983:542, Staggenborg 1988:602-603, Buechler 1990:43). Empirical studies can demonstrate no necessary association between bureaucratization - or even oligarchization - and conservatization of SMO's goals (Zald and Ash 1969 [1966]:483, Jenkins 1983:541, Klandermans 1989:27; see also case studies by Staggenborg 1988, Buechler 1990).

Finally, trends towards a "professionalization" and the "middle-class" origin of many contemporary movements' activists raise important yet largely unresolved questions bearing on organizational dynamics. McCarthy and Zald (1973, 1977), for instance, argue that contemporary movements, at least in North America, have become increasingly professionalized. Although professional staff bring much needed resources to movement organizations (know-how and specialized organizational skills), they are also seen as pursuing an agenda of their own (McCarthy and Zald 1977, Piven and Cloward 1979, Staggenborg 1988:595-596). As Tarrow (1989) aptly remarked, the professionalization of movement personnel raises the issue of a possible "gap" between the political goals of the movements' base, and the orientations taken by its leadership¹¹

¹¹ The question is rendered all the more ambiguous, I would like to point out, by the varying theoretical understandings of what "the base" of a social movement or of movement organizations is thought to be: card-

(76). This issue is also raised within the NSM strand. Many NSM analysts claim new movements to be, in various ways, "movements of the new middle classes" (Offe 1985, Eder 1985, Scott 1990, Inglehart 1990, see also review in Bagguley 1992). The political alignment of these classes is hotly debated. Are they "inherently conservative"? (Goldthorpe 1982 cited in Bagguley 1992:37) Or "highly class-unspecific"? (Offe 1985:833) More likely to align with the Left in a "middle-class radicalism"? (Carroll 1997:28) Or are middle-class activists to be found, rather, through the whole political spectrum? (Bagguley 1992) In the absence of definite class interests, Bagguley proposes, the meaning of middle-class leadership resides in the rootedness of these classes into the expansion of "structures of education and knowledge." Educated activists play the role of "intellectuals", he argues (1992:37-40), and in this the "new" movements are not different from the "old", Foweraker adds (1995:45). Are we justified to see in movement intellectuals a simple resource for movement action? Crucially missing is a problematization of the role of the intellectual, or as Yeatman suggests, an inquiry into "the politics of intellectual authority" (1994:27-41).

carrying members of SMOs? "Potential beneficiaries" of movement activity? People who "identify" with the movement? Or other "objective" or "imagined" constituencies?

CHAPTER 3: CONTEXTUALIZING "SERVICES" AND THEIR FUNDING: THE HISTORICAL INTERPLAY OF STATE AND MOVEMENT DYNAMICS IN QUEBEC

Introduction

In social movement theory, concerns for "context" and the contextualization of movement action have been unevenly addressed. With the exception of Tilly, resource mobilization scholars generally study movements without a preoccupation for social structures and macro-processes (Mayer 1991). In the NSM approach, Marxist-influenced perspectives retain a focus on social cleavages and a grounding in structural-material explanations (see for example Offe 1985, see also a review of post-fordist theses in Bagguley 1992) which is shared by neo-Gramscians (Carroll 1992, 1997). Culturalist (see Melucci 1989) and post-materialist theses (see Inglehart 1990) stress the effects of recent societal transformations ("complex society" thesis in Melucci, "advanced industrial society" in Inglehart), but fail to locate movements in the fractured field of power relations (Masson 1997b:60, Bartholomew and Mayer 1992). Finally, post-structuralists such as Laclau and Mouffe (1985) give short shrift to the institutional, political and strategic context of movements' discursive struggles.

Movements and their politics do not occur in a socio-political vacuum. Their study is inseparable from an appreciation of the socio-political context of their action and of the effects of this context on movements themselves. Likewise, instances of state funding have to be located within the historical context and political processes that entered into their genesis. Addressing the issue of context in this dissertation

requires looking at the contemporary transformations of the state and of its relationship to civil society.

There is a difficulty, however, with integrating "more political economy" in concrete studies of social movements. It has a tendency to steer the analysis to easily towards top-down, system- or state-centered, macro-structural explanations. A temptation is definitely present, Carroll underlines, to impute the meaning of movement action "directly from the master narrative of political economy itself rather than by building up an understanding through close observation and theorization of actual movements." (1992:4) The problem is compounded by the liability of many such master narratives to leave very little space for movement agency in the constitution of the macro phenomena that, it is argued, shape and define them. Fortunately, this is not always, or necessarily the case, as some of the most interesting contributions to our understanding of the movement/state relationship in Québec demonstrate.

Favreau (1988) identifies two early traditions in the work on Québec's "popular and community movements". One strand focused on the autonomy of popular and community actors, stressing their production of "new values", their emancipatory potential, and the specificity of their action logic and political projects. The other strand focused on the regulatory and constraining impact of the state, its policies, modes of operation, and attempts at restructuring on movements and their organizations. While the first strand has been criticized for remaining oblivious to the effects of the wider socio-political conjuncture on movement politics, the second has come under fire for overemphasizing the state's capacity to integrate and "co-opt" movements (see Favreau

1988:402-407, Bélanger and Lévesque 1987 159-160, Lévesque and Mager 1992:25, Vaillancourt 1994:239-240).

Taken together, these currents highlight the distinct dynamics (social bases, action logics and projects) characterizing the agency of movement actors, on the one hand, and of "the state", on the other hand. Yet, neither sees the relationship between movements and state as two-sided. More recent work corrects these conceptualizations by offering a view of the movements/state relationship in Québec as the outcome of a partially mutually constitutive - albeit asymmetrical - interplay, that is: as a relationship where both parties find themselves historically shaped by their interaction, while retaining their distinctiveness.

In this chapter, I draw on this last body of work to provide a general account of the sequence of twists and turns through which "service groups" emerged as a form of collective action in Québec's popular and community movements (an ensemble of which women's groups are one part, even if seldom theorized by non-feminist scholars), and through which their funding was established, extended and institutionalized. The processes of constitution and restructuring of the welfare state in Québec and the specific role of movements in these historical developments are at the center of my analysis. In doing so, I will show how state funding of popular and community movements and the larger state projects in which this funding was embedded owed to the struggles for inclusion and democratization waged by popular and community movements. The first section of the chapter offers a general overview of the historical interplay between movement and state dynamics in the politics of the constitution and restructuring of the welfare state in Québec. The second

section gives a more specific account of this story as it was played out in the organization and reform of Québec's *Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux* (MSSS).

3.1: Quebec popular movements and the politics of the welfare state

In this section, I offer a reading of the historical interplay between popular and community movements and the Québec welfare state that highlights their respective dynamics and the way they shaped each other within the unfolding of the politics of welfare state constitution, crisis and restructuring. This reading stresses the importance of movements' politics of representation in the political processes of inclusion, exclusion, and accommodation that contributed to the making of the Québec welfare state. At the same time, I underline the role of inclusionary, exclusionary and accommodating practices of the state in the emergence and expansion of service groups in movement organizing. Drawing on recent interpretations, I also view the increase in state funding for service groups in the 1980s as an element of a particular restructuring strategy arising from the convergence of movement claims and state concerns.

a) Constituting the welfare state, constituting movements

In post-war Western liberal democracies, the establishment of a Keynesian consensus¹ on the forms of redistribution and social solidarity entailed the collectivization, under state management, of a more or less

¹ Also analysed as the "fordist compromise" (see for example in the work of Lévesque and Mager 1992).

extended field of services and social insurance (Quadagno 1987). The political rationale underlying these projects saw the state as the main guarantor of the "basic well-being" of its citizens (Brodie 1994:16). Delayed by years of Duplessis' non-interventionist government, the central elements of a Keynesian welfare state finally took shape in Québec in the 1960s. Throughout the decade and into the first years of the 1970s, the Québec government deployed a vast array of social policies in the domains of education (1960-1968), social benefits (1965, 1969), health and social services (1971), and justice (1972) (Hamel 1991:54, Langlois 1990; see Linteau et al. 1989).

Over this period, the intervention of the Québec state took the form of an expansion of publicly provided welfare featuring a centralized and technocratic mode of administration. In doing so, the Québec state came to assume a central role in welfare arrangements. Not only did it take responsibility for a growing public welfare sector, but its social policies of the 1960s and early 1970s redefined the boundaries and reorganized the relationships between state-, market-, family-, and volunteer-based welfare provision. The role of the voluntary sector, in particular, was greatly diminished as the state took over the institutions and agencies - schools, hospitals, social services - of the religious communities and philanthropic associations that had so far dominated the organization of welfare (Linteau et al. 1989:646). What was created in this process was not only a particular kind of welfare state. It was also a particular configuration of welfare arrangements and modes of welfare

provision: a particular "welfare mix"² in which the welfare state played the determining part.

It has been argued that the "social compromise" (Bélanger and Lévesque 1987, 1992; Lévesque and Mager 1992) obtained between the social and political forces presiding over the constitution of the Québec welfare state was a response to the claims and pressures originating from popular and community organizations. Emerging in working-class urban neighbourhoods as well as in some rural areas in the 1960s, these organizations aimed at representing the interests of the poor and the disadvantaged. They advanced claims for an extension of social rights and for new collective services responsive to the un-met needs of citizens in domains such as housing, urban equipments, social services, health, and education. In short, these were demands for state-provided welfare (*une demande d'Etat-providence*) (Bélanger and Lévesque 1987), thus inscribing popular and community movements in the array of social forces participating in the constitution of the welfare state in Québec.

Welfare state formation in Québec clearly involved a political process of inclusion and exclusion of movement claims. Certain demands were included while others remained excluded from the historically specific features of the new welfare state. Popular and community movements took part in larger mobilizations leading to the extension of social rights and social benefits (Lesemann 1987:56). Some of their

² The notion of "welfare mix" can be considered as roughly equivalent to the concept of "welfare regime" developed by Esping-Andersen and widely used in the contemporary literature on the welfare state. As used here, it integrates the voluntary sector along the state, the market, and the family, a dimension of welfare provision that the Esping-Andersen model skirts (Bussemaker and van Kersbergen 1994:13, see also Evers and Wintersberger 1990).

demands and claims made their way into legislation and social policies in various domains, including: childcare, co-operatives³, and consumer protection. (Hamel 1991:117) "[L]es revendications et les luttes des mouvements (...)," Hamel argues, "ont innové et contribué à contrebalancer le poids de la bureaucratie et à infléchir la formulation des politiques publiques" (1991:118). New state agencies like the *Centres locaux de services communautaires* (CLSCs) in 1971, or *Aide juridique*, in 1972, were modelled on such grassroots experiments as the popular health clinics and legal-aid clinics of the 1960s. The struggles and initiatives of popular and community movements, it is held, directly contributed to the definition of the "state's welfare mandates" (Hamel 1987:286, 1991:117).

Other demands, however, were excluded. Central to the demand for state provision voiced by popular and community movements over this period was a call for the "democratization" of collective services (Bélanger and Lévesque 1992; Hamel 1983, 1991). Movements of the 1960s and early 1970s requested the extension of citizen control over the processes of identification and satisfaction of the needs and rights to be answered through the state. These claims were largely excluded from the constitution of the welfare state in Québec. "*La demande de services collectifs sera satisfaite*", or at least in part, "*mais la demande de démocratisation ne le sera pas (...)*" (Bélanger and Lévesque 1987:255). Movement demands for democratization only found an echo in quickly

³ Most common were housing co-operatives, food co-ops, and "*coopératives de travail*" (co-operatively organized enterprises) (see Bélanger and Lévesque 1987, 1992). Hamel argues that these experiments helped the development of government programmes in support of co-operatives (1991:117).

thwarted experiments in "citizen participation"⁴ (Bélanger and Lévesque 1987:255, White 1992:241).

Both the exclusion of movement demands for democracy and the ways in which the inclusion of movement claims took form and shape in the modes of operation of the Québec state affected movement dynamics. From the late 1960s, popular and community groups increasingly criticized the inadequacy of state programmes (Shragge and Létourneau 1987:19, Hamel 1983:64), the inaction of the state in various domains (Hamel 1991:107), and the "perverse effects" of "state interventionism" and of its bureaucratic, technocratic, and centralized modes of welfare management (Hamel 1983:68, 1987:286, Bélanger and Lévesque 1987:260-262). As dissatisfaction mounted, groups increasingly organized to provide on their own the services they deemed essential, often posing as "alternatives" embodying a critique of state welfare provision (see examples in Bélanger and Lévesque 1992:720-721). As a consequence of their increased investment in "self-provided welfare", the role and place of the voluntary sector in the welfare mix were rejuvenated.

Popular and community movement organizing took on an added dimension by increasingly translating interests, rights and needs of the poor and the marginalized into self-organized, concrete attempts at ameliorating "*les conditions de vie*" (living conditions) of those they claimed to represent. Also central to the new projects of services was the affirmation and the defense of their "autonomy", understood in the twin sense of self-representation and self-direction. In other words, the work

⁴ On the problems of state-led citizen participation experiments, see Godbout (1983).

of political representation and the control of these experiments were to be solely the prerogative of their designated constituencies of users, members, "the community", or "the citizens" (Bélanger and Lévesque 1987:258, 254).

Popular and community groups also exerted pressure on the Québec and Canadian states to obtain resources for the development of community-controlled services (Hamel 1987:286). The expansion of popular and community service organizations found early support in the creation, at the beginning of the 1970s, of a series of Federal and Provincial programmes directed at volunteer organizing: *Projets d'initiative locale* (1971, Employment and Immigration Canada), *Perspectives jeunesse* (1971, Secretary of State of Canada), *Organismes volontaires d'éducation populaire* (1973, Ministère de l'éducation du Québec), *Soutien aux organismes bénévoles* (1973, Ministère des affaires sociales du Québec). Similar funding programmes were also created in the fields of culture, leisure, and communications (Bélanger and Lévesque 1992:722, Hamel 1991:132).

These programmes, it is generally argued⁵, were a response to movement activity. Analysing this funding as a mechanism for taming protest, however, is inadequate (see criticism in Pal 1993:42-58). True, in the face of student, feminist, and antiwar unrest, "some kind of response was necessary" (268). According to Pal, the ideals of "social animation" and "citizen participation" on which Federal funding programmes of the 1960s and early 1970s were based held implications for socio-

⁵ See review in Pal (1993); see also Bélanger et Lévesque (1987, 1992), Hamel (1991).

political action. On the one hand, these programmes were deliberate attempts to foster and channel collective action towards state-defined objectives (103). Thus, they operated to mobilize "citizen participation" in different state projects that, it shall be noted, often owed directly to movement claims (for example: social development, urban renewal, and the like). On the other hand, they did provide material and symbolic support for organizing. These programmes, Pal underlines, accommodated actors representing "the poor, the marginalized and the otherwise disadvantaged" into the political process, and created new possibilities for "dissent and occasional confrontations" (251).

Similarly, Bélanger and Lévesque argue that Provincial funding programmes expressed the establishment of a "social compromise" between movements and the state (1987, 1992). Rather than being excluded outright, demands for services and for democratization were accommodated "at the margins", through the definition of a particular relationship with the community sector. Funding programmes of the 1970s were a pro-active response to the effervescence of movement activity that enrolled community-based initiatives in a variety of state projects. At the same time, this funding institutionalized the coexistence of the democratic experiments of popular and community services along with state service provision. Admittedly lax, the conditions of this funding contributed to consolidate, Bélanger and Lévesque further contend, community control over the alternatives thereby constituted (1992:723).

Throughout the 1970s, service groups diversified - from popular education groups to housing co-ops, community radios, non-profit day-care centers and women's service groups - and proliferated. What has been

called "the turn to services" of the popular and community movements points to a progressive transformation of the movement sector in which self-organized service provision became the dominant form of collective action⁶. The political inclusion represented by state funding, however, remained fragile, as witnessed by the precarious character of this funding itself. In the context of the crisis of the welfare state, this funding relationship took on a new meaning.

b) Crisis, restructuring, and the place of movements

It is a widely shared view that the economic crises of the 1970s and the deepening of the recession in the early 1980s have contributed to foster a "crisis of the welfare state". In Québec as well as in other Western industrialized countries, this crisis took the form of both a "fiscal crisis" and a "crisis of legitimacy" (Godbout and Paradeise 1988, Hamel 1991:57, Cloutier and Hamel 1991:262).

What has been called the "fiscal crisis" of the welfare state points to the effects on public finances of the wider economic crisis. It also underscores the financial cost for states of maintaining a logic of state interventionism and of keeping up with an unrelenting social demand according to the core assumption of the Keynesian welfare state: its responsibility for meeting the welfare needs of its citizens. This assumption fuelled ever-expanding and cost-escalating welfare provisions. *"L'état-providence est débordé par la dynamique propre de la structure de besoins à satisfaire qu'il s'est donnée (...)"* (Godbout and Paradeise

⁶ For a review of the various interpretations of this "turn to services", see Bélanger and Lévesque (1987).

1988:100). Under this challenge, the very legitimacy of the welfare state was ultimately put into question, as the twin principles of universality of access, and of large-scale state-provided welfare increasingly came under fire.

In Québec, failure to keep costs down and the inadequacy of state welfare programmes and modes of intervention were increasingly criticized from the mid-1970s onwards. This critique was voiced with important variations in content by a diversity of social actors: the "political class" and business people, welfare managers and beneficiaries, popular and community groups (Cloutier and Hamel 1991:262, Bélanger and Lévesque 1992:725). Among these groups emerged a consensus on the necessity of restructuring, that is: on the urgency to revise *"les priorités et les modes d'intervention étatique de gestion du social, tels qu'ils ont été mis en place sous l'égide de l'Etat-providence"* (Hamel 1993a:174; also Bélanger and Lévesque 1992:724-725). Views on what this revision should entail, however, varied greatly.

The deployment of the fiscal and legitimacy crises of the welfare state pushed state actors to redefine the welfare role of the state. Among Québec government officials and technocratic elites, monetarist theses that put state interventionism into question gained a new salience (see Lesemann 1987:58-59). A governmental discourse stressing "the fiscal limits of public expenses" emerged, and with it diverse attempts at restructuring. *"Gestionnaires et responsables politiques [sont conduits] à explorer ou formuler des réponses et des ajustements dans plusieurs secteurs"* (Hamel 1991:57).

Throughout the 1980s, various elements of a restructuring project

became discernible in different areas of social policy. Governmental priorities were re-evaluated. Principles and modalities of social redistribution were questioned. Cuts in social programmes were made to reduce or at least pre-empt the growth of the public sector (Shragge and Létourneau 1987:9). A movement away from previous welfare commitments was discernible, yet this "disengagement of the state" did not translate into a crude retreat from welfare provision but, rather, into diverse reorganizations of public benefits, service provision and their administration. These attempts were not necessarily co-ordinated, especially at first, nor did they always immediately translate into policy changes. The tendencies observed were sometimes contradictory, as Hamel notes (1992:135): the continuation of Keynesian-inspired policies often coexisted with the reorganizing of others along neo-liberal lines⁷.

This should be no surprise. "Restructuring," as Brodie comments, "represents a prolonged and conflict-ridden political process" (1994:9). Scholars from some of the main approaches in welfare studies have long contended that processes of composition and recomposition of liberal-democratic welfare states cannot be analysed from a purely structural, economic, or deterministic point of view⁸. Restructuring, it follows, should more fruitfully be considered as a historical and political process whose outcomes are variable, and contingent on the balance of forces that

⁷ The case of the restructuring of health and social services provision at MSSS, which is the object of the next section, illustrates this combination of contradictory tendencies.

⁸ This position is characteristic of the French regulation school in political economy, of the "power resources" school in welfare studies, and of feminist scholars from the "social citizenship perspective" (see Orloff 1993 for a brief review).

obtains between the actors involved. This is to say that "politics matters", and that the specific forms taken by concrete welfare arrangements should be analysed as the outcome of particular configurations of social and political forces (Esping-Andersen 1989) and of the representational strategies of concrete actors (Hamel 1993a:174, Jenson 1989a).

Fuelling the political process of restructuring in Québec were, among other pressures, the increase, diversification and fragmentation of the social demand for welfare resulting from the impact of the economic crisis on the population (Hamel 1993b:13-15). Added to this pressure was the ceaseless representation of claims on behalf of old and newly socially disenfranchised groups by a growing number of - often state-funded - popular and community organizations (Cloutier and Hamel 1991:260-262, Bélanger and Lévesque 1992:725). Restructuring, Hamel insists, could not be simply limited to cost-cutting efforts to solve the fiscal crisis of the state. Restructuring attempts also faced legitimacy challenges, among which were those posed by unanswered needs and claims for welfare⁹. *"Ultimement, ce qui est en cause, c'est la nécessité pour l'Etat de générer un nouveau consensus social dans le contexte de crise."* (1987:288) In this perspective, Hamel further contends, the "institutional redeployment of the welfare state" could not be realized without *"la participation et l'assentiment des citoyens"* (1993a:185).

In the Québec case, securing citizens' participation and consent

⁹ As noted in Quadagno, socio-economic dislocation does not automatically trigger welfare expenditures (1987:113). Organized political pressure mediating "needs" and carrying demands is more susceptible to mount an effective challenge to state legitimacy and to elicit a response (e.g. "the social democratic thesis" in welfare state theory).

involved a new turn towards a "localization of social solidarities" (Lévesque and Mager 1992:28), that is: towards the local level, "the citizen", and volunteer organizations (Hamel 1991:58-61). One of the avenues taken by the Québec government was "*un appel actif au communautaire*" (Hamel 1987:288) in areas such as employment, adult education, health, and social services (Hamel 1991:59). This active recourse to the community sector was mostly expressed in the augmentation of the financial resources granted to popular and community organizations in the 1970s (Hamel 1983:65), a trend which intensified in the 1980s (Hamel 1991:125-147). This trend was not merely an accentuation of the earlier "compromise around funding" identified by Bélanger and Lévesque. It took on a new meaning as it became a "systematic feature" (Hamel 1991:59) of concrete state projects of restructuring.

Commentators agree that one of the main avenues of restructuring that slowly emerged throughout the 1980s was a strategy of "*communautarisation*" that took the form of institutionalized, state-funded partnerships between state agencies and Québec's numerous popular and community organizations. Restructuring involved a significant redefinition of the boundaries, and a reorganization of the relationship between the state and the voluntary sectors of welfare provision (Hamel 1991, 1993a, Cloutier and Hamel 1991). Yet, rather than a straightforward "disengagement" in which welfare responsibilities were shifted to the voluntary sector, the active recourse to the community sector took various forms. Although disengagement sometimes occurred, the new "partnerships" generally entailed a sharing of responsibilities in which co-provision was ensured by parallel networks of state and community providers. Dramatic

increases in state funding cemented the new association between state- and community-provided welfare while new political discourses and policies organized this new relationship.

The initiative about the new funding of community service organizations undoubtedly rested in the hands of Québec government and state officials. The asymmetry in the relationship between movements and states cannot be ignored. Yet, these changes owed much to movement dynamics (Favreau 1988, Hamel 1991, Bélanger and Lévesque 1992, Vaillancourt 1994). Popular and community movements of the 1980s carried a "demand for democratization" (Bélanger and Lévesque 1992:721, also Favreau 1988:407). Despite changes in the forms of activism, the politics of these organizations remained anchored in the articulation and defense of the marginalized interests, needs and rights of the social groups or populations they claimed to represent (Lesemann 1988b:142, Hamel 1993b). Beyond simply "doing services", their political projects encompassed a politics of representation aimed at the inclusion of claims, demands, needs and rights in welfare processes (Lustiger-Thaler and Shragge 1993), and of community groups themselves as legitimate actors in welfare politics. This demand for democratization also included a request for a "broadening of civil responsibilities" (Hamel 1983:69) and for community control over welfare provision, a request grounded in the practice of organizations that had already reclaimed an extended role for the voluntary sector in welfare arrangements.

The politics of representation of popular and community groups, their successful experiments in self-managed welfare, and the institutional traditions of funding inherited from an earlier period

(Bélanger and Lévesque 1992:735) all provided a basis for the establishment of a new relationship between the Québec welfare state and popular and community service groups. These changes can be interpreted in terms of the historical interplay, or "mutual reinforcement" of both state and movements dynamics (Hamel 1991:131). The systematization of state funding to local service groups in the 1980s materialized from a convergence between dynamics of state restructuring in which fiscal and legitimacy concerns exacerbated "*les limites de la gestion étatique des services collectifs*" (Bélanger and Lévesque 1992:722) and the dynamics of the demand for democratization that marked the movement sector. Nowhere was the new relationship between the state and community-based organizations more apparent than at the Québec *Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux* (MSSS).

3.2: Welfare state formation and restructuring at MSSS

This section provides contextual information on the funding of women's service groups by tracing the history of the creation and transformation of the funding of popular and community service organizations at MAS/MSSS¹⁰. I begin with the central tenets of the 1971 "Castonguay Reform" on whose institutional legacies later attempts at restructuring unfolded. The remainder of the section examines the project of restructuring that took shape at MAS/MSSS in the 1980s. I focus on the

¹⁰ *Ministère des affaires sociales (MAS)* changed its name for *Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux (MSSS)* in 1985. The acronym MAS refers to the Ministry before 1985; MSSS after. I use "MAS/MSSS" in chronologically encompassing statements.

progressive definition of a "communautarization" strategy that associated selected organizations from the popular, community, and women's movement with a reorganization of health and social services provision.

a) The Castonguay Reform: organizing health and social services in Québec

In 1966, the Québec government constituted a *Commission d'enquête sur la santé et le bien-être social*, the Castonguay-Nepveu Commission. Its mandate included the elaboration of a publicly-provided system of medical insurance to complement earlier Federal (1958) and provincial (1961) programmes of "assurance-hospitalisation" (i.e., medicare). More importantly, it aimed at a major reform of the varied, disparate, and unequal provision of services assumed by an unco-ordinated ensemble of private institutions, mostly controlled by Québec's religious communities (Linteau et al. 1989:644, White 1993:82). Finally, its mandate included a request for the development of mechanisms to ensure "citizen participation" (White 1992:233).

The Castonguay Reform that followed comprised the implementation of the 1970 medical insurance scheme, and the adoption, in 1971, of the *Loi sur la santé et les services sociaux*. The latter put in place a system of universal, standardized, and publicly-funded and delivered services. The newly formed *Ministère des affaires sociales* (MAS) co-ordinated service provision within an all-encompassing new regime. Almost all institutions providing health or social services, White points out, were incorporated within the state apparatus (1992:233). The reform "*voulait encadrer et coordonner tous les services de santé et tous les services sociaux offerts à la population.*" (Langlois et al. 1990:307, my emphasis) It also aimed at

responding to "all the needs of the population" (White 1992:225). The organization of the system was based on principles of scientific management, administrative rationalization, and of centralized, hierarchical decision-making procedures (Bergeron 1990): "*l'initiative devait représenter un triomphe de la planification sociale*" (White 1992:225).

The reform was broader in scope, and the resulting system more highly centralized than in similar reorganizations occurring in other Canadian provinces over the same period. "*La réforme québécoise s'avérait beaucoup plus interventionniste, touchant directement le statut, l'administration et la mission de tout établissement offrant des services de santé ou des services sociaux.*" (White 1992:233)¹¹.

The reform also systematically associated "health" services and "social" services. "*Un des aspects les plus originaux de la réforme Castonguay était son objectif de traiter les problèmes de santé et les problèmes sociaux comme indissociables*" (White 1992:241). It extended the notion of "public health" from the medical to the social realm of intervention. It stressed the importance of prevention, social development and other means of amelioration of public health (White 1992:241, Lesemann 1987:45). The creation of *Centres locaux de services communautaires* (CLSCs) embodied this association of curative and social services. This new notion of public health was also accompanied by a discourse of community health aimed at enrolling "the citizen" in the implementation of the reform project (White 1992:240).

¹¹ A comparison with Ontario, for example, shows that reforms were more gradual, and that institutions retained a greater degree of autonomy (see White 1992:234).

The reform set up new institutional mechanisms of citizen participation. "Users" and "citizens" were granted formal representation on the administrative boards of health and social services institutions (hospitals, CLSCs, etc.). Through these mechanisms, citizens and users could take part in local processes of needs interpretation (i.e., "*la définition locale des besoins de première ligne*" - White 1992:240), thus ensuring a better adjustment of public services to "the social demand". Another mechanism for enrolling citizens within the particular project represented by the reform was, I propose, the creation in 1973 of the *Programme de soutien aux organismes privés et bénévoles de services sociaux et de santé*.

This programme, which became known as the "*Programme de soutien aux organismes communautaires*" (SOC), financed community-based experiments in health and social services. In the SOC program, citizen participation was articulated as "the representation of community interests" (MSSS-SOC 1978-79). "The development of the health and social services sector" (MSSS-SOC 1978-79 to 1983-84) was the main goal towards which citizens' involvement was solicited. The SOC guidelines were explicit in this regard. The Ministry's interest in community organizations rested on their capacity to innovate, and for the methods, approaches and knowledges that it sought to acquire therefrom. Through the SOC programme, MSSS enrolled community organizations in a process of welfare state formation. Yet at the same time, the programme also supported the development, alongside state welfare, of community-controlled initiatives, that is: of collective actors organizing around new needs and claiming new rights.

Initially, the SOC programme was small. Disposing of a budget of

less than a million dollars in 1973 (MSSS-SOC 1989-90:2), the programme still distributed only 1.5 million to a mere fifty organizations in 1977-78 (Personnel du SSOC 1986:17). As crisis tendencies emerged in the field of health and social services, the extent and the meaning of this funding progressively changed.

b) Restructuring at MSSS: a turn to *le communautaire*

The development of the network of institutions and programmes of the new public system of health and social services took place throughout the 1970s. Expenses grew accordingly and took up an increasing portion - close to one fourth, according to Bergeron (1990:367) - of the province's budget (Langlois et al. 1990:308). The economic recession at the beginning of the 1980s significantly affected the budgetary equilibrium of the Québec government (Lesemann 1988a:125), and already existing concerns for cost escalation in the field of health and social services became more acute.

From then on, a new awareness of a "crisis" in public finances fostered the application of measures aimed at reducing or controlling expenses. For the first time in 1982, the budget of the *Ministère des affaires sociales* was cut (White 1993:83). The development of the system was stalled: "*non-parachèvement du réseau des CLSC, arrêt de la construction des centres d'accueil*" (Lamoureux and Lesemann 1987:37). De-institutionalization and "*maintien à domicile*" policies for the handicapped, the elderly, and chronically or mentally ill patients were pursued (Lesemann 1988a:127). The crisis also prompted the search for new welfare arrangements. Privatization was suggested, especially under the mandate of the Liberal government (c.f. Rapport Gobeil 1986 in

Vaillancourt 1987:94-95). The individual responsibilities of "the citizen" in the achievement of public health objectives were stressed anew (Lamoureux and Lesemann 1987:37). The contribution of "*le bénévolat*" (volunteer work) to communities' welfare was also "rediscovered"¹². This rediscovery was expressed in a ministerial discourse favourable to supporting volunteer-organized services (for examples see Lamoureux and Lesemann 1987:27-29, Vaillancourt 1987:90-94).

Not only was a "communitarist discourse" developed in ministerial documents since 1979 (Vaillancourt 1987:90-94), but an active recourse to "*le communautaire*" progressively took shape through funding at the SOC. Following the implementation of a provincial policy of "*maintien à domicile*" in 1979, funding for volunteer and community organizations operating in this field was inaugurated within the SOC programme, adding an estimated five million dollars to its 1979-80 budget (Vaillancourt 1987:98). The *maintien à domicile* policy was the first instance, Vaillancourt argues, of a strategy of communitarization of state responsibilities, articulated within a discourse stressing "the limits of public services" and the necessity of communities' own "*prise en charge*" (self-reliance) (1987:90-91).

Throughout the 1980s, the budget of the SOC programme grew not only regularly, but sharply. It rose from 1.5 million dollars in 1977-78 (Personnel du SSOC 1986:17) to more than 25 millions in 1986-87 (Tremblay 1987:53), and to 51 millions in 1991-92 (MSSS-SOC 1992-93:7). The number

¹² This notable "rediscovery" of the economic contribution of voluntary action by politicians and government officials also occurred more largely at the Federal and Provincial levels (for examples see Hamel 1991:58-59).

of SOC funded community organizations increased accordingly, from 50 in 1977-80 to 955 in 1986-87 (Personnel du SSOC 1986:17, Tremblay 1987:53).

Revised yearly between 1984-85 and 1989-90, the language of the programme moved away from its earlier orientation, testimony to the Ministry's recognition of "the importance and the necessity of community action"¹³ (MSSS-SOC 1984-85 to 1989-90). Community organizations were presented as the expression of responsible citizenship. The programme emphasized "citizens' participation in the development of their communities" (1987-88) and in "their own welfare" (1988-89) by "taking charge of themselves" (1984-85/1989-90) and ensuring the "quality of the social fabric" that was the "guarantee" of social "solidarity" (1988-89).

Remarkably curt and dry, the once-more-revised 1989-90 version of the guidelines' opening statement cut to the point:

Malgré la gamme des services généraux et spécialisés que l'État dispense dans son réseau public d'établissements, il est nécessaire que les citoyens et citoyennes se prennent en charge et soient responsables de leur santé et de leur bien-être.

Pour favoriser cette prise en charge, le Ministère croit aux efforts déployés par de très nombreux organismes et souhaite encourager ces actions par un programme de soutien aux initiatives de la communauté. (MSSS-SOC 1989-90 to 1993-94) (my emphasis)

In short, it was now the citizens' responsibility to organize at the community level in order to overcome the limits of state welfare provision.

While increases in the SOC budget and transformations of the

¹³ Unless otherwise indicated, all English quotations of French material from MSSS, SLSJ groups, or other sources are my translation.

language of the SOC programme indicate that a "communautarization" strategy was taking hold in the practices of the Ministry, this transformation was not a comprehensive, coherent policy on the part of MSSS until the Reform of 1991. Rather, the development of a new articulation of state and volunteer-based service provision was a gradual and uneven process that occurred sectorially within the SOC programme. Its progressive unfolding is more accurately to be understood, as outlined in the previous section, as the outcome of the convergence of fiscal and legitimacy concerns on the part of the government and of the Ministry, with a series of organized political pressures for services from different social groups and of demands for funding by popular, community, and women's service groups.

In part, the increase in SOC budgets, Tremblay notes (1987:1-2), can be attributed to these general pressures, as well as to successful efforts of youth, the elderly, and women's organizations, in particular, for gaining recognition by the Ministry for the needs they articulated and securing funding for the services they operated¹⁴. Underscoring the permeability of the SOC to politically organized pressure is not to say that MSSS' response was a direct, or transparent one. The expansion of SOC funding in the direction of youth, women, and *maintien à domicile* sectors was not the straightforward reflection of "social needs", nor of people's organizing in the field of health and social services. Other groups too struggled for recognition and inclusion, but were less successful.

Ministerial priorities and modes of operation mediated the outcomes

¹⁴ The specific struggles of women's organizations I will present in the next chapter.

of these pressures. For example, MSSS favoured the funding of services directed at particular social groups - or "clienteles" (Tremblay 1987:75). Funding went to services that either aimed at specific categories of people increasingly constructed by the Ministry as "target-groups" or "risk-populations" (see Lesemann 1987:64-65), or that were amenable to being understood in these terms. Funding for the heterogeneous, and largely non-specialized "*services à la communauté*" sector declined throughout the 1980s, while numbers for more "specialized" types of services increased (Tremblay 1987:75). In addition, Hamel remarks, SOC funding favoured "*les organismes qui font de l'hébergement et de l'accompagnement clinique plutôt que les organismes dont l'intervention porte sur l'entraide et l'aide ponctuelle*"¹⁵ (1991:129).

These trends show that MSSS' "turn to the community sector" was not an undifferentiated, but more a selective process of inclusion of specific claims and services. Emerging as it did from a series of uncoordinated and disparate measures, it was only in the wake of the work of the Rochon Commission that this turn became more clearly articulated as the development of an explicit strategy of communautarization of welfare responsibilities within a larger project of restructuring the organization of health and social services.

MSSS' fledgling "project of restructuring" was given official letters of credence with the creation, in June of 1985, of the *Commission d'enquête sur les services de santé et les services sociaux*, or Rochon Commission. In creating the Commission, the Québec government expressed

¹⁵ The latter organizations represented 39% of SOC beneficiary groups, yet they received only 13% of the SOC's total budget (Hamel 1991:129).

its desire for a comprehensive reform of health and social service provision rather than for piecemeal expedients or sector-based reorganizations. The work of the Commission, which lasted from January 1986 to December 1987 (Bergeron 1990:368), aimed to establish a broad social consensus on the transformation of Québec's health and social services (Lesemann 1988b:138, 143). The Commission's hearings became the stage for a major political debate in which a variety of different actors participated. The Commission's report, published in 1988, illustrates the ambiguities and compromises entailed by attempts at "restructuring the welfare state," as well as the institutionalization of a new "partnership" with *le communautaire*.

Although formulated at a crucial moment where "*les questions de la légitimité de l'intervention de l'Etat et du caractère strictement public du système de services sont plus que jamais posées*" (Lesemann 1988b:139), the Commission's recommendations reaffirmed the main tenets of the Castonguay Reform. "[C]e n'est pas l'ensemble du système qui est en cause", its report stated, "*mais sa capacité d'adaptation*" (Commission Rochon, quoted in Lesemann 1988b:138). Principles of universality and accessibility were maintained (J. Lamoureux 1988:167, Table ronde 1988:145), as well as the state's role as the main guarantor of the welfare of the population (J. Lamoureux 1988:167; Lesemann 1988b:138).

These recommendations, many commentators note, largely reaffirmed a Keynesian, state-centered model of welfare provision (J. Lamoureux 1988, Lesemann 1988b, Table ronde 1988, Bergeron 1990). The report also expressed resistances to neo-liberal strategies of restructuring (Vaillancourt 1989 in Bergeron 1990:371; ICEA in J. Lamoureux 1988:167) -

in particular through its refusal to impose users' fees or to privatize state services (Table ronde 1988:146-147). Still, a more ambiguous combination of reproduction and change characterized the project of restructuring encapsulated in the report of the Commission.

First, the "quasi-illimited" social demand, seen as largely responsible for the escalation of costs, was to be tamed by redoubled efforts at specifying objectives and targeting programmes. This technocratic approach to the government of populations and its focus on risk management (Lesemann 1988b:138) had been part of the Ministry's repertoire since the mid-1970s (see Lesemann 1987:64-65). The systematic use of such "technologies of governmentality" has been analysed elsewhere as a central element of neo-liberal restructuring projects (see Miller and Rose 1990). Second, the Commission recognized that despite the intensification of "targeting" efforts the system did not possess "the flexibility, the capacity of innovation and the financial means" to respond adequately to the pressure of this growing and increasingly diversified demand (White 1992:225). Having ruled out recourse to market mechanisms - to private enterprise and to re-commodification - to ensure, at a lesser cost for the state, the flexibility and innovation required by the transformations of social demand, the Commission turned to the voluntary sector.

In addition to MSSS' rediscovery of the virtues of the voluntary sector, the strong representation of community organizations to the Commission's hearings - 300 of the 800 briefs submitted (J. Lamoureux 1988:163) - certainly contributed to the Commission's heightened sensitivity to "*le communautaire*". The importance of community initiatives

in service provision was recognized as "major". "[P]ar l'étendue et la valeur de leur engagement, les organismes communautaires apparaissent comme une des composantes majeures du système de services dans le domaine social et sanitaire" (Commission's Report, quoted in J. Lamoureux 1988:164).

As a result, the Commission's recommendations included the implementation of renewable three-year funding plans to support community service organizations, and their "association" to the realization of state programmes under the terms of specific "*contrats de services*" (service contracts). In addition, community organizations would gain representation in the decision-making processes that would be devolved to the new "*régies régionales*" (Regional Boards) (J. Lamoureux 1988:165).

Indeed, the recommendations of the Commission entailed a reconfiguration of the welfare mix in the field of health and social services. On the one hand, the Ministry maintained a central position in the planning, integration, co-ordination, and regulation of a "new mix" of state and non-state components and modes of service provision. On the other, the establishment of state funded partnerships with community organizations allowed governmental commitments to specific types and levels of health and social service provision to be maintained¹⁶ without the costs associated with the operation of publicly-provided services.

The gradual entrenchment and standardizing of MSSS funding to women's service organizations took place in this context of responding to

¹⁶ In particular the services associated with "the social aspects of the system", notably the dimensions of social integration and of social development (i.e., prevention, amelioration, innovation) that had been weakened since the Castonguay Reform (White 1992, Lesemann 1987, Table ronde 1988).

socio-political pressures from different social groups and movements, and of experimenting with various options for organizing welfare provision. As I will make clear in the next chapter, the funding of women's services was a significant part of what retrospectively can be seen as the progressive unfolding of the "turn to the community sector" at MSSS. The funding of women's services, as well as the 1985 *Politique d'aide* that institutionalized it, was one of the concrete experiments that prefigured, with some variations, one of the main arrangements through which restructuring finally crystallized in the new *Loi sur les services de santé et des services sociaux (Loi 120)*, in 1991, that is: a state-funded association with "autonomous partners" from the community.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I showed how popular and community movements and the Québec welfare state shaped each other within a historical, dynamic, and partially mutually constitutive interplay. Movements' engagement in a politics of self-managed services was an answer to state processes of inclusion and exclusion of politically organized claims from civil society. The state project of restructuring in which women's service groups funding was inscribed was the outcome of a convergence of state and movement dynamics. More precisely, it was the contingent result of a combination of crisis factors in the liberal-democratic welfare state and of movement struggles characterized by a demand for the inclusion of movement claims, issues, actors, and self-managed experiments in welfare politics.

The traditions of state funding to popular, community and women's organizations in Québec as well as the transformations of this funding in the restructuring of the welfare state in Québec, and at MSSS in particular, arose in specific historical interplays of movement struggles and state processes of inclusion, exclusion and mediation of organized political demands. Through their role in these politics, I argue, movements have contributed to shape the very context and the institutional terrain in which the question of their funding was embedded.

There are pitfalls, however, with further using this "movements and restructuring" approach for this dissertation. Two different problems arise if the meaning of movement activity is imputed from the master narrative of welfare state restructuring, no matter how much space is given to movement agency. First, such an analysis channels our understanding in terms of "welfare". In so doing, it overlooks important dimensions of movement activity. The projects of Québec movement organizations in the 1980s, for example, extended beyond self-managed and critical interventions in the domain of welfare towards a broader field of mainstream social and political issues (Hamel 1993a:183). They also extended beyond the political arena of the state towards the spaces of "the local", "the community", and of "micro relations of power" (Favreau 1992:209). Adopting a movement perspective on movement activity, I propose, requires de-centering welfare issues to the benefit of the larger field of movement politics.

Second, there remains a profound theoretical problem in reducing movements based on ostensibly non-capitalist relations of power - as, for example, women's movements - to the dynamics of the welfare state. As

acknowledged by Barry Adams:

Theorizing about the new social movements, then, needs to recognize that the differentiation and formation of subordinated categories of people are both a *part of* and *apart from* the political economy of advanced capitalism. (1997:48)

The context of welfare state restructuring, it follows, is only a part of the context of shifting relations of power in which the struggles of movements that are both a *part of and apart from* the political economy of advanced capitalism are engaged. To fully understand their struggles then, we need to broaden the notion of political economy by "listening to movements", to their goals, analyses and targets, and to the meanings they themselves attach to their actions.

CHAPTER 4: FIGHTING FOR FUNDING AND FOR RECOGNITION AT MSSS

Introduction

Scholars from the resource mobilization strand of social movement theory consider that routinizing the mobilization of resources is essential for movements. Not only have movement organizations to maintain themselves, but routinizing resources is necessary for the development and deployment of movement politics on additional registers, that is, beyond organizational survival or simple maintenance. "Only if survival is insured can other goals be pursued." (McCarthy and Zald 1977:1226). One of the main challenges facing maturing movements and their organizations is, according to McAdam, McCarthy and Zald, "to establish routine flow of resources into the organization" (1988:725).

In the case of women's services, important constraints affected the routinization of resources from "the grassroots". Services made strong demands on basic resources such as space and womanpower. Shelters, rape crisis centers and women's centers were defined as "women's spaces", that is, as places where women could go in times of need, and where a variety of movement activities could also take place. Early reliance on makeshift arrangements was supplanted by more permanent physical settings, accessible to the women of the community and open most of the year or year-round. "Doing services the women's movement way" also required an emotionally intensive and physically extensive labour (sometimes twenty-four hours a day) by movement personnel engaged in direct service action (on this see Schecter 1982, Dobash and Dobash 1992). In many places,

women's demands for services and the bare necessities of organizing rapidly outstripped the resources obtained from activists and volunteers, as well as the financial contributions from members, direct beneficiaries, local communities and charities. There were but two choices: to turn to the state, or fold.

In the cases documented by Schechter (1982), D. Lamoureux (1988), McFerren (1990), Dobash and Dobash (1992), and Matthews (1994), the main strategic response of women's service organizations to the critical imperative of mobilizing the resources necessary for sheer survival was to seek state funding. Complete avoidance of state funds, although promoted in radical feminist circles throughout the 1970s, proved not to be a feasible option. Dorothy Smith well captured the problem: "not to seek funding [...] often means that we don't do anything" (Smith 1977 cited in Adamson, Briskin and McPhail 1988:196). Only a few women's service organizations systematically refused or avoided state funding. Typically they became marginalized and did not survive (see examples in Matthews 1995:295-298, Dobash and Dobash 1992:42, also in Schechter 1982).

The significance of the strategic battles for state funding led by women's service groups is too often ignored. Some authors just gloss over these struggles: funds were somehow bestowed on women's service organizations - funding "became available", there was an "explosion of funding" for women's groups. Others, however, rightly point to the active involvement of women's groups and their allies in the development of funding policies and programmes for women's organizations. Securing and routinizing a steady flow of funds from state sources towards women's services has been the object of sustained efforts by women's movement

actors in Canada (see Gilman 1988, Hilton 1989, Schraeder 1990, Kenny and Magnússen 1993), the United States (Schechter 1982, Matthews 1994, 1995, Reinelt 1995), Australia (Auer 1990, McFerren 1990), and Britain (Dobash and Dobash 1992). Yet, few of these studies examine how subsequent funding policies and programmes were marked by this engagement, or analyse the implications of such inscriptions on the politics of state-funded women's groups. Fewer still indicate that state funding, when it is claimed as well as when it is granted, is not just about money but about inclusion. Securing state funding is also about obtaining recognition, establishing legitimacy, and democratizing mainstream politics. The demands for funding of women's service groups, Schechter (1982) and Reinelt (1995) remark, have been associated with struggles for the public recognition of the issues and analyses put forward by women's movements.

In this chapter, I trace the "battle for state funding" led by Québec shelters, CALACS, and women's centers from the end of the 1970s throughout the 1980s. I show that their funding by MSSS was not there for the asking, but was established and formalized through a protracted process of representation and struggle. Moving away from the broader context of this funding presented in the previous chapter, I explore the theoretical possibility for women's movements to "shape the state" through engagement in politics of representation. My analysis documents the political processes through which the funding of women's services took shape historically at MSSS, foregrounding movement actors and the substance of their representations and claims, the structure of political opportunities, the role of allies, the tactics employed, and the characteristics of MSSS' response. Stressing the role of the provincial

Regroupements and of "state feminism" in these politics of representation, I argue those movement actors and allies indeed "made a difference" in the way such politics unfolded at MSSS. More explicitly, I contend that they contributed to shape the state projects and institutional forms that framed the funding of women's services.

The struggles of women's service groups, I also underline, went beyond the simple issue of funding. At stake in these politics were fundamental issues of political inclusion. Entwined with demands for funding were demands for the recognition of women's service organizations as legitimate political actors and service providers in the arenas of women's welfare, as well as the recognition of the issues, analyses, and solutions they put forward. Also at stake for women's service groups was the protection of their political, programmatic, and administrative autonomy in their relationship with MSSS. Showing concretely how and to what extent these demands were incorporated at MSSS - that is, what was included and what was mediated and how, and with what kind of consequences - supports my broader argument on the constitutive effect of political struggles on the external conditions (i.e., funding) in which local women's groups operated. More details on these inclusions and mediations will be provided in subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

4.1: Fighting for funding, inclusion, and autonomy

In this section, I focus on the processes of collective representation through which women's service groups sought inclusion at MSSS. Requests for a formalized funding relationship were central to the

political representations made by the *Regroupements*. Together with claims for "*reconnaissance*" (recognition), they formed a demand for political inclusion of new rights and needs, as well as for the inclusion of women's service groups as legitimate actors in the field of welfare. The notion of "autonomy" was inseparable from this demand for inclusion, and the main stake in this encounter.

Women's service groups of the 1970s relied on a combination of volunteer or militant labour, local donations, and state funding from short-term Federal employment development programmes such as *Projets d'initiative locale* and *Canada au Travail* (Regroupement québécois des CALACS 1993:29; Regroupement provincial des maisons [1983]:2, Beaudry 1984:18, Fournier and Gagnon 1991:295; also Côté 1994:3, Brodeur et al. 1982:33). Rapidly these sources became insufficient to ensure the stability and continuity of women's service initiatives. At the end of the seventies, activists experienced major difficulties in securing the resources necessary for the operation of shelters and rape crisis centers. The situation was deemed one of "survival" (Regroupement provincial des maisons [1983]:2, Lacombe 1990:76, Regroupement québécois des CALACS [1988], 1993:29).

The first outcome of the tensions created by difficulties in routinizing resources was the creation of the provincial *Regroupements* of shelters and CALACS. Breaking down local groups' isolation, sharing experiences and defining common orientations were mentioned among the factors leading to the creation of the *Regroupements*. Yet, seeking government funding from MAS was clearly the main impetus rallying groups together (Regroupement provincial des maisons [1983]:2, Lacombe 1990:76,

Regroupement québécois des CALACS [1988], 1993:29). After three years of discussion, nineteen participating shelters created the *Regroupement provincial des maisons d'hébergement pour femmes en difficulté* in 1979:

Par ce geste les maisons décident de se donner un outil réel, une force collective face au Ministère des affaires sociales ainsi qu'un lieu de rencontres et d'échanges pour elles.
(Lacombe 1990:77)

That same year, six rape crisis centers founded the *Regroupement québécois des CALACS* (Regroupement québécois des CALACS 1993:29):

Leur survie, sans cesse menacée, les mène alors à se regrouper provincielement afin de faire pression sur le Ministère des affaires sociales (MAS) pour qu'il assure la viabilité des centres. (Regroupement québécois des CALACS 1993:29)

The first task undertaken by both *Regroupements* was to lead a collective "battle for funding". The immediate goal they pursued was to obtain "*une véritable politique de financement*" - a formalized, official "funding policy" that would guarantee adequate, uniform funding for all their member organizations. MSSS (at that time the *Ministère des affaires sociales* - MAS) was the *Regroupements'* target.

This move occurred in the context of a favourable political opportunity structure. With the creation of the *Conseil du statut de la femme*, in 1973, the Québec government had committed itself to improve the status of women. Québec's 1978 *Politique d'ensemble de la condition féminine*, prepared by the *Conseil* in consultation with women's groups (CSF 1978), pressed MAS to implement recommendations regarding "violence

against women". Among these recommendations were the "permanent funding" of existing women's services and support for the extension of the network of shelters and rape crisis centers (Recommendation 2-56, p.136, also p.134). The *Regroupements* thus took action in a context that opened up possibilities for the incorporation of issues of gender violence at MAS, and where they benefited from the presence of "state feminism" as a significant ally.

The two *Regroupements* undertook to pressure MAS. Requests for funding were accompanied by demands for public recognition of violence against women as an issue. They also made demands for the incorporation by the Ministry of new "women's rights", understood as women's right to safety and to receive adequate help, and of "women's needs" for the type of response already provided by shelters and rape crisis centers. For example, between 1978 and 1981 the shelters adopted the following claims to be defended in their negotiations with MAS: "*Reconnaissance du droit d'aide et d'hébergement aux femmes*" (1979); "*Accessibilité aux maisons dans toutes les régions*" (1981); "*Reconnaissance du besoin de maisons d'accueil et d'hébergement pour femmes victimes de violence*" (1978, 1981) (Regroupement provincial des maisons [1985b]). In so doing, the *Regroupements* staked claims on the ways these rights and needs were to be interpreted and satisfied.

MAS answered first by accommodating these demands "at the margins" in the Ministry's *Programme de soutien aux organismes bénévoles* (later known as SOC), a small programme doling out 1.5 million dollars to a mere 50 organizations at the end of the 1970s. In 1977-78, only one shelter was accredited to the programme, receiving \$100,000 (MSSS 1987:13, table 1).

After a series of meetings with representatives of the *Regroupement* (Lacombe 1990:77-78), eleven shelters were granted access to the non-statutory funds offered by the SOC. CALACS, for their part, initiated discussions with representatives of MAS in July of 1979. The Ministry awarded a small "*subvention de dépannage*" to the six members of the *Regroupement québécois des CALACS* (*Regroupement québécois des CALACS* 1993:29).

In 1980, the shelters' *Regroupement* commissioned an economic study to determine the "real costs" of operating a shelter as a basis for negotiating with MAS. Following this study, the *Regroupement* formulated the financial claim it doggedly pressed throughout the 1980s and after: complete funding by the Ministry of shelters' operating costs for the totality of their "services" (i.e., direct services, *sensibilisation* and prevention), plus start-up grants for new shelters. In 1982, local shelters and their *Regroupement* launched a series of political actions. Using "*des pétitions, des lettres aux députés, l'envahissement des médias locaux, régionaux et provinciaux*" (*Regroupement provincial des maisons* [1985a]:3), they publicized the issue of conjugal violence and the precarious situation of shelters. They also presented all their grant applications in a single envelope (a strategy termed "*dépôt collectif*"), to stress their unity and their demand for collective and uniform treatment (4). These efforts bore fruit: "*Un virage s'effectue, toutes les maisons du Regroupement provincial reçoivent une subvention du M.A.S.*" (4)

As a result, access was opened to the SOC programme for shelters and rape crisis centers. Yet, this response fell short of meeting the *Regroupements'* demands on both counts of adequate funding and recognition.

SOC funds were meagre and were to be granted on an annual, case by case basis, without the official guarantees requested by the *Regroupements*. The programme did not fund shelters and rape crisis centers as "women's services", but under the broad label of "volunteer groups". Controls, however, were minimal and the vagueness of funding guidelines made the programme potentially open to a wide variety of approaches and practices.

In addition to the actions of the *Regroupements*, Québec's *Politique d'ensemble de la condition féminine* pressed for a broader inclusion in MAS' welfare mandate of the new "needs and rights of women" arising from the politicization of issues of violence against women. In the absence of a clear plan of action for dealing with women's services and the issues they represented, the Ministry made a series of attempts to formalize its relationship with women's service groups. MAS' attempts at "inclusion" first favoured the absorption of these issues into existing areas of concern.

In this perspective, the Ministry consulted the shelters on a "*Document d'orientation sur les centres de dépannage pour les personnes en difficulté*" in 1979. This document rewrote battered women as "*mésadaptées sociales*"¹ (social misfits). Consistent with the principles inherited from its 1971 reform (see Chapter 3), it also suggested integrating the shelters within the network of its institutions. Such a move would have virtually transformed women's shelters into state agencies under the full financial, administrative, and policy control of the Ministry. These

¹ Such administrative categories are surprisingly resilient. The *Regroupement québécois des CALACS* had to deplore again, years later, the classification of sexual abuse and of violence against women and children in the section on "*adaptation sociale*" of MSSS' 1992 *Politique de santé et du Bien-être social* (Regroupement québécois des CALACS 1993:2).

proposals were actively opposed by the shelters and their *Regroupement* (Lacombe 1990:79) and MAS was sent back to the drawing board. Proposals to integrate shelters, however, continued to surface until the adoption by MAS of the *Politique d'aide aux femmes violentées*, in 1985 (see next section).

Attempts by MAS to deal with women's service groups by absorbing them into existing areas of concern also led the Ministry to withdraw its funding from the small number of free-standing CALACS. The Ministry had already agreed to fund shelters, that defined themselves as shelters "for women in difficulty." In February 1980, the Ministry decided unilaterally that shelters could do both "battering" and "rape". It offered supplementary funds to shelters to set up rape units, and terminated its funding of CALACS (Lacombe 1990:79-80, *Regroupement québécois des CALACS* 1993:29). At the time, shelters also helped women with problems of mental health, alcohol, drugs and homelessness. Adding "rape" to this list seemed only administratively logical: "*Pour le gouvernement, l'équation est simple: femmes en difficulté égalent aussi victimes de viol.*" (Lacombe 1990:79-80)

The Ministry's *volte-face* sent the *Regroupement québécois des CALACS* into another round of political lobbying. The *Regroupement* called for the support of the *Conseil du statut de la femme* and of the Québec *Ministère à la condition féminine*² (*Regroupement québécois des CALACS* 1991:4). Asked to defend CALACS' specificity and their need for separate funding, members of the shelters' *Regroupement* uneasily redefined their *raison d'être* as

² Funding for "women's organizations" was available at the Federal level (Secretary of State), but no such funding existed at the provincial level, neither at CSF nor at the *Ministère à la condition féminine*.

"battered women shelters" in 1982 (Lacombe 1990:80). The Ministry's preferred course of action was definitively blocked. It finally acknowledged CALACS' distinctiveness and agreed to fund them through the SOC programme, beginning in 1982-83 (Regroupement québécois des CALACS 1993:30). Both *Regroupements*, however, continued their political pressures for "a real funding policy" (i.e., for financially adequate, recurring and standardized funding).

While early political representation by the provincial *Regroupements* was central in opening up the SOC programme and in negotiating a collective funding at MAS for shelters and CALACS, women's centers first gained entry to the SOC on an individual basis. Funding was first granted to a single women's center in 1979 (there were ten of them - CSF 1986a:31). By 1982-83, still only five were funded in 1982-83 (MSSS 1989: Annexe 1).

In 1984-85, MAS took a significant step in formalizing its relationship with women's service groups. Defining four key funding areas in the SOC programme, it earmarked one for groups working with "women in difficulty", creating a specific niche in the SOC for the funding of women's service groups. This entry point was structured around the three priorities of "violence", "economic dependency", and "loneliness". Its description embraced activities such as:

(...) l'hébergement transitoire, le suivi de la clientèle, l'écoute téléphonique, l'accueil, la relation d'aide, l'information, la référence, l'accompagnement, la prévention et la sensibilisation du milieu. (MSSS-SOC 1984-85)

The "women's sector" channelled and opened the door wider for the funding

of more shelters, CALACS and women's centers. Sixteen women's centers received grants that year (1984-85), compared to seven the preceding year (MSSS 1989: Annexe 1).

In June of 1985, 96 women's centers organized provincially. Like the two other *Regroupements*, *L'R des centres de femmes du Québec* (L'R) was created as a response to the financial difficulties experienced by local centers. With the creation of L'R, women's centers entered the political battle for funding and inclusion at MSSS:

Alertées par la menace de disparition des Centres, les femmes de 96 Centres se sont regroupées, en juin 1985, sous le nom de L'R des centres de femmes du Québec. En conférence de presse, le regroupement informait la population sur le danger de fermeture des centres si aucune politique de financement ne venait soutenir leur développement. Nous demandions alors au gouvernement québécois de prendre ses responsabilités afin d'assurer la continuité des services offerts. (L'R 1986:7)

Dilemmas surrounding the question of state funding have left no traces in the available documentation from the three *Regroupements*. Documenting this debate within the *Regroupement des centres de santé des femmes du Québec*, Michaud notes the existence of profound divisions among and within health centers on this issue. Yet, as she also makes clear, leftist and radical feminist stances against state subsidies (for fear of co-option and *récupération*) were the choice of only a minority (1995:149-154). From the relative silence of the *Regroupements'* official documents, it seems that the majority of Québécois women's service groups shared the "pro-statist" stance typical of women organizing in Canada (Vickers and al. 1993:36-46) and the corresponding belief that state resources could be harnessed fruitfully in the pursuit of the goals of women's organizations.

From the moment when a consensus was reached within the *Regroupements* to seek more stable, institutionalized funding from MAS/MSSS, the terms of the debate shifted from the desirability of state funding to whether shelters, CALACS and women centers could secure this funding under acceptable conditions. Their "specificity" and above all their "autonomy" must be respected. In terms akin to the notion developed in the Québec popular and community movements (see Chapter 3), autonomy was articulated by women organizations as self-representation and self-direction, founded on the idea of "women organizing as women." The idea of autonomous organizing translated, first, into a principle of "women only" membership ("*non-mixité*") and, second, in the adoption of a "critical distance" from left-wing and union organizations (D. Lamoureux 1990:36, Brodeur et al. 1982). With the battle for funding at MAS/MSSS, autonomy became increasingly defined in relation to - and in opposition to - the state.

The decision of women's service groups to seek permanent funding from the Ministry was not naive. Rather, it was a calculated gamble that lobbying and political pressure could establish a balance of forces strong enough to withstand attempts to override their commitment to self-determination. The potential threats presented by state funding were acknowledged in various ways by the *Regroupements*. In a preliminary version of its "*Base d'unité*", the *Regroupement québécois des CALACS* expressed these concerns:

Nous sommes cependant conscientes que financer, pour l'Etat, veut souvent dire s'assurer d'un contrôle sur le genre de services offerts, la façon d'intervenir, le pourquoi et aussi sur les bénéficiaires (fiches, statistiques, etc...). C'est

pourquoi nous sommes très vigilantes [quant] au danger pour un groupe comme le nôtre d'être récupéré par l'État. Nous reconnaissons la difficulté de maintenir notre intégrité, le risque de compromettre nos idéaux, en acceptant un financement intégral et important de l'État. (Regroupement québécois des CALACS [1988:2])

Women's service groups were aware of the possible dangers entailed by MSSS funding, as is illustrated by their spelling out of their own "funding conditions" (see in particular Regroupement provincial des maisons [1985b], L'R des centres de femmes du Québec 1986:33, 1987; Regroupement québécois des CALACS [1988]:2). Regularly reiterated throughout this decade of negotiations, these conditions stressed the entwined issues of "who represents", "who defines", and "who controls" women's service organizations, their actions, and their politics.

In their engagement with MAS/MSSS, the three *Regroupements* continuously asserted the right of women's service groups to specificity and autonomy. The direction of the organizations was to remain in the hands of "*le milieu*" (of women members and users from the local community) as opposed to a control by the Ministry, or to an eventual integration to its institutions (Regroupement provincial des maisons [1983]:6, L'R des centres de femmes du Québec 1986:15).

Pour les CALACS, l'autonomie reste une composante prioritaire. Personne d'autre que les femmes membres et les utilisatrices ne pourront définir les priorités et les champs d'intervention. C'est clair! (Regroupement québécois des CALACS 1993:30)

A second dimension emphasized by the *Regroupements* was the preservation of the programmatic autonomy of women's groups. For example,

funding to women's centers, the centers themselves stated, should "respect their modes of operation and their autonomy in a way that guarantees their flexibility and independence of action", as well as their "polyvalence", "diversity", and "*approche globale*" (Regroupement des centres de femmes du Québec 1986:33; 1987). Funding to CALACS and shelters was to respect the type and range of services they offered, their modes of intervention and their "*pratique*" (praxis), as well as the forms of training they had developed (Regroupement québécois des CALACS [1988]:2; Regroupement provincial des maisons [1985b], 1988:5).

Finally, CALACS and shelters in particular stressed issues of autonomy in administrative and management decisions. As early as 1979 the *Regroupement provincial des maisons* stated its intent to protect its "*autonomie de gestion interne*", that is: "*contrôle des admissions, clientèle, durée du séjour, (...) choix du personnel et de leurs compétences, (...) liens à entretenir avec le réseau institutionnel*" ([1985b]). In addition, both *Regroupements* of shelters and CALACS affirmed their attachment to principles of no-charge services and "confidentiality of files" (Regroupement québécois des CALACS [1988]:2, 1993; Regroupement provincial des maisons [1983], [1985b], Roy 14-03-1996).

As Michaud noted in her study of Québec women's health centers (1995:204-235), the autonomy of women's service groups was the main stake in the negotiation of the funding relationship with MAS/MSSS. Inseparable from the claims for funding and recognition, the notion of autonomy was central to organizing the demands for inclusion of the three *Regroupements* at MAS/MSSS.

By 1985, shelters, rape crisis centers and women's centers had

carved out a space in the community sector to articulate women's rights and needs in very practical terms. They had also gained some degree of financial support while at the same time succeeding, not without a few major battles, in protecting the specificity and autonomy of their organizations from direct interference by the Ministry. Yet, no official funding policy was in sight and the relationship between the state and women's services was still very much *ad hoc*. This situation did not satisfy the *Regroupements*.

4.2: The 1985 *Politique d'aide*: inclusions and mediations

In 1985, the adoption by the Ministry of a "*Politique d'aide aux femmes violentées*" (A policy of assistance for abused women) revealed the important impact of the *Regroupements*' entwined claims for inclusion and autonomy. Not all their claims and representations were incorporated to the same extent, nor in the same manner, yet the *Regroupements* and their allies were instrumental in shaping the state. The policy as a whole constituted, I propose, a significant case of successful, albeit "mediated," incorporation of the issue of violence against women into the field of state welfare.

In the first place, the *Politique d'aide* (MAS 1985) was elaborated in consultation with the *Regroupements* of shelters and CALACS, as well as with individual shelters and rape crisis centers. A degree of recognition of these groups as legitimate actors in the policy-making process was thus achieved. Second, this inclusion had an effect on the representations inscribed in the policy. A feminist analysis of "violence against women" -

rather than more therapeutic versions of "family violence" (as in the case documented by Walker 1990a, 1990b) - was incorporated in the policy's text (see Chapter 5). The policy's understanding of violence, Colgan noted, was largely drawn from the analyses developed by shelters and CALACS, which represented an important political victory (1986:49).

Third, the policy affirmed the Ministry's recognition of "community initiatives on the terrain of violence against women." It explicitly acknowledged the pioneering role of women's groups, namely women's shelters and rape crisis centers, in initiating a reflection on violence and in developing appropriate forms of aid. Recognition was accompanied by a formalization of funding. The policy announced the Ministry's intent to "consolidate its financial support" to women's services through the existing SOC programme. Without the assurance of a guaranteed, recurrent funding policy, women's shelters were nevertheless granted between \$70,000 (for the first year of operation) to a maximum of \$130,000 per year, plus a *per diem* of \$6.00 for each sheltered woman and child. CALACS were funded up to a maximum of \$60,000 yearly. Women's centers were included "at the margins" as organizations offering help, support, information and reference to abused women, "or any other activity favourable to the development of women's autonomy" (MAS 1985:55). Their funding levels, however, were not specified.

Fourth, the policy was the site of a public clarification of the categories and rules governing MAS funding to "community organizations". The status of "autonomous organizations" was officially attached to women's services and other groups in the "community organizations sector". With this status came a promise that the Ministry would "respect their

autonomy and their initiatives" (MAS 1985:33, 53). In doing so, the Ministry formally abandoned the right to interfere generally linked to the allocation of state funds. It made state funding possible for community organizations without them necessarily having to relinquish their much valued freedom or independence from the state. The Ministry's stance was not a change from SOC traditions; it simply institutionalized them. There was a trade-off, however. Ensuring "the well-being of the community" was defined as the twin responsibility of the state and "the citizen". As the expression of citizens' organizing for their own welfare, the voluntary sector retained its autonomy providing its participation - the "sharing of responsibilities" - in a project previously assumed so far by the Ministry alone. This new political rationale effected the incorporation of women's and community organizations as autonomous partners in health and social services welfare provision.

Fifth, the *Politique d'aide* materialized the Ministry's acceptance of a new responsibility in providing emergency, middle-term, and preventive services for abused women through its own agencies and institutions. MAS included the issue of violence against women as a new welfare mandate³ within its general responsibility for organizing health and social services for all of Québec's population. In the *Politique d'aide aux femmes violentées*, the Ministry affirmed its "commitment to ensure adequate forms of aid to abused women". This engagement meant, primarily, the development of "adequate services" within MAS' network,

³ This development of a new welfare mandate is an indication of the persistence of a process of welfare state formation well into the 1980s, and of its coexistence with other efforts to curb the development of state-provided health and social services.

that is: its direct involvement in welfare provision for abused women. It also included financial support for "the milieu's groups and resources" (1985:4). In an important departure from the monopoly situation that characterized state intervention in health and social services since 1971, welfare delivery to abused women was not to be the responsibility of the Ministry alone. The *Politique d'aide* affirmed the necessity of "concerted action" between the main actors involved: it enrolled women's service groups as partners-in-women's-welfare under the co-ordination of the Ministry.

Bringing the Ministry's network of agencies onto a terrain that had been occupied so far by women's service groups alone and inscribing their joint venture in state co-ordinated policy was more than women's organizations had bargained for. The thrust of the *Regroupements'* claims was not for "more state welfare". The glaring inadequacies in state agencies' response to wife battery and sexual assault were a daily experience for groups working with women who had been abused. As a result, it was only consistent for these groups to make proprietary claims, that is: to claim sole legitimacy and responsibility in providing for the needs of abused women. If part of the *Regroupements'* pressures indeed comprised "*une demande d'état*" (a demand for more state intervention), this demand was framed, rather, as a general appeal to the Québec state to recognize, denounce, and police violence against women. Or, in the words of a representative of the *Regroupement* of shelters, "*Demander que l'Etat se prononce, dise et fasse quelque chose pour contrer la violence faite aux femmes*" (Relais-Femmes 1985:21-22). What was more specifically asked for and to a large extent expected from MAS by the *Regroupements* of shelters

and CALACS was recognition expressed in a standardized, institutionalized *funding policy* for the support and the development of a network of resources operated and controlled by local women's groups (*Regroupement provincial des maisons* [1983]).

The launching of the *Politique d'aide aux femmes violentées*, then, represented a surprise and somewhat of a disappointment for the *Regroupements* and their member groups.

En 1985, le gouvernement par l'entremise du M.A.S. dévoilait sa politique d'aide aux femmes violentées plutôt qu'une politique de reconnaissance et de financement des centres [i.e., CALACS] et des maisons comme les deux regroupements l'avaient réclamée. (Regroupement québécois des CALACS 1993:31)

To say that the 1985 policy was not what the *Regroupements* had asked for, or that it exemplified the co-option of the issue by the state would not be a satisfactory account of what was a more complex political process. The *Politique d'aide* can be more fruitfully analysed as the outcome, *mediated in welfare terms*, of what can only be seen as a very successful effort at political representation on the issue of violence against women.

These representations, it is important to bear in mind, were not solely the work of the provincial *Regroupements*. Important institutional actors, including the Québec *Secrétariat à la condition féminine*, the *Conseil du statut de la femme* and professionals and institutions from MAS network also participated in the consultations leading to the development of the policy (MAS 1985:59). CSF, in particular, had already recommended in its 1978 policy document *Pour les Québécoises: égalité et indépendance* that MAS develop its own specific emergency and counselling services for

women who had been battered or raped, in addition to supporting existing women's groups (CSF 1978:135-136). Regional colloquia on "violence against women and children" jointly organized in 1980-81 by MAS, the CSF and Québec *Ministère de la Justice* had helped publicize the widespread character of violence and, as stated in the policy itself, had highlighted "the quasi-absence of adequate services in the public network" (MAS 1985:12). In addition, the aggressive lobbying and press campaigns conducted by shelters in the early 1980s (*Regroupement provincial des maisons* [1985a]) as part of their "fight for funding" may have had the unforeseen effect of contributing to shift MAS' political options away from the small-scale funding policy demanded by the *Regroupements* and towards the large-scale response the *Politique d'aide* represented.

From the moment the Ministry yielded to representations of "violence against women" as a serious, widespread phenomenon that had to be included within the proper scope of public action, a direct and comprehensive involvement by MAS was mandatory. From that point, action on this new mandate had to be consistent with what were still, in 1985, the main imperatives of Québec's organization of welfare. Among these imperatives were commitments to principles of universality, equity, and accessibility.

As a traditional principle of welfare provision, universality dictated that all citizens be entitled to welfare provision. Equity required that minimum standards of welfare services be available: that is, that standardized coverage be provided. Finally accessibility meant that all who qualify be served throughout the whole territory⁴ (Smith and

⁴ Indeed, these principles were contested in the middle of the 1980s. The narrowing of criteria for entitlements (selectivity), the shrinking of "minimum standards", and the re-defining of accessibility in terms of

Lipsky 1993). Guaranteeing the availability of specific services for all abused women, and ensuring accessibility to these services within and across Québec regions (see MAS 1985) were among the main concerns that mediated the Ministry's inclusion of the issue of violence against women.

Although shelters and rape crisis centers were strongly attached to principles of universality and although they had demonstrated, the policy recognized, that they were well adapted to women's needs, they did not measure up to the requirements of organizing welfare for large populations. The actions and approaches of shelters and rape crisis centers varied according to ideology, resources, and local specificities; their scope was limited by their small size, their small numbers, and their uneven geographical distribution. Many of Québec's regions lacked sufficient resources and some peripheral regions, the Ministry recognized in the *Politique d'aide*, were deprived (MAS 1985:32).

As Smith and Lipsky remark, the diversity of approaches, the limitations in scope and in capacities, the uneven geographical distribution and the client selectivity that are typical of the non-profit sector are no longer adequate when it is recognized that a given type of welfare provision is to be available for all. Continuous welfare provision by this sector is possible only if an inclusive governmental system guarantees accessibility to a minimum standard of service (1993:219-222). Incorporating violence against women within MAS' welfare mandate necessarily entailed the development of such a system: hence the drafting of the large-scale response represented by the *Politique d'aide* rather

"priorities" had already entered MAS' repertoire, but had not yet gained prominence.

than a simple funding policy for women's groups.

Finally, the incorporation of women's service organizations as "autonomous" but "co-ordinated" partners of state-provided welfare was *mediated in administrative terms*. The principle of "*complémentarité*" (complementarity) had been at the heart of the Ministry's management discourse since the Castonguay Reform of 1971. Within this discourse, *la complémentarité* was understood as:

une politique de démarcation claire et nette des mandats professionnels et organisationnels voulue afin d'éviter le dédoublement des fonctions et de favoriser l'efficacité, tout en reconnaissant le rôle de chacun par rapport à l'ensemble des besoins de la personne. (White 1992:239)

Throughout the 1980s, the guidelines of the SOC programme were consistent in their concern for *la complémentarité*: activities and services that would duplicate those provided by the Ministry were ineligible. In practice, the very absence of services for abused women in the Ministry's network made it impossible for the Ministry to determine at the onset the respective domains, limits, functions and "complementarity" between women's services and the services to be developed by the Ministry's agencies. Deferred to the implementation of the policy, the meaning and implications of *la complémentarité* remained ambiguous enough to generate tensions and uncertainties for women's service groups (Lamoureux and Leemann 1987:144-157, also Demers 1987). Would their funding disappear as the Ministry developed its own services? Would they be reduced to the tasks the Ministry could not, or did not want to assume? Contrary to other interpretations (D. Lamoureux 1997), I propose that the

tentative nature of the proposed new welfare mix in the *Politique d'aide* and its initial "un-decidability" regarding complementarity prevented early closure. It made the meaning of *la complémentarité* - residual complementarity *versus* complementarity-in-difference⁵ - into an issue to be resolved "in the field", that is, to be worked out historically, politically, and with open-ended outcomes.

4.3: After the *Politique d'aide*: fighting for funding in a climate of uncertainty

After 1985, MSSS was the object of relentless pressure to further formalize the funding relationship established through the women's sector of the SOC programme, and through the *Politique d'aide aux femmes violentées*. Immediately after its creation, in 1985, the *Regroupement des centres de femmes du Québec* entered the battle for funding. The "fight for funding" of women's centers differed markedly from that of shelters and CALACS. Women's centers were in a different position regarding "direct services" and the issue of violence, both of which were more central for shelters and CALACS. The commitment of women's centers to articulate "local women's needs" (L'R 1986:13-15) led individual centers to develop different local combinations of "services", "education", "collective action" and "research and experimentation" (L'R 1986:16-17), and to organize around a variety of issues of concern for women. From this multi-

⁵ The latter understanding was actively promoted by the *Regroupements* - as well as by the broader community sector. See FFQ (1988), Comité de travail (1990); see also Lamoureux et Lesemann 1987, Demers 1987, Robert 1989, J. Lamoureux 1994. Interestingly, this position was also defended by the SOC personnel at MSSS (see Personnel du SSOC 1986:12).

form reality emerged in 1986 a three-pronged funding strategy under which funding policies would be demanded from the Secretary of State, from MSSS, and from the *Ministère de l'éducation du Québec*⁶ (L'R 1986). Rising budgets at the SOC certainly played a role in the *Regroupement's* concentrating first on MSSS to which it submitted, in 1987, a "*Cadre de référence*"⁷ articulating its demands (L'R 1987). L'R asked MSSS to recognize the contribution of women's centers to women's welfare, while respecting the centers' global approach and autonomy. L'R demanded that MSSS cover two-thirds of the operating costs of women's centers, asking the Ministry to provide \$50,000 to each center in support of a "typical" yearly budget of \$70,000 (28-29).

The *Regroupement* of shelters, for its part, decided to take a more public stance after 1985 in the hope of increasing the political pressure on MSSS:

nous sommes passées en 1986 à une attitude plus offensive. Nous avons questionné publiquement le gouvernement sur ses promesses électorales, mobilisé la population, suscité l'intérêt des médias." (...) "Nous avons cherché à établir un rapport de force, à changer les règles du jeu, et nous avons réussi dans une certaine mesure. (Lacombe 1990:117)

This strategy had an impact. In 1987, a revised version of the *Politique d'aide* eventually granted shelters a three-year funding plan. The new

⁶ In 1985-86, the Secretary of State's Women's Program funded 36 centers for a total of \$335,000; MSSS' SOC granted a total of \$308,000 to 23 centers; MEQ doled out \$222,000 to 34 centers through its OVEP Programme (L'R 1986:42).

⁷ A similar document was produced in 1989 for the Secretary of State (L'R 1989). Another was addressed to Québec's *Ministère de l'Éducation* in 1992 (L'R 1992).

funding levels were considerably higher: the maximum grant was now of \$175,000 plus an \$8.00 *per diem*. As a result, the plan provided an average of \$200,000 yearly for each of the 46 members of the *Regroupement*, as well as for about twenty other shelters for battered women and for "women in difficulty"⁸. Funding levels for CALACS and women's centers remained unchanged.

Securing a funding policy did not mean that the "fight for funding" was over for the *Regroupement* of shelters. The 1987 plan met only 50% of their financial claims (*Regroupement provincial des maisons* 1990c:14), and political representations continued. Member shelters gave their *Regroupement* the mandate "to create a new momentum for claims" and to "reopen the funding issue" at MSSS (*Regroupement provincial des maisons* 1988). In 1990, the *Regroupement* produced an updated economic study⁹ of shelters' operating costs (*Regroupement provincial des maisons* 1990c). Asking MSSS to move beyond the "symbolic and political" recognition effected by the *Politique d'aide* (xxix), the *Regroupement* demanded, once more, "decent budgets" to ensure the range and quality of services provided by shelters while respecting their objectives, priorities, ideology, and organizational autonomy (ix-x).

The fight was not over either for CALACS and women's centers. Both

⁸ These shelters were either un-affiliated or members of the *Fédération des ressources d'hébergement pour femmes violentées et en difficulté*. Founded in 1985 (CSF 1986a:20), the *Fédération* was the result of a scission that occurred within the *Regroupement* of shelters after their mission was redefined from "women in difficulty" to "battered women". A second schismatic factor was the issue of users' fees favored by some shelters versus the no-charge policy adopted by the *Regroupement* (see Demers 1987:173-175).

⁹ A first economic study was produced in 1980.

Regroupements launched "visibility campaigns" in 1988 in which local service groups actively participated (see Chapter 6). Intense political lobbying on the part of women's centers and a public demonstration in front of the Québec Parliament were instrumental in obtaining a three-year funding plan in June of 1989. The plan granted yearly amounts ranging from \$15,000 for the first year of operation to \$40,000 for "optimum functioning" to each of the 75 member centers of *L'R des centres de femmes du Québec*. The terms of the inclusion of women's centers in the SOC programme were also more clearly formalized (see MSSS 1989).

The CALACS were the last to obtain a three-year funding plan, in 1990-91. Amounts of \$25,000 (for the first year of operations) to \$65,000 (for "optimum functioning") were granted to the 17 members of the *Regroupement québécois des CALACS* and to 5 un-affiliated rape crisis centers. Recognition by MSSS, the *Regroupement* of CALACS declared, remained theoretical. Funding levels only made SOC's previous funding practices official, and were far from reaching the amounts demanded, that is, between 60% and 75% of the "typical" \$200,000 budget projected by the *Regroupement* (*Regroupement québécois des CALACS* 1993:31, 42).

The gradual entrenchment and standardizing of the funding of women's service organizations that culminated in the granting of renewable three-year funding plans¹⁰ was integral to what can be seen, retrospectively, as the progressive unfolding of the "turn to the community sector" at MSSS. Yet, this "turn" itself, and the form it would take was not determined from the start (Vaillancourt 1994:237). At the Federal level, for

¹⁰ The granting of such three-year plans to community organizations was part of the recommendations of the Rochon Commission in 1988 (see Chapter 3).

instance, the turn to the community sector took the form of major cuts in state programmes as well as in community organizations' funding - even while these were nevertheless expected to "take up the slack" for the state's disengagement (Phillips 1995).

The general climate in which the battles for funding were waged in the second half of the 1980s, was one of increasing uncertainty. A major reform was underway at MSSS (see Chapter 3) in which proposals of disengagement and sub-contracting to the community sector jostled with a defense of the welfare role of the state, and of the autonomy of women's and community organizations. The situation was very much in flux. SOC budgets were rising, yet the programme itself came close to disappearing in 1986-87 (Vaillancourt 1994:237). The recommendations of the Rochon Commission and of MSSS' *Orientations* and *Avant-projet de loi* that followed raised serious political concerns for women's service organizations. At stake was the issue of "programme funding", a proposal which potentially entailed a reduction in their margin of manoeuvre, and by extension, their "freedom to define their orientations, their policies, and their approaches" (FFQ et al. 1988). At stake were also the funding of provincial *Regroupements* and the very existence of a provincial arena for political representation by women's service groups, both of which would disappear following the displacement of decision-making from MSSS central offices to the future "*Régies régionales*" (Regional Boards). The fight for funding of women's service groups became inseparable from these issues. It also became tied to the - largely unpredictable - outcomes of their participation in a larger struggle, articulated through an alliance of *Regroupements* representing a wide spectrum of women's, popular, and

community organizations, over the preservation of the specificity, autonomy and fate of *le communautaire* in MSSS' project of restructuring¹¹. Despite the 1991 Reform and as a result of these struggles, the 1985 *Politique d'aide* and the SOC programme remained the main institutional forms regulating the funding of women's service groups at MSSS until 1995.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I analysed the socio-political significance of the "battle for funding" in which Québec shelters, CALACS, and women's centers engaged with the Québec *Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux*. I defended the argument that struggles by women's movements played a role in "shaping the state". Or more precisely, that these struggles shaped the external factors related to the context, conditions and requirements of state funding that, in turn, entered into the genesis of women's movement politics at the local level. Foregrounding the politics of representation in which the provincial *Regroupements* of women's services engaged at MSSS, I argued that these politics and struggles contributed in various ways to shape the institutional terrain - the project, policy and programme - through which their funding was obtained.

What were the outcomes of these politics? The gradual entrenchment and standardizing of funding for women's services by MSSS played a role in the historical unfolding of the increased association of MSSS with the community sector. MSSS' strategy of communautarization was importantly

¹¹ I have presented elsewhere (Masson 1997a) the details and historical outcomes of these mobilizations.

"gendered". In 1986-87, 29.2%¹² of SOC funding went to the women's sector and in 1992-93, 36.8%¹³. The *Politique d'aide* constituted one version of the new "partnerships" that were experimented with, in the 1980s, and that entered into the development of the 1991 Reform. Moreover, this policy incorporated some of the main claims articulated by the *Regroupements* around the twin issues of "recognition" and "autonomy". Although often incomplete or mediated, these inclusions transformed the institutional terrain with consequences for the conditions in which movement politics would subsequently be played out by local women's service groups.

Demands for the funding of women's shelters, rape crisis centers and women's centers were partially included, thus giving some assurance regarding the survival and development of women's services. Consultations included women's service groups as legitimate actors in the policy-making process, and the policy itself recognized them as appropriate and legitimate service providers. The issue of "violence against women" was incorporated within MSSS' welfare mandate, along with women's rights to "security and protection" (MAS 1985). As I will show with more detail in the next chapter, the policy also included the feminist analysis promoted by women's groups. However, the inclusion of the issue of violence, I also contended, was mediated in welfare terms making a direct, large-scale involvement of the Ministry necessary. In addition, at the same time that the inclusion of women's services as partners formally recognized their

¹² In 1986-87, 7.3 million dollars were granted to the women sector out of a budget of 25 millions (Tremblay 1987:1, 53).

¹³ \$23,639,000 went to shelters, CALACS, and women centers out of SOC's total budget of \$64,202,000 in 1992-93. Shelters reaped close to four fifths (78%) of the funds of the women's sector (MSSS 1992-93).

autonomy, the Ministry's attachment to the administrative principle of "complementarity" potentially threatened the latter. Yet, women's service groups preferred "being vigilant recipients to pristine paupers" (Pal 1993:277). Autonomy was formally guaranteed: at stake was its preservation. I will examine in the following chapters the extent to which funding conditions and requirements at MSSS effectively incorporated (or respected) women's service groups' claims for the preservation of their political, programmatic, and administrative autonomy.

The collectivization of the struggle through provincial *Regroupements*, as the "battle for funding" shows, was a decisive element in getting political leverage over funding conditions. The role of the three provincial *Regroupements* of shelters, CALACS and women's centers was determinant in obtaining standardized levels of funding, in achieving a measure of inclusion for women's service groups at MSSS, and in defending the autonomy of women's services. Gaining funding for themselves at MSSS¹⁴, the *Regroupements* were able to secure some degree of organizational and representational stability, and they succeeded in opening up new channels and creating a new "arena" at MSSS for the representation of claims by local women's service groups. More generally, they also succeeded in establishing themselves as political actors and as

¹⁴ MSSS granted a funding of \$20,000 to the *Regroupement provincial des maisons d'hébergement* in 1981-82, and of \$10,000 to the *Regroupement québécois des CALACS* in 1982-83 (MSSS 1987:14-15). This funding was maintained throughout the 1980s and its amounts were regularly increased: the *Regroupement* of CALACS, for example, received \$40,000 in 1989-90 (Maison ISA, fieldwork diary). In 1986, L'R demanded recognition and funding by MSSS (L'R 1986:35); it was funded the following year and received \$35,000 in 1988-89 (MSSS 1989). Like their member organizations, provincial *Regroupements* also appealed to other institutional sources for funding, notably to employment-oriented programmes and to the Women's Programme of the Secretary of State of Canada.

legitimate interlocutors for the women's movement at the provincial level.

Schecter (1982), Dobash and Dobash (1992) and Reinelt (1995) highlight the role of coalitions of shelters in successfully negotiating the terms of funding relationships in the United States and in Britain. If stories of failed, or mitigated success in this kind of engagement cannot be ignored (see Matthews 1995 on Los Angeles Rape Crisis Centers), seeing the state as a terrain of representation and struggle opens up the analysis to considering the possibility that politics of representation, coalition work and the use of insider as well as outsider tactics may succeed to "maximize autonomy for the movement" (Reinelt 1995:99) and to transform the institutional terrain.

The literature also suggests that alliances with "femocrats" (i.e., feminist civil servants) may prove crucial in defining the parameters of funding programmes in ways that incorporate the priorities of women's service groups and favour less restrictive requirements and modes of administration (see McFerren 1990 on Australian shelters; see also Schraeder 1990 and Pal 1993 on the Secretary of State Women's Programme). In the battle for funding of the Québec *Regroupements*, an alliance with "state feminism" - that is, more precisely with state agencies "formally charged with furthering women's status and rights" (McBride Stetson and Mazur 1995:2) was instrumental in gaining the recognition of CALACS, the political inclusion of violence against women and the funding of women's services by MSSS. Yet, divergence between the claims of women's service groups and those articulated by these agencies, notably by the *Conseil du statut de la femme*, also played a role in the outcome of these struggles. While women's service groups made proprietary claims on developing

services for women and demanded a funding policy to do so, CSF recommended, rather, that support for women's services be coupled to the creation of a network of state services. Sharing with MSSS a localization in "the state", the feminism of the CSF, I suggest, could not but partake of the kind of mediations that led MSSS to a large-scale intervention.

Finally, the openness of the political opportunity structure to the incorporation of women's movement claims also played a role in these outcomes. It had been suggested to me¹⁵ that the extent to which *Regroupements'* claims have been accommodated at MSSS can be attributed, beyond or behind governmental commitments to improving the status of women, to the specific political situation in Québec. Nationalist politics created electoral stakes in allying "women" on both sides of the debate on independence. This, it can be suggested, created additional pressure that affected governments of both the Parti Québécois (1976-1985) and the Parti Libéral (1985-1994), inciting them to answer favourably claims made on behalf of women by the CSF and women's organizations.

Such politics may also be partly responsible for the development of restructuring strategies based on the incorporation of the community sector into more "associational" forms of governance than those found, for instance, at the Federal level, or in Ontario. In this regard, Maroney's work (1988) suggests that the stakes in these politics are not simply electoral, but can also be understood in relation to the processes of constitution of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic blocs.

¹⁵ I have to thank Heather Jon Maroney, Caroline Andrew and Alan Hunt for this.

CHAPTER 5: REPRESENTATIONS OF THE PROJECT: DISCURSIVE POLITICS IN LOCAL WOMEN'S SERVICE GROUPS

Introduction

Most scholars inquiring into the transformations of women's services start by assuming the initial unity of these groups around politicized projects, goals and analyses that they usually associate with some forms of "radicalism". Following this kind of argument, the conditions of state funding irredeemably alter feminist representations. Pressures to frame issues "in terms acceptable to funders" transform organizational mandates and identities (Ng 1988, Heald 1990, Transken 1994). "The movement's radical goals" are displaced and conservatized as goals aimed at broader social change, such as combating violence or liberating women, are abandoned in favour of providing quality services (Johnson 1981, Tierney 1982, Schechter 1982, Barnsley 1985, 1988, D. Lamoureux 1988, 1990). Feminist analyses of women's situation are de-politicized or marginalized in the process (Morgan 1981, Barnsley 1985, 1988, Couillard 1994, 1995a, Matthews 1995). The competition for funds and for legitimacy feminist services wage with non-feminist church, private, or public social services adds to pressures to conform, and to tone down critique and radicalism (Johnson 1981, Tierney 1982, Schechter 1982, Barnsley 1985, 1988, Walker 1990a).

Other authors, however, suggest that different combinations of factors may play a role in the fate of movement goals, analyses, identities and modes of operation under state funding. Dobash and Dobash (1992), in particular, stress the initial heterogeneity of movement

organizations' self-defined projects, analyses and goals. Differences in projects and orientations, they propose, explain the very different responses of women's service organizations to the pressures engendered by funding. The work of Dobash and Dobash also indicates that displacement, conservatization, de-politicization, and deradicalization of movement representations are not a necessary outcome of state funding. Studies by Simon (1982) and Rodriguez (1988) highlight the role of the "strong ideological commitment" of women's services to their own projects in mounting an effective resistance to "conventionalizing" forces. Finally, underlining the importance of coalitions, Reinelt (1995) shows that collective struggles over funding may have the effect of politicizing and radicalizing the politics of participating organizations.

In this chapter I want to take issue with the sequence of events proposed by most analysts of state-funded women's services, that is: a pattern of conservatizing and narrowing - under state funding - of originally radical, politicized, feminist projects. Rather than taking the start in some kind of "unified datum", the projects of women's service groups were constructed, I propose, from "taking 'women' as a position from which to act", in a context where "women" and "appropriate emancipatory action" could be defined in diverse ways by drawing on the available discourses about women and feminism. From these multiple and heterogeneous starting points, I will argue, the historical sequence in the Québec case has been the one of a convergence around shared projects, and of their broadening and politicization.

The unification of movement members around elements of a common socio-political project of change, Melucci (1989) has convincingly argued,

cannot be taken for granted. Melucci considers the "coming together" of individual and collective actors in "movements" as "precisely what needs to be explained" (1989:30, see also 17-37). To do so, he suggests, we need to attend to the historical processes of "interaction, negotiation, and conflict" through which particular versions of collective action are constructed. For Melucci, this construction takes place at the infra-level of "submerged networks", groups and organizations. It is at this level, rather than at the more abstract level of the movement, that "individuals acting collectively" and "interacting with others" come to define, in "cognitive terms", shared identities and orientations, as well as the possibilities and obstacles to their action (26). Melucci, however, does not inquire closely into the substance of movement rationales, identities and goals, nor does he advance further in the understanding of the particular factors and influences that enter into their constitution, and transformation.

In this perspective, this chapter explores the following questions. What was the substance of the "representations of the project" initially constructed by early women's service groups in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean? What substantive changes did these representations incur? What discursive politics presided over their constitution and their transformations? What processes and what kind of balance between factors "internal to the movement" and external factors related to MSSS funding were responsible?

To further this inquiry, I propose to conceptualize the "representations of the project" of women's service groups as encompassing the production of rationales for action anchored in discursive constructions of the position of women in the social world. These

constructions involve the very production, in discourse, of "women" as a social category and as a collective identity. Representations of the project also include the organizational definition of long-term goals and more immediate objectives. Taking "women-as-women" as a position from which to act was the stepping stone from which a diversity of feminist projects were discursively constructed and modified in SLSJ women's service groups. These symbolic constructions, though, were not produced in a void, but amid a plurality of historically-located discourses.

I also propose to grasp these representations of the project in their materiality as discursive practices - that is, not only in substantive terms, as meanings encoded in texts, but as events that occur "in contexts", do something in these contexts, and are embedded in particular discursive politics. "Social movement groups," McCarthy, Britt and Wolfson have noted, "have become increasingly likely to write documents about their goals and procedures." (1991:46) The formalization, in writing, of organizational goals, political rationales, and approaches to action forges the unity of a collective actor which does not see itself as transient but, rather, attempts to ensure its continuity through time. Written representations of the project are directly implicated in the maintenance of an organization's orientations towards change. They fix - although sometimes only provisionally - the terms of the project and become a point of reference and a mechanism of socialization in the coming and going of individual activists. They also install an organizational structure of accountability, a mandate against which activists and members gauge and measure organizational activity, and have to answer for their work. Yet, representations of the project may also be produced to answer

to funding requirements. Their substance is then the outcome of specific discursive politics, whose character and consequences are bound to vary in relation to the specific features of given funding protocols, and in relation to the ability of movement organizations to strategize around the discourses favoured by funders, and to maintain (or to radicalize) their self-defined projects.

In this chapter, I will show that the construction and the transformations of the "representations of the project" in SLSJ women's service groups were the object of distinct discursive practices. These took place in the form of "discursive events" that occurred at distinctive "moments" in the life of SLSJ women's service groups. Mostly resulting from internal factors, they were also, sometimes, the outcome of intricate discursive manoeuvres and strategizing.

5.1: The initial project of women's service groups

The women who created SLSJ local women's service groups and proceeded to define their initial projects on the basis of "the position of women" did so from different socio-enunciative locations and experiences of women's organizing and, more often than not, before MAS/MSSS funds became widely available. "Taking women as a position from which to act" involved the discursive construction of this very position. Through a series of chosen examples, I show that founders produced initial projects that featured different representations of "what it means to be a woman" and of "what should be done about it". These projects were often limited to "answering women's needs", and usually composite in their

appropriation of "feminism". In this, they were not markedly different from the other "projects of services" elaborated in Québec over the same period.

a) Responding to unanswered women's needs

The creation of many women's services was anchored in a rationale that aimed at filling the gap between pressing "women's needs" and the absences or inadequacies of local institutional responses. Identifying the "need" was enough to justify taking action. Action, in turn, was mostly directed towards "meeting the need". Chicoutimi's Le Centre féminin and its rape crisis unit were created from this starting point.

Le Centre féminin was founded in 1975, in the wake of International Women's Year. A committee of 20 women documented the "need" for sheltering "women in difficulty". The absence of available resources and a sense of "emergency" justified action for setting up a shelter. *"L'urgence d'un tel service paraissait évidente et aucune ressource analogue n'existait à ce moment pour les femmes."* (Centre féminin, "Historique") "Meeting the need" at Le Centre féminin was limited to the objective of "helping women in difficulty", that is: to offer shelter, moral support, referral and accompaniment. Opened in 1976 in the basement of the convent of the *Soeurs du Bon Pasteur* (Catholic nuns), the shelter obtained funding from MAS in 1979. According to different observers, at the beginning of the 1980s the Board was composed of members of the local elite and nuns, religious values permeated the shelter, and intervention was largely *"laisser-faire"* (ISA, Interviews 7, 9; Interview 1988, Vandal 1984).

Faced with demands from women victims of sexual assault, the shelter

decided to create a "rape unit" in November of 1979. The new unit, however, existed only on paper as neither the Board nor the Director of the shelter moved to ensure effective advertising and co-ordination of the project. In 1981-82, the Board decided to apply for the supplementary funds made available to shelters by MAS (since 1980) for creating rape crisis units. A women criminologist was hired in September 1982 to organize the unit. She was soon joined by a nurse from the Chicoutimi hospital who was increasingly concerned, "in her practice as a health professional", by the way rape victims were treated. Women, she felt, did not receive the care they deserved. They had to wait long hours in the Emergency Ward, and sometimes left the hospital without having received any attention; doctors often did not want "to take the time" that lengthy medico-legal examinations and tests required (ISA, Interview 2).

Drafted by the Board of the Centre féminin, the original orientations of the rape unit called for a collaboration between the unit and a team of mainstream professionals from the Chicoutimi hospital, the *Centre de Services Sociaux*, and the *Aide Juridique*. The two women who led the 1982-83 reorganization reinterpreted these orientations from their own professional and experiential backgrounds. The idea of a team of collaborators was upheld, but the medical component of the team was foregrounded. A medico-legal approach was adopted that endorsed medical examination and the procedures for collecting evidence required for legal prosecution. Examinations were to be done on the premises of the rape unit, however, and not at the hospital. Medical professionals were required, but recruitment of such collaborators targeted exclusively female doctors and nurses.

Visits to rape crisis services operated by the Montreal General Hospital and the CLSC Montréal Métropolitain highlighted the importance of crisis counselling for rape victims. Yet "feminist intervention", despite being practised at the CLSCMM, was dismissed as "not credible" (Interview 2). Rather, standard psychosocial counselling was advocated. "Meeting the medical need" was the primary mission of the rape unit in its first years of operation, and this set it apart from the other rape crisis centers.

La salle d'examen, on a été le seul Centre [CALACS] à mettre ça sur pied au début. Les autres centres (...) n'avaient pas le côté médical. Ils n'étaient pas partis du besoin médical, mais du besoin psychosocial. Ils faisaient de l'accompagnement, ils allaient rejoindre les victimes à l'Urgence et ils faisaient le côté psychosocial. L'Urgence faisait le côté médical. (ISA, Interview 5:19)

The initial project of the rape unit thus first linked a "women's issue" - sexual assault - with existing, mainstream medico-legal and psychosocial modes of intervention. This project, however, was rapidly infused with a critique that underlined some of the inadequacies and gendered aspects of mainstream medical response, and that called for a "women-defined" alternative.

b) Constructing "the position of woman"

Women's center La Maison au Quatre-Temps d'Alma originated from the convergence of different women's organizations - *L'équipe Mieux-vivre*, *Le Centre de bénévolat du Lac*, the local AFEAS, *Forum des femmes*, *Le Collectif d'information juridique*, the regional section of the *Fédération des femmes du Québec*, and social-action-oriented *Fraternité des*

Hospitalières (Catholic nuns) - into a project of creating a "*Maison de la femme*". The initial project was two-pronged. The *Maison* would not only provide meeting space for "feminine associations"; it would also be a place "[pour] faire quelque chose ensemble pour la femme" (to do something together for "the woman") (Minutes, Nov. 12, 1982). Adopting this perspective, the founding committee undertook to devise a shared rationale and set of objectives to orient their action. Minutes from their meetings reveal these constructions. They provide a powerful illustration of the discursive work entailed when neither "the position of women" nor "the directions in which to act" can be considered a given.

The choice of the term "the woman" by the founders created a universal individual subject, an imagined constituency with imputed characteristics. "The woman" they portrayed was powerless: "*sans identité propre, pauvre, non-organisée, démunie de pouvoir et d'information*", and "*soumise*"¹. She was subjected to external forces: "*violentée, dépendante du mari, des enfants, du patron, culpabilisée par le milieu qui la rend responsable du chômage*"². She was objectified in advertisement ("*objet de la publicité*") and emotionally distressed ("*isolée, inquiète, angoissée, perdue, frustrée, dominée par la peur*") (Minutes, Nov. 15-16, 1982). This portrayal may have stemmed from the work these women's groups already did with actual women of their community. Yet, it is doubtful that their representatives, although themselves women, identified with such helplessness. The "woman" of their discourse was clearly an imagined one,

¹ Translation: without her own identity, poor, unorganized, without power and information, submissive.

² Translation: abused; dependent on the husband, children and boss; made to feel guilty and responsible for unemployment.

placed in a position of exteriority to that of the speaking subject (the founders), and to be acted upon by them.

Women from the founding committee ascribed expectations to "the woman". Answering the question "What does she want?", the committee appropriated well-known terms and themes of existing feminist discourses on behalf of "the woman" to articulate an emancipatory horizon. "*Ce qu'elle veut être*" (what does she want to be): "autonomous, full-fledged citizen, able to break the chains of her slavery, independent, *épanouie*³, accepted as a woman 'with her own identity', respected, consulted, recognized," and having "ties with other women". The emotional regime of this new subject was also targeted: "She" wanted to be "loved for herself, listened to, understood, and valued," as well as to be "responsible, active, courageous, and daring" (Minutes, Nov. 15-16, 1982).

What is to be done, then, to change the subject? How do "we", through the *Maison de la femme*, get "her" there? The formal objectives of the *Maison* included attending to the subject's emotional regime by providing a space where the woman could "feel at home, feel accepted for who she is and loved"; where she could be "supported, counselled and encouraged"; where she could "affirm herself, create, and revive her spirituality". Formal objectives also featured more militant feminist goals, for example: enabling the woman to be "*sensibilisée, solidarisée, conscientisée*", as well as "to learn new skills and abilities, to acquire a voice, to get involved in the community, and to get together with other women for the defense of her rights" (Minutes, Nov. 15-16, 1982).

The representation of the project elaborated by the founding

³ See note 4.

committee took the textual form of a juxtaposition of elements of vocabulary presented without clear definitions, hierarchies, or discursive context other than their co-occurrence. The terms used are not easily traceable to the distinct feminist discourses identified by academics (i.e., liberal, socialist, radical). Rather, they seem to have been snatched from a loose discursive field of complaints and grievances about "*la situation de la femme*." By the beginning of the 1980s in Québec, a large number of issues related to *la condition féminine* were already part of the world of representations of the majority of *les Québécoises*. Laments on the plight of women and emancipatory terms such as "*épanouissement*"⁴, "equality", "independence", and "autonomy" were not the prerogative of any specific strand of feminism. Rather, they had been popularized in everyday discourse by the media as well as through the activity of a variety of women's organizations. Equally important is the co-occurrence of these elements of feminist discourses with a vocabulary of "personal growth". The project of Maison au Quatre-Temps indicates the availability of this type of discourse to talk about "women". At the same time, it also reveals the awareness of local organizers of the emotional dimension of *la condition féminine*. The articulation of personal growth to local feminist discourses directs attention to the work on emotions and perceptions of the self that are involved in attempts to transform women's subjectivities (see Chapter 6).

The disparate collection of fragments that composed the project of Maison au Quatre-Temps indexed a wide range of issues, means and goals in

⁴ Literally: "in full bloom". "*L'épanouissement de la femme*" was a strong and well-known popular metaphor that pointed to the actualization of women's individual and social potential.

everyday language. Despite its non-analytic stance and lack of internal consistency, this assemblage enabled the center to gain in scope, in potential audience, and in consensus-building capacity. The "local version of feminism" produced by Maison au Quatre-Temps stands as an example of a "popular", composite feminist discourse that was by no means limited to this particular group.

c) The trouble with feminism: identification and distancing

"Needs" identified through a survey funded by a Canada Works project, in the summer of 1979, were at the origin of the creation of Centre féminin La Source. Most urgent for local women were access to "information" on the topics of women's health, work and rights. Support was sought from the local AFEAS and the Adult Education Service of the local schoolboard. Members of the founding committee resisted orientations towards "questioning gender relations" proposed by the professional "*animatrice*" from the schoolboard. They preferred, rather, a "softer approach" to women's issues, while at the same time distinguishing themselves from L'AFEAS (La Source, Interview 16:12-22). The project that emerged favoured the creation of a place where women could meet, exchange with one another, and find information on issues of concern to women (Etoile du Lac 14-01-1981, 11-02-1981; La Source, Invitation to official opening).

The center opened in January 1981 under the name of "Centre féminin La Source". It was staffed by seven project workers with various backgrounds and formal training - housewives, a rural primary school teacher, a secretary, a waitress. At least three of them had only attended

high school. Most of them had little or no organizing experience, although two were members of the local AFEAS. The initial goals of the center were: providing women with a place to meet, organizing "*cafés-rencontres*" and conferences, and helping women with their decisions regarding work, health or other issues ("Rapport de projet", 1981). Four workshops a week were offered that used outside professionals and other experts to convey information. Themes were heavily centered on women's work (focusing on access to the job market), on women's health (concerned with women's sexuality and reproductive health), and on the family (highlighting issues related to divorce and female single parenthood). Also offered were a number of workshops on more explicitly feminist themes (for example: "Solidarity among women", "What is the *Conseil du Statut de la Femme?*", "Women and Politics", "Sexism" and "Stereotypes").

Like Maison au Quatre-Temps, La Source located itself in the broad field of *la condition feminine*, identifying a broad range of needs, grievances, or problems as specific to women. The dissemination of available information and discussion and exchange among women were its preferred strategy. Local responses were strong, and polarized. Women flocked to the workshops "*en masse*", comforting the founders in their analysis of "women's needs for information". Largely unexpectedly, the staff also found itself overwhelmed by demands for help from women who were battered, or depressed, or were in the process of separating from their husbands, or had experienced sexual assault. Moreover, one month after the opening, at the March 8th celebrations they helped organize, women from La Source were outflanked (Interview 12) by a more radical fraction of their constituency who seized the occasion to take a public

position against local bar *Clito-Sexe* (strip club). The center received threatening phone calls; a more general backlash developed. According to one of the founders,

Nous autres, on était étiquetées. On passait dans la rue pis il y a des femmes qui changeaient de trottoir pour ne pas nous parler, pour ne pas que les gens pensent qu'elles... ont besoin du centre de femmes. (...) Il y a plusieurs personnes qui me disaient: "t'as du en manger de la misère, pour travailler sur un projet comme ça! (Interview 12:55-56)

A member of the 1989 collective also recalled:

Dans le milieu, le fait de travailler au centre, c'était mal vu. (...) Les gens disaient: "les femmes qui travaillent là, elles vont toutes se séparer." Quand les gens savaient que je travaillais au Centre féminin, c'était fini. C'était épouvantable.

[Interviewer: "Pourquoi?"]

On apprenait des choses. On devenait au courant de ce qui se passait, des lois, de nos droits. C'était la peur qu'on en sache trop. (Interview 13:21-22)

Although the adjective "feminine" made a non-threatening public statement of the center's intentions, La Source's seemingly tranquil strategy of providing information to local women, be they in difficulty or not, was not inconsequential. The experience of the first project transformed La Source's representations in various ways. The backlash and the accusation of being "a hotbed of extremist feminists" forced leaders of La Source to take a clearer position on "feminism".

Publicly appropriating the label in an interview for the local newspaper, women from La Source defined "being feminist" as promoting the extension of women's rights and well-being (Etoile du Lac 15-07-1981).

They also produced a promotional pamphlet in which they attempted to regain control on La Source's image by stating for all to see not only "what the center is" but "what its goals are not". *Were not* among the goals of the center: "condoning gossip", "favouring games or arts and crafts", "deciding for women", "promoting divorce", "depreciating men", or "providing a gathering place for lesbians" (Pamphlet, 1982). While maintaining its identification with feminism, La Source distanced itself from two poles. On the right: from "traditional" feminine organizations and "*club sociaux*" (social clubs), as well as from stereotyped feminine tittle-tattle; and on the left: from "un-acceptable" versions of feminism that included "influencing women", critiquing men (or patriarchy) and challenging compulsory heterosexuality.

La Source's pamphlet illustrates the discursive associations the leaders of many women's organizations felt compelled to parry. Such re-significations of "feminism" were pervasive and made the label difficult to wear, particularly in rural contexts and in peripheral regions. Mobilizing the power of feminist discourses and practices for the cause of women entailed fending off these re-significations. At La Source, like at l'AFEAS (J. Lamoureux 1993:131), affirming the legitimacy of feminism involved an identification with a discourse of women's rights, as well as a distancing from other forms of feminism that remained un-critical of the prejudices that surrounded the latter.

d) Initial representations of the project: unity and diversity

The 1960s and early 1970s in Québec, Jocelyne Lamoureux argues, witnessed important transformations in the social representations of "the

feminine". Individualization processes linked to the social, economic and cultural changes of the post-war era favoured the emergence of liberal representations of "women as individuals" rather than as "appendixes of the family" (i.e., women-as-mothers, women-as-spouses) (1993:61-62; see Jenson 1987b for a similar argument for France). A new subject position, "women-as-women", was made available. Yet the socio-political context still denied women's individuality and autonomy in many ways. This new representation of women provided the discursive grounds for contemporary feminism. "For the first time," Jenson contends, it permitted "women", that is: "alone and outside a family frame of reference" and "unencumbered by a familial or other adjectival designation" (Jenson 1987b:82, 1991:69), to be deployed as a social category and a political actor. "Women-as-women" had become an object and a subject of political discourse. This discursive position of "women-as-women" still had to be mobilized for new claims and new collective identities to emerge - that is, to acquire a political saliency. From the perspective of local women's organizing, mobilizing the position of "women-as-women" as a basis from which to act permitted new "needs" to be defined, "gaps" in the treatment of these needs to be identified, and new claims to be made. This point of departure, though, did not entail the constitution of homogeneous projects of services around discursively unified and "politicized" representations of "women" and orientations to action.

Initial projects in SLSJ women's service groups were anchored in women's "needs" for help, for a place, and for information. Their representations of "the position of women" and of "what should be done about it" were often limited to answering the need. Le Centre féminin and

its rape unit went little beyond helping individual women to cope with the aftermath of violence. At Quatre-Temps and La Source, answering the need led to the creation of a "women's place", that is, of basic infrastructure for women's organizing and for the dissemination of knowledges about women and their issues. Identification of initial projects with feminism took various routes. Le Centre féminin saw itself as an outcome of a larger movement of concerns for the situation of women emerging from International Women's Year and the "women's movement". Other groups, like women's centers Maison au Quatre-Temps, Centre féminin La Source, and the Centre communautaire féminin de Chibougamau (CCFC), drew on the wide field of *la condition féminine*. Their projects articulated diverse and "composite" versions of feminism that appropriated the most popular elements of Québec feminism (*épanouissement*, autonomy, equality, ameliorating the situation of women).

Yet, identifying with "feminism" was not an easy process. Founders of the rape unit initially rejected "feminist" modes of intervention. La Source felt compelled to distance itself from particular varieties of feminism. Socio-political discourses about "women", although expressed or encountered in the founding years, remained marginal except at shelter La Chambrée where founders were trained in feminist social work. Despite the fragmentary information on the early days of women's center/shelter Halte-Secours, and of shelters L'Auberge de l'amitié and L'Aquarelle, it can safely be assumed that their initial representations of the project did not stray too far from these examples. Nor were the projects of women's services in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean very different from the ones that were formulated elsewhere in Québec at the time.

Reliable information on the projects of early women's service groups in Québec, in particular on CALACS and women's centers, is scattered or non-existent. It is generally, and correctly admitted that the aims of local women's services in the 1970s were, minimally, to provide women with women-defined and women-controlled collective resources in response to the absence or inadequacy of institutional responses to what were seen as "problems" and "needs" that were specific to "women". The first shelters and the first rape crisis centers set themselves to the task of countering the lack of recognition of battery and rape by state agencies, and more specifically the inadequacy of their treatment of abused women (see Brodeur et al. 1982, Beaudry 1984, Colgan 1986, Shragge and Létourneau 1987, also Lacombe 1990). Women's centers saw their mission as arising from the necessity to bring local responses to a diversity of unanswered "women's problems" and "women's needs" (L'R 1986:13). Beyond these rather broad statements, the diversity of the projects underlying women's services in Québec defies any quick attempt at further characterization.

Although some have wanted to see in early women's services the actualization of a radical feminist consciousness (see for example D. Lamoureux 1988, 1990), empirical accounts strongly suggest that this was neither necessarily, nor even generally the case. Beaudry's (1984) well-documented work on the first shelters shows that a quarter of the shelters⁵ were in the hands of "*les religieuses*" (Catholic nuns). They aimed at protecting and helping "women in difficulty" according to a philosophy of justice inspired by renewed ideals of Christian charity (76-

⁵ Out of a total of 38 circa 1983 according to Beaudry's list (1984:107-108).

78)⁶. The majority of shelters, Beaudry writes, were created by "*des ménagères*" (housewives). Reflecting women's socialization to "caring", these shelters viewed their intervention as "answering women's needs", and few saw their work as encompassing political pressure (79-88). Only a small number of shelters were founded by younger women influenced by radical feminism, and included activities of awareness-raising and advocacy (82-83, 90-91). This diversity in origins and orientations among the early shelters is highly visible in the history of the creation and consolidation of the *Regroupement provincial des maisons d'hébergement* (see *Regroupement provincial des maisons* [1985a]:2, also Lacombe 1990:77).

Dure découverte pour plusieurs que cet éparpillement des objectifs qui, pendant les premières années, va hypothéquer toute tentative d'action concertée. Toutes les tendances sont au rendez-vous (...) et un long travail de convergence sera nécessaire pour créer une réelle solidarité, du moins au niveau des stratégies d'action. (Beaudry 1984:17)

There are indications that a similar diversity in initial objectives, action and projects also existed among Québec women's centers, as well as among CALACS. Feminist-identified *Centre des femmes* and *Centre d'information et de référence pour les femmes* described by Brodeur et al. (1982:33-35) were a world apart from Québec City's *Centre femmes*, sponsored by the Canadian Association of Mental Health and the YWCA (see monograph by Côté 1994). The majority of the founders of women's centers, Fournier and Gagnon further note, were not "*des féministes de longue date*,

⁶ Section 1.3 c) (Chapter 1) illustrates other ways (material, financial) in which Catholic nuns and other religious institutions supported women's service groups in SLSJ local communities.

mais des femmes issues de différents milieux qui [voulaient] appliquer dans "le quotidien les idées véhiculées à partir des années 1970." (1991:204-205) Finally, while some rape crisis centers aimed at "changing the system", others, such as CAPAS Châteauguay were created with the initial objective of "helping rape victims" (Shragge and Létourneau 1987:32, see also Racine 1994:46). Divergences and conflicts stemming from this diversity also affected the first years of the *Regroupement québécois des CALACS* (Regroupement québécois des CALACS 1991:9). The "project" underlying the actions of Québec shelters, women's centers, and rape crisis centers was not given in advance, nor was it univocal. Rather, projects were multiple, and highly variable in the ways in which they articulated their feminisms.

5.2: The *Politique d'aide*: a terrain shaped by feminist struggles

The 1985 *Politique d'aide aux femmes violentées* acted as MAS' official guidelines on the issue of "*la violence faite aux femmes*" (violence against women). The representations of violence and its causes put forward by the policy constituted a discursive terrain that was profoundly shaped by the actions of the women's movement.

Credit for the pressures leading to the development of the *Politique d'aide* was given by MAS to two main actors: Québec's *Conseil du statut de la femme* and women's service groups. The policy was presented as MAS' response to the recommendations regarding violence against women⁷ proposed

⁷ The Conseil's recommendations, it is important to note, were the result of a political process that included the consultation of 116 women's organizations (CSF 1978:xix-xx).

in CSF's 1978 *Politique d'ensemble de la condition féminine*. More importantly perhaps, the policy was "largely inspired", the Minister's foreword stated, "from the action and the approach" developed "by women and groups from the community". Women's groups - shelters and CALACS, in particular - were recognized as the pioneers of the reflection on violence against women, and of the development of specific and adequate forms of assistance. They were also credited with "having succeeded in making governments and the population aware" of this violence, of its "causes and consequences" (MAS 1985:3-4).

In addition, two other sets of references were employed to grant legitimacy to the "*énoncé de problématique*" that operated as the rationale for the policy. First, the "expertise" that buttressed the policy's analytical and empirical claims was composed mostly of a body of academic and governmental feminist literature on battery and rape. Second, authority on the matter was also granted to the report of the 1980-81 Regional Colloquiums, organized jointly by MAS, the CSF and the Justice Department, with the participation of professionals from MAS and representatives from women's groups. Both "scientific" and more practically oriented sources were used to support the feminist analysis of violence promoted by the *Politique d'aide*.

The analysis presented in the *Politique d'aide* aimed at establishing the reality of violence against women and at explaining its causes to an intended audience composed chiefly of MAS' network of establishments, women's groups, and specialized publics. "The abuse of women," the policy affirmed, "has always existed" (MAS 1985:6). Statistics were brought both to "prove" the existence and to establish the prevalence of battery and

rape. "Conjugal violence" was defined as "the violence inflicted on a woman by her husband or companion" (43); rape as "a violent sexual attack" and a "sexual crime"⁸ (8). The physical and psychological consequences of violence against women and children were systematically laid out, and the necessity of intervening to meet the individual "needs" of abused women and their children was affirmed.

"Causes" were related to gendered power relations. Men were named as the ones who battered and raped: "husband or companion, father, brothers, sons, landlord or strangers." (MAS 1985:6) Violence against women was not merely linked to the unequal status of women in society, it was the consequence of "the power of husbands and fathers over the women and children they 'owned'", a power "implicitly extended" in a more general way "to all men over all women" (6). Citing the Report of the Regional Colloquiums, the policy identified "the relationship of domination of men over women" as the underlying cause of violence against women. "Social and cultural norms" were targeted as "permitting and even encouraging this domination of men over women by making resources and powers more readily available to the former" (6). Differences in the socialization of men and women, the economic dependence of women, but most of all a series of preconceptions and prejudices regarding battery and rape were made responsible for the persistence of violence against women (7, 9). Debunking the most widespread of these preconceptions (for example: "women like and/or deserve to be beaten", "men's sexual urges are uncontrollable") made it necessary to intervene on "mores and

⁸ The policy pre-dated the criminalization of "conjugal violence". Only sexual assault could be legally referred to as a "crime" in 1985.

mentalities".

Not only was a feminist analysis of violence foregrounded in the *Politique d'aide*, but it was appropriated by MAS in a relatively unmediated manner, at least as a rationale for action. Three policy goals stemmed from this "*problématique*". First: "promoting actions aimed at changing mentalities and behaviours"; second: "participating in actions aimed at combating and preventing violence against women" and, third: meeting women's health and social services needs by "improving services for abused women" (MAS 1985:20-21).

The approach to intervention favoured by the 1985 *Politique d'aide* could not be accused of shoring up the family. On the contrary, the policy directly attacked as "preconceptions" "shared by some professionals" the notion that "the *foyer conjugal* is off-limits to any outside intervention" and that its unity should go undisturbed (MAS 1985:7). Effective action in these matters, the policy stated, "demands a revision of our concepts for intervening in family affairs." (8) Such a revision, it was implied, needed to be consistent with the analysis presented in the text of the policy. It was also to be consistent with a policy whose "principles" insisted, among others, on "the respect of the autonomy of persons", that is: "on the respect by health and social services professionals of the decisions and choices made by the persons themselves regarding their lives." (20) Finally, this revision should use as an example the activities and approaches of women's groups.

The *Politique d'aide* effectively proposed to tap into the modes of intervention of women's service groups for the development and improvement of the services to be provided by the Ministry's agencies. Repeated

statements about women's groups having developed "adapted", "adequate", "specific" services were textually counter-posed to the necessity of developing such a response in MAS' network. Moreover, the policy stressed MAS' interest in drawing on the "approaches and knowledges" (1985:31) and on the "preventive activities" developed by women's groups (1985:28). In this sense, and in keeping with the tradition of the SOC programme, the *Politique d'aide* sought to enrol women's organizations in a process of welfare state formation.

The policy that regulated the funding of women's service groups thus included a feminist analysis of violence emphasizing the role of male domination; goals that promoted, in addition to the development of adequate services, combative action at the level of collective representations and conducts; and the approaches to intervention of women's groups. These inclusions made the policy into a discursive terrain permeated by feminist analyses of the position of women and of "what should be done about it" - that is, the policy was shaped by representations put forward by the Québec women's movement milieu.

Two main consequences for women's service groups can be said to follow. First, by making these feminist representations part of the official stance of the Ministry regarding violence against women, the *Politique d'aide* legitimized and helped their dissemination in women's service organizations. Second, the *Politique d'aide* established feminist analyses and approaches as the obligatory reference for MAS' network of agencies and professionals. The "competitors" of women's groups were thus placed by their Ministry in a position where *they* had to conform to feminist service work, and not the other way around. The pressure

identified in the literature on women's services to "conservatize" by adopting "legitimate", that is: mainstream models of intervention, was thus removed.

The extent to which the *Politique d'aide* included feminist representations makes the institutionalization of the issue of violence in Quebec a very different case than the one studied by Walker (1990a, 1990b). In Ontario, a discourse of "family violence" and "wife assault" put forward by mainstream professionals prevailed. Intervention favoured "fixing-up" the family (1990b:69, 1990a:17-18) and enforcing "individual women's rights to protection from the violent acts of individual men" (1990a:207). "Who did what to whom" remained unnamed, the role of the organization of society in the oppression of women was unchallenged, consciousness-raising was evacuated from institutional intervention, and feminist services were pressured "to operate in a traditional institutional manner." (1990b:69, 1990a:20, 213). Not only was the outcome of these struggles over the definition of battery and rape different in Québec, but the position of MAS professionals in these discursive politics was itself permeated by a feminist discourse. Their analysis of violence, as presented in the policy, was markedly inspired by feminism (MAS 1985). They were also involved in developing feminist forms of intervention (see Chapter 6). Professionals, it appears, were not reproducing gendered "relations of ruling".

5.3: Women's centers between "women in difficulty" and "women's autonomy"

The focus of the *Politique d'aide* on violence provided little

grounds for accommodating the multi-issue and polyvalent projects developed by women's centers. To gain broader recognition and financial support for its member groups, newly created *L'R des centres de femmes du Québec* undertook to mobilize the discursive points of entry made available by the texts of the SOC programme and the *Politique d'aide*. L'R and local women's centers entered into a dialogical process of definition of their mission that bore the mark of their efforts to locate themselves more firmly on MSSS' discursive terrain. At the same time, however, they also strove to open up this discursive terrain in ways that would favour the inclusion, and the deployment of the broader projects defined as "women's centers'". How did this strategy work itself out and with what consequences for the representations of the project of local women's centers?

a) Defining "women's centers": L'R's balancing act

Following its foundation, in 1985, L'R created a special committee on "funding" which had, among other tasks, "to establish the specific vocation of women's centers" (L'R 1986:9). Through the work of this committee, L'R undertook to construct a specific identity for the collection of multi-issue *maisons des femmes*, *centres féminins*, and *centres pour femmes* that composed its membership. This work produced a definition of "women's centers'" objectives, approaches and means of action to be adopted and shared by all member groups, and to represent them in their pursuits (L'R 1986). This attempt at fixing and collectivizing the features of "women's centers' project" took place within a strategy aimed at formalizing and expanding state funding to L'R

and its members. The terms of this project, while also mobilizable in funding strategies directed at the Secretary of State Women's Programme and the *Programme OVEP* of the *Ministère de l'éducation du Québec*⁹, were mainly addressed to MSSS from which L'R demanded a contribution representing two-thirds of women's centers' "typical budget".

The "vocation" of women's centers was presented as follows. Women's centers acted locally in the field of "*la condition féminine dans son ensemble*." More specifically, they were conceived as: "*Une alternative à l'isolement psycho-social des femmes*"; "*Des lieux d'appartenance et de transition*"; "*Un réseau d'entraide et d'action*"; "*Des ressources locales polyvalentes, légères et accessibles*." To fulfil their vocation, women's centers favoured four modes of intervention: "services", "educational activities", "collective actions", and "research and experimentation" (R 1986:13-17).

A closer look at the 1986 and 1987 versions of this "*Cadre de référence*" (L'R 1986, 1987), reveals a carefully crafted balancing act, dialogically situated at the intersection of two different discourses. One of the discourses that was articulated by the *Regroupement* in these texts was a "socio-sanitary" discourse about "women" and the role of women's centers, constructed to appeal to MSSS. The other was a feminist discourse that was used to re-signify the former, challenge its limits, and carve out space for a project that was defined simultaneously on and outside

⁹ Specific *Cadres de référence* strategically tailored for negotiating with the Secretary of State were produced in 1989, and in 1992 for the *Ministère de l'éducation du Québec* (L'R 1989, 1992).

MSSS' terrain¹⁰.

In 1985, women's centers were funded at the SOC under the terms of its "women in difficulty" sector which included, "notably" (i.e., not exhaustively) "problems of violence, economic dependency, and loneliness" (MSSS-SOC 1984-85). L'R exploited this register to articulate a socio-sanitary discourse centered on the effects of "women's psychosocial isolation" (L'R 1986). Women, or at least the majority of women who came to women's centers, were depicted as housewives or single parents from low-income milieux, isolated and often distraught by changes in their lives, vulnerable to all sorts of health and social "problems" and in danger of falling into "multiple dependencies" (L'R 1986, 1987). L'R also underlined the involvement of women's centers regarding the - changing - *problématiques* deemed "of concern to the Ministry": health, violence, and women's socio-economic condition in 1986 (L'R 1986); women's mental health, violence against women, and youth protection in 1987 (L'R 1987), the latter being changed to "sexual violence" in 1991 (L'R 1991). L'R stressed the "preventive" role women's centers played regarding these problems, and emphasized their flexibility in answering women's needs and developing local resources.

Through these discursive devices, L'R located the project of women's centers in a continuum of health and social services, on the discursive terrain of MSSS, whose mandate was increasingly defined in terms of answering psychosocial, mental health and physical health problems. A second register, however, was available in the institutional forms that

¹⁰ This project was also defined on and outside the feminist terrain delimited by the Secretary of State's Women's Programme (see Chapter 8).

regulated the funding of women's groups. The 1985 *Politique d'aide* encompassed a provision that made funds available, through SOC, to organizations other than shelters and rape crisis centers, providing they "offer[ed] help, support, information, referral to abused women or any type of activity favourable to the development of women's autonomy" (MAS 1985:55, my emphasis).

"Developing women's autonomy" occupied a very interesting place in MAS' discourse. On the one hand, it was articulated to a discourse aimed at redefining the citizen's role in welfare, and where autonomy meant the reliance of the citizen on herself and on her community - rather than on the Ministry's agencies. On the other hand, it expressed the political inclusion of a broad-based, multi-directional, and highly popularized feminist objective of self-determination¹¹. In defining the project of women's centers, L'R played simultaneously on both sets of meanings: advocating women's self-determination of their own needs, projects, and resources, and emphasizing the economic advantages for MSSS of such "self-reliance"¹².

As a discursive point of entry for negotiating the inclusion of the project of women's centers at MSSS, "developing women's autonomy" opened up a largely uncharted domain of issues and activities. It could also be

¹¹ In this, I would suggest, it could be seen as part of the Ministry's commitment to a process of "modernization of the status of women", following a tradition established by the Québec government in the early 1970s.

¹² From 1987-88 onwards, MSSS acknowledged the coexistence of these two sets of meanings in its definition of the women's sector at SOC. This sector encompassed organizations "*qui favorisent les démarches d'autonomie et de prise en charge des femmes par elles-mêmes dans le domaine de la santé et des services sociaux*" (MSSS-SOC 1987-88 to 1996-97).

legitimately mobilized to anchor the project of women's centers in a feminist discourse, back on the terrain of women's self-organizing. Bridging between "helping women in difficulty" and "aiming at women's autonomy" the central tenet of the project of women's centers, as conceived by L'R, was their "global approach". The centers addressed women "as women" and in their "totality". Developing women's autonomy called not only for direct services (i.e., "help"), but also for awareness-raising activities on the social causes of individual problems, for the acquisition by women of new knowledges, and for their involvement in collective actions geared towards change: organizing, changing mentalities, defending women's rights. The "modes of intervention" of women's centers, they argued, were indissociable of one another (L'R 1986, 1987). Such was the project that L'R proposed to its member groups, and for which it claimed financial recognition at MSSS.

b) Strategizing around the project at the local level

Part of the strategy devised by L'R to gain a formal funding policy for women's centers at MSSS included a direct attempt at standardizing the discourse of local women's centers in their relationships with MSSS. In addition to the wide distribution of the 1986 (general) and 1987 *Cadres de référence* to its member groups (L'R 1986, 1987), L'R fashioned for local centers a series of guidelines for filling MSSS grant application forms (L'R 1988). The guidelines were very explicit in asking local centers to define themselves, their constituency, and their action on MSSS' terrain.

Elements of a socio-sanitary discourse appropriate to MSSS' concerns were to be emphasized by local women's centers. L'R recommended they

underline those among their objectives that corresponded to the Ministry's objectives. Examples provided included: "helping women escape passivity," "dependence," and "isolation". Description of the "clientele" of the centers should highlight "health and social problems", "in synch with MSSS' areas of concern", such as "mental health, conjugal violence, single parenthood, use of prescription drugs and alcohol". Description of activities should insist on "services" and on the "preventive aspects" of women centers' work, including the development of women's autonomy (L'R 1988).

A look at local women's centers 1989-90 grant application forms shows that these guidelines were followed. For example, La Source applied the directives of L'R regarding the level of funding demanded from MSSS (\$50,000). La Source also used L'R's guidelines in its own way. The group's "foundation story" was rewritten to emphasize a raising awareness of problems of mental health, conjugal violence, pornography, and isolation experienced by women. Description of the "clientele" stressed women's "adaptation and mental health problems" resulting from geographical isolation, a narrow job market, low levels of education and a high unemployment rate for women. Objectives and priorities were described as "developing women's autonomy", "bringing women together to find the answers to their needs", "informing and sensitizing" and "changing mentalities". La Source's description of activities did emphasize direct services (individual and group intervention). Yet, a wide array of activities was also listed: popular education sessions (with a focus on health), Women's Day organizing, training, interventions in the media, concerted action and political representation.

The language of this grant application clearly shows La Source attempting to "talk MSSS' talk", especially in its description of "women's problems" and "clientele". However, La Source's self-definition was not limited to holding a socio-sanitary discourse for MSSS' benefit. A feminist discourse was also articulated in the description of objectives and actions. Insistence on "women's autonomy", "bringing women together", "changing mentalities" through an array of activities went beyond direct services to include the main elements of the "global approach" advocated by L'R. The strategic and reflexive work behind the application to MSSS can be better appreciated when compared to La Source's demand for core funding to the Secretary of State that same year. References to women's health and social services problems were dropped; emphasis was placed on collective action, the defense of rights, and bringing about social change.

Have women's centers adjusted their project to the exigencies of MSSS funding? From what precedes we can surmise that the answer to this question is complex. I have argued so far that women's centers, first at L'R, then in local centers, did tailor their project to fit the terms of MSSS funding. They did locate themselves within a socio-sanitary discourse preoccupied by women's "problems" in the health and social field. They did position themselves as providers of direct services and preventive activities. They played on MSSS' interest for responsible citizenship and other cost reduction measures. Yet, women's centers did so in a way that challenged the limits of this discourse by including strong components of a broader, feminist project of awareness-raising and organizing for change that took them way beyond "servicing women in difficulty".

5.4: Representations of the projects in the late 1980s

While some local women's service groups were receiving MSSS funds through SOC since the early 1980s (Le Centre féminin, the rape unit), most groups obtained their funding in the second part of the 1980s. By the end of the 1980s, all SLSJ women's service groups had secured MSSS funding under the combined terms of the "women in difficulty" sector at SOC and the *Politique d'aide aux femmes violentées*. By that time, the goals and rationales for action put forward by these groups had also changed, sometimes drastically. The direction taken by these changes, however, was not the one predicted by the "pessimistic" strand of the literature.

a) Analysing "the position of women"

The projects of local women's service groups, in the late eighties, were grounded in a more analytic rationale than their early eighties counterparts. "Taking women as a position from which to act" was not limited anymore to the simple exposition of grievances, or "urgent needs". An analytic conception of the position of women now offered explanations for women's problems and needs. Typically, these analyses identified socio-political causes to women's plight, searching for the source of the problems beyond the individual, in the organization of society, and of gender relations of power.

The analyses put forward by SLSJ women's service groups at the end of the eighties all collectivized individual women's problems and directed attention to social causes. Appropriating a statement from their *Regroupement*, local women's centers typically affirmed that "women's

problems are social rather than individual". Similarly, sexual assault and conjugal violence were viewed as "a social problem, not an individual one", by the CALACS and all the shelters. Even the - more "mainstream" - Centre féminin went as far as to state:

La violence conjugale n'est pas un problème intra-personnel mais plutôt le reflet de la situation sociale, politique, économique, de toutes les femmes dans notre société. C'est le produit d'un rapport de domination entre les hommes et les femmes. (Annual Report 1990)

As this citation illustrates, not only were specific grievances and problems defined as "social", but they were understood as part of a larger ensemble of social, political and economic conditions shared by all women. For the groups, this ensemble also had to be problematized.

For example, Maison Halte-Secours, the Dolbeau shelter, placed conjugal violence within a larger context: "conjugal violence must be analysed beyond blood and bruises" ("La vie de couple, un passeport pour la violence," March 1990). This larger context was the one of "the social power granted to men over women": "the power to control women's lives", "bodies", "spirits", and "hearts". It was also the one of a whole society that condoned violence, did not protect women and accused them of being responsible for the violence of which they were the victims. As Halte-Secours' article defined the social power of men over women as "the power to hit and to decide", the responsibility of "men", and of society's institutions for violence against women were discursively made to overlap.

In much the same way, different forms of gendered power were identified by local women's groups. An analysis linking conjugal violence

to "inequality between the sexes", itself understood in term of the relations of power of men over women, was adopted by shelter La Chambrée ("Pochette de presse", 1990). Activists from Maison ISA emphasized a more systemic view of these relations of power. They analysed sexual assault as "the outcome of a society where relations between men and women are unequal [i.e., "Men are dominant, women are dominated"], and are maintained by a social, political, economic, and cultural organization that legitimizes this inequality" and "upholds men's privileges to the detriment of women's legitimate rights." ("Ce que nous pensons des agressions à caractère sexuel", 1988)

For shelters Maison Halte-Secours and L'Auberge de l'amitié (as well as for the *Regroupement* provincial des maisons 1990a), this system had a name: patriarchy. "A patriarchal structure based on the oppression of women by men" was responsible not only for conjugal violence, but for making all women susceptible, to varying degrees, "to experiencing these relationships of oppression in the job market, in the medical, judicial, political, social or economic worlds." (Auberge, Document for representation, 1990) Joining the *Regroupement québécois des CALACS* in 1989, Maison ISA formally adhered to the analysis featured in the *Regroupement's* "Base d'unité"¹³ (a condition for membership), thus adding "patriarchy" to an analysis already anchored in a broad view of gender relations of power.

Local women's centers, for their part, did not make their analyses as explicit (at least in the public documents gathered for the research). However, their understanding of systemic causes can be inferred from the

¹³ See *Regroupement québécois des CALACS* [1988].

repeated references made to "discrimination", "prejudice", the "domination" of men over women, and the "oppression of women" (La Source, Quatre-Temps, Maria Chapdelaine, CCFC).

b) Goals and objectives

Although a definite type of goals and objectives might be expected to follow from these rationales, the question of "goals" is more complex. By the end of the 1980s, statements of goals and objectives¹⁴ had increasingly become "strategic". Goals had become "means of action" in themselves for addressing, with different strategic purposes, different audiences: MSSS, the Secretary of State, Revenue Canada; core activists, members, or women from the community. Leaving aside the goals fashioned for grant applications, which were often highly customized to suit funders' priorities (this Chapter, see also Chapter 8), we can see that different "internal" versions, or more adequately perhaps, layered sets of goals often coexisted. Taken together, these sets of statements constituted "local universes of goals and objectives" in which each SLSJ women's service group operated. By the end of the 1980s, goals had expanded significantly beyond "helping women" and "providing information". And in more than half the groups, they were the outcomes of conscious decisions aimed at "changing the project", as well as the expression of a political will to align on projects defined and promoted by the provincial *Regroupements*.

¹⁴ I use "goals and objectives" rather interchangeably, as local women's service groups did. Goals and objectives mentioned in this chapter always have an empirical referent, and are not imputed from a meta-narrative.

- The shelters

~ In 1989, shelter Maison Halte-Secours undertook a series of actions geared towards transforming its representations and public image "for a better correspondence" with "actual reality". It created an ad hoc committee with the mandate of providing the corporation with a written text reflecting its goals, objectives, philosophy, and orientations. The shelter's central goal remained "helping women victims of conjugal violence and their children", mostly by "supporting the battered woman on her path towards autonomy", "helping her to recover her identity *comme personne humaine à part entière*", and "enabling her to discover her own resources and the resources of others". Additional objectives proposed "playing a preventive role in the population" and "being present" in the organizational environment ("Politiques et code d'éthique", 1989). The 1989-90 Annual Report provided a different balance of goals. The shelter was described as possessing a "triple mission", which was seen to encompass, in a formulation borrowed from the shelter's *Regroupement* (1990c): "the promotion of, sensitization to, and the defense of the rights and interests of women victims of conjugal violence"; service provision; and representation. The report identified Maison Halte-Secours as part of "*les groupes féministes*", and feminist intervention as one of the main elements of its "global approach".

Although La Chambrée's relatively tame formal goals had remained unmodified at the beginning of 1991, its representatives stated that the shelter was committed to feminist intervention and that it shared "all the objectives enunciated in the *Charte d'intervention des maisons d'hébergement*" (FDR:5). This Charter, the first of its kind, had been

adopted in January of 1990 by the members of the *Regroupement provincial des maisons* (1990a) after an intensive self-reflexive process in which representatives of the *Regroupement* toured the province to provide member shelters with the opportunity to participate in the definition of common orientations. Shelter L'Auberge de l'amitié, also member of the *Regroupement*, went further than La Chambrée. It defined itself, its approach and its principles through a five-page public document whose terms were directly transcribed from those of the Charter. Changing the grammatical subject of the text to "L'Auberge" and selecting as theirs some of the "principles" of the Charter, representatives of the shelter crafted their own version of a project established, at the provincial level, within a wider movement collectivity.

L'Auberge's version prioritized the offer of services, albeit qualified as "alternative". It also adhered to a series of underlying "principles" that functioned as a wider set of goals. Among these principles were: "Promoting women's and children's autonomy, respect, freedom, and potential"; "developing solidarity among women"; "deprivatizing" violence. "The promotion of women's economic, political and social equality" was advocated, within the vision of a society founded on "egalitarian relationships between men and women", as well as on "women's and children's rights to dignity, integrity, and justice." In this perspective, "profound modifications in the structures of our society" had to "be claimed". To work towards these goals, the document claimed, "we have chosen to intervene as feminists", "within a feminist perspective", and using "feminist intervention" as our model (Document for representation, 1990).

Adhesion to the 1990 text of the Charter signalled the political alignment of La Chambrée and L'Auberge on representations of the project that were put forward by the *Regroupement* as a whole¹⁵. Alignment operated in a symbolic as well as in a material way. The Charter defined for La Chambrée and L'Auberge a "horizon of becoming", setting them on a trajectory that included emancipatory goals they had not formulated with the same clarity. The Charter also embodied a new, intermediate "structure of accountability".

The accountability structure encapsulated in the Charter operated through an ensemble of principles, positions and commitments agreed on at the level of the *Regroupement*, and that required formal adoption by present and future member groups. To these common representations of the project, they could eventually be held accountable. I call "intermediate structure" this form of accountability located between individual shelters and the larger movement milieu constituted by their provincial *Regroupements*. Because it relied on positions "institutionalized in text" and on formal commitment, this intermediate structure differs from the loose, informal form of "internal accountability" theorized by Mansbridge (1995), that operates through self-identification with "the women's movement". Its intermediary character also distinguishes it from

¹⁵ The *Regroupement provincial des maisons d'hébergement*, as well as L'R and the CALACS *Regroupement* are democratic structures of representation. In this sense, the *Regroupements* were not "exterior" to members and did not function in a top-down manner to "impose" representations and projects. Rather, member groups gave mandates to *Regroupements'* Executive Committee and permanent staff regarding orientations and politics. The establishment of intermediate structures of accountability should be understood in this light. The participative process underlying the definition of shelters' Charter (op-cit) further illustrates my point.

accountability to locally-defined organizational goals, and from the internal organizational structure of accountability created by legal incorporation (i.e., accountability to the organizations' General Assembly of Members).

Shelter L'Aquarelle was un-affiliated in 1990, while Le Centre féminin had left the *Regroupement* a few years before¹⁶. Representative from L'Aquarelle stated that the objectives of the shelter were primarily "to help women victims of violence and their children," with the objective of "rendering them autonomous" (FDR:5). As for Le Centre féminin, its objectives were "to protect" women and children victims of violence, "to favour women's self-reliance (*"prise en charge"*) through helping them in their decisions," and "to sensitize the population and the milieu's organizations to conjugal violence and to ameliorate women's life conditions" (*"conditions de vie"*) (Annual Report 1990).

- The rape crisis center

Between 1984 and 1986, new volunteers joined the rape unit with a sympathy for feminist understandings of sexual assault, one of them with previous experience of feminist organizing in a CALACS from the Montreal region. Repeated discussions about issues raised in the day-to-day life of the rape unit were credited for raising the groups' awareness: "*on a eu*

¹⁶ L'Aquarelle was "considering" provincial affiliation in 1990. Geographical remoteness and the transportation costs associated with participation in the *Regroupement* or the *Fédération des maisons* (that typically met in Montreal) may have acted as a deterrent. Among reasons given by informants for the disaffection of Le Centre féminin were a series of disagreements, in particular with the *Regroupement's* "no-charge" policy (the centre collected a "contribution" from shelter residents), and over the participation of professionals from MSSS' network in the Centre's Board.

des discussions de fond, ça faisait avancer beaucoup"; *"on a avancé notre conscientisation ensemble"* (ISA Interview 5; also Interview 1988). Early "preventive" work in high schools, co-organizing of the Day of Action Against Violence Against Women, and contacts regarding future affiliation with the *Regroupement québécois des CALACS* also contributed to shape the groups' orientations. This growing "*conscientisation*" increasingly pitted activists of the rape unit against the Centre féminin, in ideological as well as in organizational terms (Maison ISA, Interview 1988, Interviews 5 and 6). A long and difficult struggle led to formal independence from the Centre féminin in 1988 and triggered a collective effort at redefining the organization's project.

The organization was renamed "La Maison ISA", a woman's name and an acronym standing for "*Information, Sensibilisation, Aide*". Initial objectives of "helping the victims" and "informing the population" established by the Centre féminin were rewritten as helping women as "persons" and "preventing sexual assault with the ultimate goal to put an end to this kind of violence." ISA's new objectives also included collaborating with other people, organizations and institutions involved in the issue "to promote legal and social changes" ("*Buts et objectifs*", [1988]). These, however, were only ISA's formal objectives.

An internal document was also written to unite Maison ISA's activists around a common rationale and common goals ("*Ce que nous pensons des agressions à caractère sexuel*", 1988). This document framed Maison ISA's organizational objective of "helping women" within the affirmation of women's "right to self-determination". Feminism was the best approach: "*Nous favorisons donc l'approche féministe*". As a consequence of an

analysis that tied sexual assault to gender inequality, Maison ISA's activists also stated their determination to act "individually and socially, and politically when and where possible" for "durable changes aimed at equality between men and women." Moreover, they went a step further by opposing domination at large: "We oppose all relationships of domination of one group over another." They also declared their "solidarity with all struggles against oppression."

Affiliation to the *Regroupement québécois des CALACS*, in 1988, further aligned Maison ISA on representations put forward by the CALACS at the provincial level. Membership in the *Regroupement* was conditional on members' adhesion to its *Base d'unité*¹⁷ (unity platform). Adhesion to objectives that aimed at "Regrouping CALACS", "Mobilizing individuals and groups in the struggle against violence against women", and "Fostering social and political changes" was demanded of members. Members also had to adopt and promote an analysis of sexual aggressions that underscored the role of a "patriarchal society and its social, political, and economic structures," and the role of women in leading "the struggle against the violence of men against women". The *Base d'unité* also comprised procedures for evaluating the degree of conformity of new members to the CALACS' platform (*Regroupement québécois des CALACS* [1988]). Being a condition for membership, this intermediate structure functioned in a different way than the one represented by the shelters' Charter of intervention: it operated as a gate not only to include, but if necessary to exclude. Even if making allowances for new centers' pace of change, it definitely possessed a

¹⁷ Vandal (1997) mentions there were at least three versions of the *Base d'unité*. A first "platform" existed before the 1988 version adopted in Congress. A revised version was drafted in 1993.

disciplinary component.

Compared to the CALACS' *Base d'unité* and to the shelters' Charter, L'R's *Cadres de référence* (1986, 1987) also created an intermediate structure of accountability between women's centers and their *Regroupements*. This particular structure functioned through identification with a textually-defined model. If identification remained voluntary and largely informal, it proved no less effective as shown by the intertextual character (i.e., the presence of snatches of texts by L'R) of many local women's centers' statements of goals and objectives (see for example the statements of goals presented by Maison au Quatre-Temps and Centre de femmes du pays de Maria Chapdelaine below)¹⁸.

- The women's centers

At Centre féminin La Source a process of redefining the project was also tied to moments of organizational restructuring. A veritable changing of the guard occurred in the mid-eighties after the progressive departure of all but one of the founders. New women were drawn in who were overtly sympathetic to feminism. Abandoning the qualifier "feminine" by amending its Charter in 1987, La Source renamed itself as "Centre de femmes La Source". A new pamphlet was produced that publicly asserted La Source's commitment to the following objectives: *"Maintenir un réseau d'entraide et d'action qui vise: l'autonomie; qui défend: les droits des femmes par les luttes et les appuis; qui développe: la solidarité entre les femmes"*

¹⁸ L'R developed a distinct *"Base d'unité politique des centres de femmes du Québec"* in 1993. Although adoption by members was part of this more formal accountability structure, "adhesion" was framed as a "moral" engagement towards principles that could vary in their practical application (L'R 1993:9).

(Pamphlet in use in 1989).

Rules and regulations established by the new collective (1988/1989) included a set of formal goals, which was referred to by collective members as "our real objectives, the ones that are dear to our heart" (Fieldwork diary:41). "Promoting women's rights and equality between men and women" was affirmed, not as a self-standing objective, but "with the goal of identifying and denouncing all forms of domination and oppression of women." La Source also set to "Bringing women together on the basis of the defense of their rights," "Raising women's consciousness of their specific [i.e., gendered] problems", "Intervening in our community as a pressure group and a public voice" (*groupe d'opinion*), and "Developing and disseminating training programmes in *la condition féminine*". Finally, La Source also committed itself to be a place for "bringing together, informing, supporting, sensitizing and welcoming women and women's groups". This particular set of objectives functioned as a "homing device" as La Source regularly engaged in playing the strategic game of tailoring its goals to the discourses of funding agencies (this chapter, see also Chapter 8). La Source defined itself publicly as feminist and intervened in the media and in the milieu under this identity. Resistances to feminism in the community were part of a wider struggle: "*On est des fois pointées du doigt*", summed up one informant, "*mais c'est que, quand t'es féministe, que t'as un mouvement féministe, t'as toujours des opposants, hein!*" (Interview 6:77, 80)

Maison au Quatre-Temps retained the goals established in 1983. However, it reinterpreted them in the light of its identification as a "women's center". "Maison Quatre-Temps is a women's center", that is, "a

polyvalent center answering to the needs of all women and using feminist intervention" (Interview 1988). Further borrowing a terminology proposed by L'R that defined a women's center as "*un réseau d'entraide et d'action*", Maison au Quatre-Temps re-signified its goals initially aimed at "helping women" into "entraide" (meaning altogether help, self-help, and solidarity among women), and gave more emphasis to "action" in ways that positioned women of the community as the "acting subjects" (Pamphlet in use in 1990). Developing women's autonomy and bringing women together to work collectively for change were the main themes that operated as the discursive "center of gravity" in a group where multi-source funding also translated into many versions of strategically tailored goals.

Similarly to ISA and La Source, organizational restructuring at the women center in Dolbeau was tied to a moment of reflection over the group's orientations and its role in the community. The organization obtained a new charter in 1988, chose a new name - Le Centre de femmes du pays de Maria Chapdelaine¹⁹, adopted a collective structure, and moved out of the basement of shelter Halte-Secours. In its 1989-90 Annual Report, the Center defined itself as "a meeting space, a space for feminist reflection on women's lives." Its objectives were: "*Offrir un éventail de services, de moyens d'action et d'éducation à toutes celles qui s'intéressent à leur autonomie et à leurs conditions de vie*", "*répondre adéquatement aux besoins des femmes*", "*agir dans le milieu lorsqu'il s'agit de défendre l'image et les droits des femmes*". "Services" were

¹⁹ The name "Centre de femmes du pays de Maria Chapdelaine" refers to the name of the administrative territory (MRC) covered by the women's center. Maria Chapdelaine is also the heroine of a well-known novel set in Lac-Saint-Jean.

directed at enabling women "to re-appropriate the choices that orient their lives". "Education" was aimed at raising women's consciousness of the social nature of their problems. Definitions of "meeting space...", services and education were borrowed from a document by L'R (1987:12, 5). "Action" was oriented towards "*l'amélioration des conditions de vie des femmes, c'est-à-dire de faire en sorte que leurs droits et leurs besoins soient entendus, reconnus, et respectés.*"

The Centre communautaire féminin de Chibougamau, for its part, reaffirmed in 1989 its attachment to its initial goals in a document for public representation. In addition to "being a meeting place for all women" and "being an agent of information, sensitization, animation, consultation, services, research and action (...)" the CCFC emphasized the third of these goals - "*être un outil d'auto-organisation individuel et collectif*". Individual self-organizing entailed giving "women in general and women in difficulty" "the means to take charge of themselves in all the domains of their lives so that they can become autonomous and have a better quality of life." Collective self-organizing meant enabling women "to become aware of women's needs and *conditions de vie* and find solutions to ameliorate their quality of life." To attain this latter goal, objectives were proposed. These included: "reflecting the real needs of women of the region", inviting women to engage in self-criticism of their own attitudes, behaviours, ideologies and values, "developing solidarity among women", "denouncing violence against women and finding ways to stop it", "recognizing women's right of speech, right of action, right to be herself [sic]" and working to have these rights respected, and "demystifying and struggling against all forms of domination,

discrimination, exploitation, prejudice, and violence."

c) Politicizing the subject, the object, and the terrain of action

By the late 1980s SLSJ service groups had adopted goals and objectives that were clearly broader than in their initial projects. Goals and objectives were also more definitely politicized in their content, this in three different ways: they included a politicized view of the subject, object, and terrain of their action.

Goals directed at "women-as-subjects" featured a politicized view of the subject. First, they were politicized in the sense underlined by Schechter (1982): they went beyond "solving the immediate problems" of women as subjects of violence, oppression or domination. SLSJ women's service groups also addressed the deeper societal problem of "women" being "subjected subjects". While women's immediate problems were answered by offers of protection and counselling, these were only the material support for an action that aimed at changing the subjected subject into the subject of her own circumstances (see Chapter 6). This is the meaning, I suggest, of the widespread goals aimed at "developing women's autonomy". SLSJ groups aimed at transforming subjected subjects into self-determining subjects capable of action, be it "to put an end to the climate of violence" (Halte-Secours), or to "re-appropriate the choices that orient their lives" (Maria Chapdelaine).

Second, this view of the subject was also "politicized" in that it positioned "women" as agents, and the exercise of their agency as one of the main conditions for change. Third, particularly in women's centers, goals politicized the subject by locating women's active agency not just

individually and in the private realm, but also collectively, and to be exercised in the public realm. As the CCFC signalled it, "women" had a (specific) "right" to (public) "speech", "action", and "identity". Goals directed at raising women's awareness of being part of a specific group, at "developing solidarity", and "bringing women together" "to work and find solutions" aimed at constituting women as actors, as a prerequisite to acting collectively in the public realm of civil society and state politics.

Goals were also politicized in their object in that they directly targeted the broader conditions that perpetuated women's situation. Acting on these conditions first entailed transforming social representations. Raising awareness and "changing mentalities" about particular issues, values, and images of women were a constant feature of SLSJ groups' goals and objectives. For many groups, acting on broader conditions also included promoting and defending women's rights and equality against unequal relations of power between men and women. Some groups addressed further the socio-political dynamics at work through statements of objectives such as "identifying and denouncing all forms of domination and oppression of women" (La Source) or opposing, demystifying, struggling against all forms of domination, oppression, and prejudice (Maison ISA, CCFC). That these broader goals were not couched in a language of "women's liberation" or "debunking patriarchy" is not indicative of their lack of politicization, but of their differential positioning, in time and space, and in a feminist discursive field.

Finally, the goals of SLSJ women's service groups were politicized in the sense underlined by Sandilands (1987) in that they featured issues,

actors, and modes of action that were clearly located on a political terrain. These goals situated the groups' projected action in the public space of collective representation. Issues were to be brought into this public space for contesting and debating their social meaning: violence was to be "deprivatized" (Auberge), domination and oppression were to be "denounced" (La Source, CCFC), the population and the milieu were to be "sensitized" (all groups). Struggles over social meanings in the public space were also struggles for formal and substantive inclusion: women's rights and needs were to "heard, recognized, and respected" (Maria Chapdelaine, CCFC). Goals featuring "rights talk", "needs talk", or "equality promotion" were also politicized in that they committed to defend a social group - "women" - that was not properly represented, or heard in the public space. Lastly, many organizations included goals in which they indicated their intention to occupy the spaces of public/democratic debates and representation as political actors, on behalf of women (for example: Halte-Secours, Maison ISA, La Source, Maria Chapdelaine).

Conclusion

The initial projects of SLSJ women's service groups were not characterized by a the presence of "politicized", or radical feminist orientations towards change. Their agenda and identifications did not stem from an adhesion to some pre-constituted feminist canon. Discursively constituted from taking "women-as-women" as a position from which to act, their initial projects were composite in their appropriation of

"feminism". Socio-political ways to construct the position of women as a rationale for action remained marginal, and projects were usually limited to "answering women's needs".

For not being necessarily "radical and politicized", the representations of the project of local women's service groups were nevertheless pregnant with the politics of the grievances they were addressing. Creating shelters and rape crisis centers was a direct challenge to the legitimacy of battery and rape. Women's centers constituted public forums addressing the wider field of grievances attached to *la condition féminine*. Initial projects mobilized, deployed, and helped disseminate the foundational category of contemporary feminism, "women-as-women". In this sense, and in the sense underlined by Sandilands (1997), they possessed a political character as they added new categories, public spaces, collective actors, and issues to the realm of public discussion and contestation. Finally, the examples provided in this chapter also show that acting on the basis of these rationales created dynamic situations in local women's service groups, opening them to transformations fostered by the practice of services, responses and demands from local women, reactions of their communities, and further contacts with a wider movement milieu.

Initial projects, I have also argued, were indeed transformed throughout the period considered. Yet, they were altered in the sense of becoming more, rather than less politicized and identified with feminism. Rationales for action were developed in local women's service organizations that moved away from a grounding in "women's needs" to articulate analyses of the position of women stressing the operation of

gender relations of power and domination. The substance of their goals was broader, and more politicized. Local women's service groups in SLSJ positioned "women" as the individual and collective agents of changes to be effected in the private and the public realms. They targeted the socio-political dynamics at work in constituting "the position of women". They also projected their action into public spaces of collective representation and struggles over social meanings, sometimes setting themselves the task of occupying these spaces on behalf of women. Identifying "as feminists" had become the norm, rather than the exception among local women's service organizations. Finally, transformed projects showed a progressive standardization of representations among groups of a similar type (shelters, women's centers, CALACS).

Through the stories presented in this chapter, I have also substantiated, and made more concrete a Meluccian argument according to which the unity of the organizational actor - the unification of people around shared orientations - takes shape through the discursive constitution of common, collective projects. This chapter shows that the production of initial projects occurred in discursive events tied to moments of creation of local service organizations. As discursive practices, "representations of the project" took the material form of written statements about rationales for action and substantive goals appearing in the groups' official documents and public statements. These representations operated to codify and fix the basic parameters of organizational identity (who are we? why do we exist?) and activity (what should we do? How should we operate?).

What these stories also document are the discursive politics at work

in constituting these representations of the project. Taking women-as-women⁴ as a position from which to act, I have proposed, can be seen as a starting point for the development of feminist projects. Yet, as post-structuralist feminist theorists have pointed out (Chapter 2), this position - "what it means to be a woman" - is not pre-given. Rather, it is discursively constructed by actors situated in particular times and places, and located differentially in relation to shifting networks of available symbolic resources. The founders' professional or institutional origin and their experience of women's organizing - or lack thereof - intersected in a particular manner in each group. Local elites and Catholic nuns, criminologist and nurse, animators from the Adult Education Service and feminist-trained social work technicians, women's groups representatives and "ordinary local women" showed different degrees of familiarity with the available discourses about "women" and "feminism". They also showed different degrees of readiness to appropriate some of its versions. Rejection of feminist modes of intervention at the rape unit and the dance of "identification and distancing" at La Source reveal the existence of larger, discursive politics around and against feminism that were acted out at the individual, local, and broader cultural levels.

Transformations in formal representations of the project, occurred as specific, and sparse discursive events, tied to particular moments. Internal factors related to local organizations themselves fostered moments of organizational change. These factors included: the arrival of new cohorts of activists with different understandings of "feminism" and organizational experience; reflexive activity on the basis of the organizations' day-to-day work; and contacts with other groups (other ways

of thinking and doing) in the forums provided by the provincial *Regroupements*. Formal "defining" activities at the *Regroupement* level, this chapter also shows, played an important role.

Changes in local projects, it appears, also stemmed from moments of affiliation (ISA and the CALACS' *Base d'unité*), of unification (shelters and the Charter), and of identification (women's centers and L'R's *Cadre de référence*). Local adhesion to representations of the project defined provincially (*Regroupements*) were important moments in a process of movement building. They materialized the "coming together" of local organizational actors under standardized, common definitions of "who we are and what we do and how". This particular process of movement building was a process of institutionalizing particular versions of feminism and representations of the project among local movement actors. It was also part of a process of politicization of local groups along the lines of the positions and analyses favoured at the *Regroupement* level. One of the main contributions of this chapter is to identify the concrete mechanism through which this standardization and this politicization were effected. For these formal mechanisms created between local groups and their *Regroupements*, I have coined the term of "intermediate structures of accountability".

The role played by MSSS' funding in the discursive politics leading to changes in initial projects was more complex, and certainly not as debilitating as predicted by the "pessimistic" strand of the literature on state funding. The inclusions realized by the 1985 *Politique d'aide* reinforced, rather than marginalized feminist analyses and approaches in the field of violence against women. In adopting feminist orientations,

the policy also levelled the playing field between "feminist" women's services and their mainstream competitors, this to the advantage of the former. Yet, it is clear that women's centers strategically redefined their project for the purpose of securing funding at MSSS. In this sense, the "world of conditions" of MSSS funding played a role in the discursive politics that lead to the collective definition of their project. Women's centers, however, did not surrender to MSSS orientations. Rather, they negotiated a fine balance that straddled both a socio-sanitary discourse and a feminist discourse, and proposed a feminist re-signification of the former in the name of "developing women's autonomy". As we will see in the next chapters, women's centers succeeded in carving out space for the - funded - pursuit of their local feminist projects.

Theoretically, the stories presented in this chapter support a post-structuralist argument regarding the un-fixity of feminist representations, that is: their variability, and their transformation over time. The position of "women" was constructed by SLSJ local women's service groups from a diversity of socio-enunciative positions and in diverse and changing ways: as individuals with specific grievances and unmet needs; as powerless, objectified and emotionally distressed individual subjects; as a clientele with gendered health and psychosocial problems; as a social group oppressed by gender/patriarchal relations of power. These different constructions bore different implications in terms of "the directions in which to act" they indicated, advocated, or made possible.

Finally, the "composite" character of the local versions of feminism developed by SLSJ women's groups, in the early 1980s as well as in the

late 1980s, does not only indicate that the reality of "feminism" is diverse, but that feminist ideas do not remain "locked in" specific, closed discourses. Rather, "they become available references and, as such, elements to be appropriated, adopted, or transformed in a wide variety of situations." (Pires del Rio Caldeira 1990:73-74)

CHAPTER 6: POLITICS OF INFLUENCE AND POLITICS OF INCLUSION: TRANSFORMATIVE POLITICS IN LOCAL WOMEN'S SERVICE GROUPS

Introduction

Following Cohen and Arato's theorizing, the transformative politics of feminist/women's movements, like those of most other "new" contemporary movements, is two-pronged. They undertake a "politics of identity and influence" aimed at altering gender identities, social relations and forms of male dominance. They also undertake a "politics of reform and inclusion" directed at state and mainstream politics.

Is "doing services" doing transformative politics? For the Marxist-influenced Left in Québec that coined the "service groups / political action groups" dichotomy in the late sixties and early seventies, the answer was no. The one way of political struggle was a politics of agitation, protest and mass mobilizations¹. Although Randall (1988) contends that doing services and doing transformative feminist politics remain two "incompatible mandates" (15), most feminist authors argue like Schechter (1982) that "services" and "politics" should coexist in order for the action of women's service groups to be truly transformative. Such a coexistence entails undertaking politicized, feminist forms of service work, as well as engaging in other, more public forms of feminist political action such as outreach and advocacy. The "services *versus* politics" debate thus becomes a question of the presence or absence of

¹ For a better understanding of this period of movement activity in Québec and of this particular debate, see texts by Bachand, Hurtubise, Panet-Raymond, and Bélanger and Lévesque in Bélanger and Lévesque (1987).

change-oriented activities in the work of women's service organizations. The fate of their transformative politics, it is often argued, is entwined with the issue of state funding.

The first question raised by the literature on state-funded women's services is whether state funding encroaches on the feminist politics of service work. It is generally contended that state funding is responsible for altering, directly as well as indirectly, the distinctive political - or politicized - character of feminist approaches to services. The welfare origin of funds, it is argued, favours the hegemony of dominant, "mainstream" models of service provision. It steers women's groups towards victimizing, therapeutic, and de-politicized approaches that search for the cause of the problem within the individual. Providing women with an awareness of the socio-political roots of their problems is eschewed, or marginalized in the process (Morgan 1981, Johnson 1981, Tierney 1982, Schechter 1982, Randall 1988, D. Lamoureux 1988, 1990). Moreover, funding guidelines may entrench prescriptions regarding the practice of services that clash with the feminist conceptions of service provision developed in women's groups (Johnson 1981, Schechter 1982, Matthews 1995)².

The second question refers to the maintenance of a feminist action repertoire under state funding. According to the literature on state-funded women's organizations, at stake is the maintenance of a "balance" between doing services, on the one hand, and doing outreach and advocacy

² For example, some funding sources made individual counselling for battered women mandatory (Johnson 1981:834), or demanded that rape crisis centers convince victims to prosecute (Schechter 1982:186-187). In other cases, no funding was available for services deemed essential by women's groups, such as supporting battered women after their stay in the shelters (Schechter 1982:253).

on the other. State funding, it is argued, is responsible for channelling women's groups into service provision (Johnson 1981, Tierney 1982, Barnsley 1985, 1988, Randall 1988, D. Lamoureux 1988, 1990). The funding protocols documented in the literature often prioritized service provision to the detriment, or even the exclusion of other forms of action³. Usually mentioned are difficulties of obtaining funding for community education (i.e., outreach) and for doing advocacy work on behalf of women (Schechter 1982:95, Matthews 1995:303). Service-oriented funding may also play on existing tendencies and reinforce the "service mission" in groups where "providing assistance to women in need" is the initial *raison d'être* (Schechter 1982, Dobash and Dobash 1992).

Yet, other authors underline the diversity of forms of service provision and counselling practices encountered in state-funded women's service groups (Schechter 1982 and Dobash and Dobash 1992 on the U.S. and British battered women's movements; Gornick, Burt and Pittman 1985 on U.S. rape crisis centers). Dobash and Dobash (1992), in particular, show that the services provided in practice are situated along "several continua," with elements of services they define as "feminist" coexisting with "non-feminist" ones. Empirical studies also suggest that resolving the issue of the balance between services, outreach and advocacy may prompt a diversity of responses in individual women's service groups (Schechter 1982, Gornick, Burt and Pittman 1985, Dobash and Dobash 1992). "Problems (...) and new

³ Besides exclusionary provisions, an emphasis on services may be promoted by funding formulas based on the number of "units of client services performed" (Schechter 1982:95) or "new victims served" (Matthews 1995:303). Funding may also be conditional on the development of new or extended services, that end up taking all of the groups' available resources (Matthews 1995:299, Ng 1988:36-37).

demands for compromise were met in a variety of ways, some expanding the efforts towards assistance and wider social change while others narrowed the focus more closely on the provision of services." (Dobash and Dobash 1992:41, see also Schechter 1982:255)

This latter body of studies suggests that a waning of feminist politics in women's services is not a necessary outcome of state funding. Funding conditions may vary in their inclusion or exclusion of feminist approaches to services, as well as in the balance of services, outreach and advocacy they permit. Women's service groups' engagement in transformative feminist politics and their answers to the conditions of their funding also depend on other factors, that is, to paraphrase Ferree and Martin, on women's organizations' "history and prior developments as well as present opportunities and constraints." (1995:8)

In this chapter, I will show, first, that the initial projects of SLSJ women's service groups did not feature an engagement in a pre-given, full-fledged "feminist politics of services". Rather, more nascent feminist politics were contained in rationales that sought simply to "help" and "inform" women. Second, I will demonstrate that the *Politique d'aide* and the SOC guidelines were largely inclusive of the programming of local women's groups, and favoured rather than hindered the development of a feminist approach to service work. Space existed within MSSS funding for the deployment of feminist transformative politics. Third, by the end of the 1980s, as I will document, SLSJ women's services groups had largely gone beyond "helping women" by adopting politicized, feminist approaches to service work, especially in "service heavy" groups like the shelters and the CALACS. They had also developed action repertoires that gave more

weight to politicized forms of outreach and to advocacy work. In the absence of clear limitations from MSSS funding, and as indicated by the variability in which SLSJ groups effected these changes, the transformations noted mean that local groups remained, over the 1980s, creative of the ways in which they defined, re-defined and pursued their politics.

This chapter also provides the opportunity to inquire into the workings of movements' transformative politics. The processes and means of action through which movements pursue their "politics of inclusion and reform" are already a substantial focus of social movement studies (see Chapter 2). The insistence of contemporary movements on changing representations, codes and norms, identities and social relations in "everyday life" has been noted by social movement theorists (mostly in the NSM strand). Yet, what remains to be explored, Scott suggests, are the processes through which such cultural-discursive innovations are fed into particular movements' transformative politics (Scott 1990:134). To put it in Cohen and Arato's (1992) terms, inquiry is needed into how contemporary movements' politics of identity and influence in civil society operate in practice.

I intend to contribute to this inquiry by drawing on the work of Veronica Schild and Nikolas Rose to examine the practical workings of the repertoire and substance of "services" and "outreach" in SLSJ service groups. What is at stake, for a large part, in the transformative politics in which SLSJ local women's service groups were engaged at the end of the 1980s was, I propose, a struggle over subjectivities. "Politics", Veronica Schild writes, "is also about challenges to power relations that set the

limits *within which we define ourselves* and establish our differential participation." (1994:64, my emphasis) In this sense, she argues, "politics includes struggles for subjectivities" (64, see also 73-74), that is: a struggle over individuals' sense of self. Transforming subjectivities entails actively challenging the subjects' lived sense of self, their emotions, their representations of the world, and their ways of conducting themselves in this world (Schild 1994:73-74; also Rose 1994). Nikolas Rose furthers this analysis by proposing that the inculcation of new understandings of the subject, representations, and meanings is "more contextual, more practical, and more technical" than previously suggested (1994:6). Routines, procedures and techniques for changing the subject are also involved.

Women's movements undertake a labour aimed at "changing the subject". Proposing alternatives to social meanings and changing what it means to be, to feel, to know, and to conduct oneself as a "woman" is what lies at the root of the strong concern for "personal transformation" and "consciousness raising" documented in Western women's movements. It is through these transformations, according to Schild, that women learn to become subjects of a particular sort: to experience themselves as "confident and competent beings" and as effective "political agents" (1994:64). Women's movements also engage in broader programmes for transforming conducts. Not only are "women" targeted, but a whole range of social conducts is problematized, from sexism to rape to battery, "that cannot be rectified by 'normal' political means" (Cohen and Arato 1992:559-560). I will explore how SLSJ women's service groups went about effecting these changes.

6.1: The action repertoire of the initial projects

"Taking 'women' as a position from which to act" entailed not only defining this position and an appropriate course of action in discourse. It also entailed engaging in practical activities to actualize initial projects that were, as I have argued in Chapter 5, often limited in scope, although definitely political in character. Acting from these constructed positions, as well as from different socio-enunciative locations and experiences of women's organizing, women involved in setting up local shelters, rape crisis centers and women's centers themselves defined the elements and priorities of their action repertoire.

Orientations towards "helping women" emerged as the rationale for the founding of shelters and rape crisis centers. The action repertoire that followed centered on the provision of direct services for women victims of conjugal violence and rape, and more largely for "women in difficulty". For example, in the early 1980s, Le Centre féminin in Chicoutimi and Maison Halte-Secours in Dolbeau offered sheltering and support on a 24 hours and 7 days a week basis. Information and referrals to other agencies and professionals were also provided. In addition, Halte-Secours operated an emergency hotline and a used clothing counter (Halte-Secours, Charter 1983); Le Centre féminin offered accompaniment and follow-up⁴ services (Vandal 1984; Centre féminin, "Historique"). Most

⁴ "Accompaniment" refers to the staff's availability for providing not only technical, but emotional assistance by going with women to legal offices, the hospital, government bureaus, etc. to undertake the legal, medical, or administrative procedures necessitated by their situation. "Follow-up" generally refers to any kind of intervention pursued after answering the initial demand for help. In the case of Le Centre féminin, follow-up more narrowly referred to counselling services offered

Québec shelters, in fact, seem to have first developed a repertoire featuring sheltering, psychological and material help, information and accompaniment (Regroupement provincial des maisons [1983]). It is only in 1984, documents from the *Regroupement* testify, that shelters collectively recognized that their action went beyond "*accueil et hébergement*" to include, among others, activities aimed at "*prévention*" and "*sensibilisation*" ([1985a]:5, [1985b]:3).

Similarly, action at the Chicoutimi rape unit (officially opened in June 1983) was heavily weighted towards direct help services prioritizing medical, legal, and psychosocial modes of intervention. A "24/7" emergency service was organized which included emergency support for women victims of sexual assault and medico-legal examinations by women nurses and doctors. "*Relation d'aide*" - a relatively non-formalized type of counselling - and accompaniment through medical and legal processes (for example: abortion, preliminary inquest, trial) were also offered. Rapidly, however, the rape unit added other kinds of activities to its repertoire. In 1983, it initiated what would become a regular participation in the "Take Back The Night" protest march and in International Women's Day activities. In 1984, two interns from the University of Sherbrooke's Department of Social Work developed a "programme of prevention and awareness-raising" aimed at high school students that was also to become a standard feature of the unit's action.

In women's centers, "women's needs for a place" and for "information" (rather than for "help") was constructed as the rationale for action. This rationale opened up possibilities for appropriating a

during and after the woman's stay in the shelter.

more diverse selection of the action repertoire potentially available to local groups. Needs for a "women's place" and for information deemed relevant to women's concerns gave rise to formulas favouring the diffusion of information and promoting subsequent discussion and exchanges among local women. In 1981, 1982 and 1983, St-Félicien's La Source, Chibougamau's CCFC and Alma's Maison au Quatre-Temps all held an array of weekly "*cafés-rencontres*", workshops, conferences, information sessions, video nights, and the like. Themes typically centered on "the woman versus her health, her rights, the family, work, the economy, politics, violence" (CCFC, "Historique"). Within these themes, topics such as vegetarianism, sexual harassment, job search techniques, and "guilt" coexisted happily. At La Source, information was also conveyed through a weekly column in the local newspaper.

The creation of these "women's places" often served as a cradle for further women's organizing. Shelter L'Aquarelle, for example, originated from pressures initiated by the CCFC in 1982. A colloquium for improving pre- and post-natal health care in 1981, the creation of a local day-care center in 1982, and a used clothing store (employing women) in 1983, were also due to the involvement of the CCFC. At Quatre-Temps and at the CCFC, the centers drew together a number of local women's groups that held their own activities, shared space and equipment, and from time to time engaged in joint action. Participation in organizing March 8 activities was a regular annual feature in all centers. A wide array of special projects often funded through Employment Development programmes provided recruits and raised the public profile of the centers.

As "women's places", women's centers also attracted a number of

women seeking individual assistance on matters of divorce, depression, physical or sexual violence against themselves or their children, contraception or reproductive health. Sometimes unexpectedly (as we have seen in the case of La Source in Chapter 5), sometimes in relation to initial objectives that included "counselling and supporting" women (as in the case of Quatre-Temps, in Chapter 5), direct services to "women in difficulty" arose as a response to local women's demands. Yet, these services were only one part of what was a much more varied action repertoire.

6.2: The Politique d'aide and the SOC: inclusions, exclusions and mediations

The guidelines of the 1985 *Politique d'aide aux femmes violentées* and of the *Programme de soutien aux organismes communautaires* (SOC) outlined the universe of activities that could be undertaken by shelters, rape crisis centers, and women's centers under the auspices of MSSS funding. The *Politique d'aide* specified the work to be done regarding "abused women" in the field of health and social services, how it should be done, by what agencies, and within what type of collaboration. The SOC programme defined in more general terms the action repertoire that could legitimately be undertaken by funded groups. Despite a clear orientation towards direct services, space definitely existed within the terms of MSSS funding for other forms of collective action, especially prevention and public awareness-raising activities, training and internal and external co-ordination.

a) The *Politique d'aide* and the programming of women's groups

The *Politique d'aide* appropriated a feminist analysis as its rationale (see Chapter 5). Yet, a series of "slippages" moved the understanding of "what was to be done" regarding violence against women away from the implications of a feminist analysis focusing on societal causes and onto the terrain of a socio-sanitary response centered on services. While the policy's balance of goals retained feminist components, including a strong focus on intervention at the societal level, the "Action Plan" that followed made little or no attempt to operationalize goals in feminist terms. Providing direct help services was foregrounded. In comparison, transforming representations and changing collective conducts, if not totally forsaken, as we will see, were given much shorter shrift.

If the *Politique d'aide* was definitely biased towards direct services, it nevertheless lacked prescriptions regarding the work of women's organizations. The *Politique d'aide* was not a funding policy for women's organizations but, rather, a policy organizing welfare for "abused women" within a "partnership" in which MSSS agencies remained the main players (see Chapter 4). Allocating responsibilities and defining tasks for MAS' network of establishments was the central concern of the policy's Action Plan. MAS agencies were presented as deficient in appropriate services and modes of intervention. They were made into the objects of lengthy enunciations prescribing the development of specific actions and procedures. Women's organizations, in contrast, were counterposed as already existing resources. Their treatment in the policy took the form of very short and essentially descriptive statements, whose main effect was

to establish them as legitimate actors within the policy's fields of action.

This lack of definition of the work of women's groups was consistent with the integration of these organizations as "autonomous community partners" - a trademark of both the SOC and the *Politique d'aide* as a whole (see Chapter 4). It also operated, as I will argue now, to preserve the programmatic autonomy of women's organizations within the framework of the policy. To take the measure of the margin of manoeuvre inscribed in this relationship and of the place it left for women's groups to determine their own programming within the terms of MAS' funding, it is important to examine closely the role reserved for women's organizations in the policy's Action Plan.

Under the heading of "Emergency and short term services", the Ministry listed the responsibilities of front-line organizations: "accueil" (reception), immediate protection, crisis intervention, medical emergency, and referrals to the appropriate social and judicial services. The "experience" of women's shelters and rape crisis centers in developing services, approaches and practices "adapted to the situation of abused women" (MAS 1985:24, 25) was explicitly recognized. As in most of the policy, the proposed "mix" was essentially one of co-provision in welfare, that is: one in which the two partners operated within the same fields of action to provide similar elements - although not necessarily according to identical approaches and practices - of a welfare process for which they were seen to share a common responsibility.

Defined as the provision of "temporary refuge" to solve "crisis situations", "*hébergement*" was, however, to be the sole responsibility of

women's shelters. Sheltering was strictly understood as providing a "safe place", with room and board. Investment in infrastructure, it appeared, was an aspect of providing welfare for abused women and their children that the Ministry did not want to assume and much preferred to see provided (at lower costs) by women's organizations. It is only in this particular sense (contra D. Lamoureux 1997) that shelters can be seen to substitute for MSSS' involvement. "Psychosocial and follow-up services" were part of the recognized partnership. They included "listening", moral support, assistance in making decisions, information on rights and accompaniment of abused women in carrying out various procedures. *"Les organismes de la communauté offrent habituellement de tels services tant aux femmes en maison d'hébergement qu'à celles de la communauté"*⁵ (MAS 1985:26) Services offered by women's groups were doing the job, and were included without further requirements.

"Prevention" was understood in reference to a model of public health that differentiated between tertiary prevention (after-the-fact interventions) aiming at preventing "recidivism"; secondary prevention directed at "discovering, halting, and modifying" a problematic situation; and primary forms of prevention located at the societal level and aimed at pre-empting problems by altering the general socio-cultural environment (MSSS et al. 1995:11, 126). The policy recognized a role for women's organizations - *"principalement les centres d'aides aux victimes d'agressions sexuelles et les centres de jour"* - in providing tertiary and secondary preventive services, especially in terms of *"dépistage"*

⁵ Transl: "Community organizations usually offer such services to shelter residents as well as to women from the community."

(discovering), and invited them to pursue their action. Regarding primary prevention, a collaboration of actors was expected, among them "community organizations", for helping "inform staff in [MAS] establishments and the general public about the effects and causes of violence." (1985:29-30)

Finally, the policy recognized that "community organizations intervening among abused women" had developed training activities, tools and programmes "adapted to their type of intervention." Financial and technical aid for such training was to be granted by the Ministry through an existing "infrastructure programme" placed under the responsibility of CRSSSs (MAS 1985:31).

As should now be clear, the *Politique d'aide* constructed a partnership-in-welfare that, although favouring direct services, preserved to a large extent the *status quo ante* regarding the programming of women's groups. The role of shelters and rape crisis centers in direct service work, and of rape crisis centers and women's centers in preventive activities was recognized. What is more important, the activities of women's groups were included without being regulated by further stipulations. Recognition, however, was sometimes more nebulous - for example, when actors were vaguely referred to as "community organizations".

Québec shelters have argued that the policy was confining them to sheltering without "recognizing" their activities of prevention, community education, follow-up, services to non-residents, and "*l'intervention auprès des enfants*" (Lacombe 1990:120, also in Lamoureux and Lesemann 1987:147-148). Except for the latter, for which the Ministry formally denied support to shelters (MSSS 1985:29), these activities were all

funded (admittedly insufficiently) through SOC and the *Politique d'aide*. Shelters' claim of "non-recognition" stems as much from the *Politique d'aide*'s failure to give them credit for all their work as from their demand for "complete funding". Since first formulated in 1980 this demand fostered a strategy of "*reconnaissance à la pièce*" (piecework recognition) whereby shelters insisted on the explicit "naming" of the services funded by the MSSS with the objective of gaining adequate funding to support the entirety of their work. CALACS, by contrast, have focused on the insufficient level of funding rather than on attempting to clarify a language that, even if it did not formally recognize some of their activities, did permit their undertaking.

Du moment qu'on annonçait les trois volets - Aide, Information, Lutte - dans notre rapport annuel et qu'on leur disait: "voilà, c'est ça qu'on a fait avec l'argent qu'on avait eu", on se sentait légitime d'utiliser l'argent pour ça. Ils avaient notre rapport annuel au SOC. Ils le savaient ce qu'on faisait, qu'on faisait aussi de la défense des droits, de la sensibilisation, de la lutte, des actions collectives. Il n'y a jamais personne du Ministère qui est venu nous dire que ce qu'on faisait avec la subvention, c'était pas correct. (Vandal, Interview 01-05-97)

b) The SOC: funding partners-in-welfare

The *Politique d'aide* did not create a separate funding regime for women's groups. Their funds continued to be granted under the terms of the *Programme de soutien aux organismes communautaires*. Two distinctive features of SOC funding helped broaden the universe of activities that could legitimately be undertaken by shelters, rape crisis centers, and women's centers. First was the "operational" nature of SOC funding; second was the definition of SOC's "Women's sector" around objectives that

included "the development of women's autonomy".

By the mid-1980s, "global funding" had become the trademark of the SOC programme (Personnel du SSOC 1986). In contrast to project funding, where funds are granted for a pre-defined sequence of activities realized over a limited period of time, global or operational funding broadly supports infrastructure and day-to-day operations (Pal 1993:4). The partnership that took shape at SOC throughout the 1980s materialized a shift in the type of interest the Ministry expressed towards the community sector. From the funding of a scattering of more or less transitory experiments to fuel the development of state provided services (re: chapter 3), MSSS moved towards a more sustained support for "the quality of the social fabric" (MSSS-SOC 1988-89) - i.e., for the continuous existence of volunteer and community organizations themselves, as the Ministry's "partners-in-welfare". As the 1989-90 guidelines made clear, funding was aimed at supporting organizations and their functioning.

Le volet principal de notre programme est l'aide financière aux organismes par le biais d'une subvention de soutien au fonctionnement. Cette subvention (...) a pour but de permettre à l'organisme de se doter de l'organisation minimale nécessaire à l'atteinte de ses objectifs. (MSSS-SOC 1989-90:9, emphasis in the original)

SOC funds came in the form of a lump sum, without budgetary prescriptions, to be used for a variety of operational expenses. Restrictions were few. Barred were activities falling outside MSSS' field

of competence⁶; as well as research, colloquiums, seminars, and the production of educational material⁷.

Legitimate expenses included salaries for permanent staff, office expenses, and the costs of renting premises and equipment. In addition to supporting activities and services mentioned in the *Politique d'aide* and in SOC's women's sector, SOC funds could also be used for broader organizational pursuits: that is, for "*l'évolution de la vie démocratique de l'organisation, [...] la formation et au support des bénévoles, [et] certains frais afférents à l'intervention complémentaire qu'offre ce type de ressource.*" (MSSS 1989:7) With so few restrictions, SOC funding was almost fully "operational funding". It was intended to contribute to the costs associated, beyond services and outreach, with internal organizing and decision-making; with training and co-ordinating volunteers and activists; as well as with "relations of co-ordination with other community groups or partners from MSSS network" (MSSS 1989:5)⁸.

Opening access to SOC funds to organizations providing "any type of activity favourable to the development of women's autonomy" (MAS 1985:55) created a discursive point of entry for women's centers to negotiate a broader inclusion of their activities at MSSS. "Developing women's

⁶ How and if this was practically enforced given the schematic reporting required from funded groups (see Chapter 7) remains unclear. By the end of the 1980s this provision appeared to be used for screening new applicants at the SOC, rather than specific activities.

⁷ "Training" was on this list until 1987-88, and community and women's groups had to rely on other resources (in the latter case, according to the *Politique d'aide*, on CRSSSs' infrastructure programme). Funding restrictions placed on training were deleted from the SOC guidelines in 1988-89.

⁸ That these funds were not meant to fully cover these costs is another issue that refers to the "sharing of responsibilities" included in the "partnership" established with the community (see Chapter 4).

broader inclusion of their activities at MSSS. "Developing women's autonomy" progressively became the discursive device that articulated the rationale of the women's sector at the SOC.

Nous retrouvons dans le secteur II [Services aux femmes en difficulté] des organismes qui favorisent les démarches d'autonomie et de prise en charge des femmes par elles-mêmes dans le domaine de la santé et des services sociaux. (MSSS-SOC 1989-90 to 1996-97)

This articulation permitted the use of MSSS funds for a wide range of services and activities in women's centers, although the - somewhat nebulous - boundaries of the health and social services field potentially set limits to what MSSS funding could be used for. The ministerial "memo" recommending the establishment of a funding policy for women's centers (MSSS 1989) included service activities (individual and group intervention) answering to "women's priority needs" in matters of health and social issues (violence, poverty, mental and physical health). It also recognized the preventive role played by women's centers. The "reinforcement of women's autonomy", "prevention" and "*sensibilisation*" were deemed especially congruent with the Ministry's orientations. Women's centers' "*approche globale et collective*", and their educational and outreach activities (workshops, conferences, etc.) were explicitly authorized. L'R's strategy of negotiation had proved successful.

6.3: Doing direct services

"Direct services" refer to the different activities through which

material help to women (Masson and Tremblay 1993:175). These activities were an important part of the way SLSJ women's service groups, especially shelters and the CALACS, defined themselves. This section documents the extent and complexity of the action repertoire of direct services, and the variability in which direct service work was undertaken among SLSJ groups. "Doing state-funded direct services" did not marginalize the feminist politics of services. On the contrary, by the end of the 1980s direct services had become increasingly politicized by the adoption of principles and practices identified as "feminist intervention". The latter is best analysed as a technique for transforming individual women's subjectivities.

a) Doing direct services in the shelters and the CALACS

In 1990-91, most of SLSJ shelters described their main activities⁹ essentially as providing direct services to abused women. Shelter Halte-Secours and CALACS La Maison ISA, however, considered direct help as only one aspect of a more comprehensive work agenda that included outreach and advocacy. In all but one of the groups, the approach to direct services was said to draw on feminist intervention.

Shelter's direct services were offered primarily to women having experienced physical or psychological violence from men, within married or

⁹ The information presented in this section is mostly based on the responses of women's services to the *Femmes et développement régional* (FDR) survey. Group representatives were asked to name, define, and describe the three main activities of their group (Question 8). The categories used by respondents to represent "what it is that their group mostly does" corresponded to those used in promotional leaflets and Annual Reports.

common-law relationships¹⁰. Maison ISA offered its help to all women who had been sexually assaulted. "Sexual assault" was defined broadly, as women's requests for help referred not only to rape, but also to incest, sexual harassment, and other forms of sexual aggression. Services were provided free of charge¹¹. "*La gratuité des services*" was a feminist position defended by the provincial *Regroupements* (see Chapter 4).

Part of the work of the shelters and the CALACS was organized around the notion of providing an emergency response for women who had been battered or raped. Shelters offered "*écoute téléphonique*", "*accueil*"¹² and "*hebergement*" on their premises 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, year round, by female staff. Women's shelters defined themselves as "refuges": a safe place to protect women and their children from the abuser. Shelters also defined themselves as "*un milieu de vie*" (living spaces). In this perspective, all shelters presented themselves as a communal and safer version of "home", complete with kitchen, dining-room, living-room,

¹⁰ Three shelters also responded to "women in difficulty", i.e., homeless women, depressed women, pregnant teenagers, sexually abused women, as well as women experiencing mental health difficulties or addictions. This broad spectrum probably indicates the lack of resources in the small communities of peripheral regions such as Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean. However, shelter workers also noted that "violence" was often not the sole problem "abused women" had to contend with, so that the list is also indicative of the multi-dimensionality and the complexity of the tasks shelter workers potentially faced.

¹¹ Save for Le Centre féminin which requested a small contribution from its residents.

¹² It is worth mentioning here that, contrary to the situation often documented in urban centers, the location of SLSJ women's shelters' was made public: it appeared in the groups' pamphlets, and in the phone directory. Women could thus just "show up at the door".

playroom and playground for children, providing an "*ambiance familiale*"¹³ (a family atmosphere), and including household chores in which women were invited to participate.

At CALACS La Maison ISA, an emergency phone line ("*garde 24/7*") ensured that volunteers from ISA could be reached day and night. By the end of the 1980s, the strong medico-legal dimension initially characterizing the work at ISA had considerably receded. Women often asked for help weeks, months, or even years after the assault, which made the medico-legal aspect redundant. ISA also suffered a lack of volunteers and activists for staffing its emergency medical team and ensuring the "*garde 24/7*". Moreover, the group had grown increasingly critical of the "medico-legal kit"¹⁴ promoted by MSSS. This standardized evidence collection procedure was criticized by Québec rape crisis centers for substituting technique for human consideration, and for placing the needs of the medical and legal systems above those of the victim. ISA viewed its intervention as caring for women's own stated needs first: "*Nous sommes là pour soutenir la fille et voir quels sont ses besoins. Avoir une approche autre que médicale.*" (Interview 1988)

In all but one case, the narratives of groups' representatives about

¹³ The latter was understood by the *Regroupement* (Lacombe 1990:97) as a commitment to small-scale organizing, to "respecting the mother-child bond", and to creating a "community" favoring daily exchanges and self-help.

¹⁴ The medico-legal kit was elaborated jointly with the *Guide d'intervention pour les victimes d'agression à caractère sexuel* by the *Conseil du statut de la femme*, Québec doctors' professional corporation, MAS and the *Ministère de la Justice*. Made public in 1984, the kit and the Guide were soon tagged for modification (MSSS 1995:68). Plans for the revision of the Guide, with the collaboration of CALACS, appear in the 1985 *Politique d'aide*.

service work referred to "doing feminist intervention". Rather than referring to a standardized and agreed-upon model, these narratives featured a series of principles and practices that formed a continuum along which the shelters and the CALACS were differentially located. The feminist intervention practised in SLSJ groups was characterized by the presence of three main organizing themes. These were: giving the power back to women within the intervention; helping women develop abilities to initiate change; and developing a new identification to "women as a group". Most of the labour involved in doing feminist intervention was discursive. It was done through "talk", that is: through a process of guided narration that mostly took the form of individual counselling. A few other significant forms of help complemented and reinforced this feminist approach to services.

Representatives from most groups described their work of "intervention" as principles and practices that attempted to give back to women a sense of personal power in the intervention process. All groups stressed the importance of "respecting" women - that is: of restoring a "respect" they had been denied through abuse or assault. *"Elle a eu assez à être forcée à faire quelque chose qu'elle ne voulait pas, on ne la forcera pas à être en suivi."*(ISA, Interview 1988) They also portrayed their role as "answering women's needs" as stated by the women themselves (*"les siens, et non ceux qu'on lui impose"* - La Chambrée, FDR:8.2). In most groups, descriptions positioned the women as acting subjects within the intervention process: they were given decision-making power over the timing, the content, and the process of intervention.

Elle n'est pas obligée de raconter son histoire en arrivant. (...) on l'entoure selon ses besoins. On traite ses demandes et sa personne avec grand respect. Elle va à son rythme. (...) C'est la femme qui fixe sa démarche. Si elle veut être seule, elle peut. (L'Aquarelle, FDR:8.1)

Ce sont les femmes qui décident si l'aide sera régulière ou épisodique (...). Ce sont les femmes elles-mêmes qui décident quand venir, quand elles en ont besoin. (...) elles viennent ici exprimer leurs besoins et, de façon générale, on voit qu'est-ce que l'on pourrait faire, définir sur quoi on va travailler et comment. En général, ce sont les femmes qui décident les moyens (rencontres, information); elles décident aussi le moment d'arrêt. (ISA, FDR:8.1)

Insistence on "letting women decide" for themselves and on their own basis meant that no limits were imposed in most shelters and at ISA on length of stay and on the number of counselling meetings that formed part of "individual intervention". As a principle, women were allowed "*le temps nécessaire*", the time needed by each individual to settle herself and to move on. All shelters and ISA committed to help women make their own decisions, and to support them in their choices - whatever these were¹⁵.

The feminist meaning of giving power back to women in the intervention process becomes clearer when contrasted with the more technocratic account provided by representative of Le Centre féminin. At Le Centre féminin, women were encouraged to "become autonomous as soon as possible" (FDR:5), rather than to proceed at their own rhythm. The average length of stay was 8 days at Le Centre féminin - whereas it was as long as 26 days at La Chambrée. Women's stay in Le Centre féminin was disciplined

¹⁵ These provisions were also included in Québec shelters' 1990 "Charter of intervention" (Regroupement des maisons 1990a). It is worth recalling that abused women made the decision to return to their abusive spouses many times before deciding to end the relationship. It was also a principle of shelters that their support to women's decisions had to be unconditional.

by a "booklet of rules" - whereas L'Auberge de l'amitié operated with only four¹⁶. The staff of the Centre féminin held the power over its women who were labelled as "clients". Staff members organized, evaluated, studied, and decided; women were discussed as "cases" in light of organizational needs to "co-ordinate" team work.

L'intervenante accueille la cliente (...) elle lui demande ce qu'elle cherche (...). Et on ponctue son temps ici. On dit à la cliente que sa situation sera évaluée au fur et à mesure de sa démarche ici. Et le cas est à l'étude. L'intervenante décide et les cas sont discutés en équipe afin de coordonner les actions de chaque membre de l'équipe. (Le Centre féminin, FDR:8.1)

Positioning women as acting subjects in the intervention process and "letting them decide" in the name of "*l'intervention féministe*" did not mean that the CALACS and shelter workers confined themselves to a purely reactive and supportive role. Quite the contrary, they engaged in a considerable labour aimed at helping women develop abilities to initiate personal change. Part of this labour entailed attempts at altering women's emotions and perceptions of themselves. Narratives of intervention mentioned, in particular, working at lessening women's feelings of depression, fear, and anxiety, and at suppressing women's sense of guilt. This work was organized around an effort at transforming internalized social meanings making women responsible for having provoked the violence or assault of which they were the victims by an understanding that displaced the blame from individual women to "society", and to the social

¹⁶ Midnight curfew, no alcohol, no drugs, no trading of personal possessions.

organization of gender relations.

The "*intervenantes*" also engaged in a labour of empowerment. They acted with the objective of redeeming women's perception of themselves by working to enhance their self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-affirmation: "*on leur donne confiance et on les valorise*" (La Chambrée, FDR:8.2). They also proposed new forms of conduct, as we see in the example below: to refuse control, to say no to violence, to command respect from others. They also stressed women's personal responsibility in initiating change, and underlined the strengths they possessed.

On travaille sur l'affirmation de soi, qu'elle n'a pas à accepter ça, qu'elle a le droit de vivre sans la violence, qu'elle n'accepte plus ce contrôle-là, cette domination-là. Qu'elle se fasse davantage respecter comme individu (tout ça c'est l'intervention féministe qu'on fait ici). On tente de lui faire prendre conscience qu'elle a tout ce qu'il faut, et qu'elle s'en serve. (L'Auberge de l'amitié, FDR:8.1, 8.2)

Finally, local groups stressed in various ways the importance of acting upon women with the objective of developing a new identification to "women as a group". "Sharing with other abused women" and "being part of a community of women and children living the same reality" were among the "services" advertised by shelters *La Chambrée*, *Halte-Secours* and *L'Auberge de l'amitié*. Linking individual experiences of abuse and assault to a more collective and gendered experience and raising individual women's awareness of women's collective struggles were also mentioned as intrinsic elements of the intervention process. "*Ultimement, il s'agit d'amener les femmes à penser 'groupe', à penser 'collectif' (...)*" (La Chambrée, FDR:8.3) In this perspective, "support groups" were created by shelters La

Chambrée, Halte-Secours, and CALACS La Maison ISA. "Group intervention" at Halte-Secours, for example, was aimed at "validating women's experiences", at "establishing ties of solidarity" between women, and at favouring processes of "*conscientisation*" (Halte-Secours, pamphlet and Annual Report 1989-90). Practical demonstrations of solidarity - presented as "complicity" between women-as-women - were also part of the work to be done by the "*intervenantes*".

On jase, on discute sur une base égalitaire, sur une base de complicité entre femmes... On intervient d'une manière féministe à partir de l'appel téléphonique initial; la femme sent déjà que nous sommes complices et qu'on la soutient comme femme... (La Chambrée, FDR:8.3)

More technical help was also offered by shelters and CALACS that addressed the various procedures women who had experienced conjugal violence or sexual aggression might want to undertake. Information was given to women about their rights, and about the legal and administrative procedures they might have to, or want to initiate. Referrals were made to professionals (lawyers, doctors, notaries, psychologists), to governmental services, and to other community organizations. At CALACS la Maison ISA, technical help involved contacts with nurses, doctors and the hospital; with the police, lawyers and the crown prosecutor; as well as with social workers, parents and friends. Accompaniment through medical, legal, and other procedures was also offered.

On accompagne la femme dans ses démarches, comme par exemple à l'aide sociale, ou dans ses démarches juridiques. On l'accompagne presque toujours en cour (pour séparation, divorce, garde des enfants)." "On l'accompagne (...) dans sa

recherche d'un logement, dans son déménagement s'il y a lieu... On l'accompagne en cour avec les policiers, ou, avec les policiers, on peut aller la chercher chez elle si nécessaire. (La Chambrée, FDR:8.2)

Information about women's rights, referral and accompaniment all required, on the part of the shelters and the CALACS' workers, definite abilities to help women make their way through the intricacies of the - sometimes lengthy - legal and administrative procedures related to protection and divorce, sexual assault inquest and trial, social assistance, subsidized housing, "*indemnisation des victimes d'actes criminels*" and other forms of state-provided welfare. Regarding sexual assault, for example, ISA representatives mentioned that judicial procedures could last from four months to two years. The "individual help" provided by local service groups, and the work involved in direct services did not encompass only psychological forms of counselling.

Individual counselling, information, referral and accompaniments were also made available to women who requested help without sheltering by L'Auberge de l'amitié, Halte-Secours, and La Chambrée. Increased demands by "*non-hébergées*" (non-residents), the *Regroupement* commented in 1990, had prompted many shelters to structure such a response (1990c:xxv). "Feminist intervention" was extended to children in shelters Halte-Secours and La Chambrée. Finally, commitment to a "global" intervention also led shelter Halte-Secours to organize a "support-system" (childcare and transportation) to ensure access for women and children to the exchange sessions, cultural and leisure activities it organized as part of its "group follow-ups" (Annual Report 1989-90).

b) Doing direct services in women's centers

Like women's shelters and the CALACS, SLSJ's women's centers offered direct services to women of their communities. Like them, they defined their services under the categories of "*accueil*", information, referral and accompaniment; "*écoute*", "*relation d'aide*", individual and group intervention.

The physical layout of women's centers usually offered a communal space - kitchen table or living-room - where coffee was served and where informal exchanges took place. Women came for information about women's issues; others dropped in "just to chat". Sometimes, requests for information or "chatting" would lead women to reveal personal concerns and to seek help from the centers' staff. Issues typically mentioned by activists included problems related to divorce, violence, loneliness, aging, depression, as well as various instances of economic hardship. La Source, Maria Chapdelaine and the CCFC offered "*écoute*" (listening) and "*relation d'aide*". Maison au Quatre-Temps more explicitly depicted its work as feminist intervention.

The extent of the involvement of women's centers in direct services varied. For women's centers to exhibit a variable degree of engagement in direct services was not incongruent with the conditions of their funding at MSSS. Maison au Quatre-Temps declared that "*aide, accompagnement, écoute, référence et suivis*" took up two-thirds of its staff's time (including facilitating "self-help" and "emotional growth" groups). The other centers were less oriented towards direct services, mainly by not undertaking group intervention and by doing referrals rather than engaging in lengthy follow-ups.

Notre intervention est limitée à de l'écoute et à de la relation d'aide. On ne donne pas de rendez-vous, on ne fait pas véritablement de suivi parce qu'on n'a pas les compétences pour ça. Si le besoin est plus grand, on réfère. (La Source, FDR:8.1)

Women's centers also provided information on women's rights and on governmental and community resources, and offered accompaniment. They referred to other local women's and community organizations and local MSSS institutions (CLSCs, in particular). The following excerpt illustrates the extent of this network and gives an example of the range of "women's needs" women's centers were called to answer.

On fait aussi des références à d'autres groupes, si elles ont besoin d'argent, d'un HLM, d'une épicerie. On réfère au Collectif d'information juridique, à la Saint-Vincent-de-Paul, à l'Aide sociale parce qu'ils ont un fonds de dépannage, au Service budgétaire populaire d'Alma parce qu'ils peuvent faire des prêts de dépannage aux femmes. Si on a des problèmes avec l'Aide sociale, on fait appel au groupe l'Encrier, un groupe qui s'occupe de la protection des personnes sur l'aide sociale. On réfère souvent aux avocates de l'aide juridique et aussi aux maisons d'hébergement. Le CLSC pour obtenir des services à domicile, [au groupe] Le Pas dans des cas de tentatives de suicide. (Maison au Quatre-Temps, FDR:8.1)

c) "*L'intervention féministe*": a composite product, a technique for "changing the subject"

The alignment of the *Politique d'aide* with a feminist analysis of violence and its interest for the approaches to services experimented in women's groups (Chapter 5) meant that "feminist" modes of intervention could be overtly adopted by MSSS-funded women's groups. The main characteristics of "*l'intervention féministe*" practised in SLSJ women's services at the end of the 1980s were congruent with the normative

contestation, Vandal argues, was fuelled by the "new values" (new meanings, new visions of the world) proposed, among others, by women's and anti-psychiatry movements (1997:18-20). In Québec, De Koninck et al. (1994) note, the American precepts of "feminist therapy" were appropriated and promoted by psychologists and social workers in the fields of mental health and conjugal violence. As part of a distinctly Québécois feminist critique, focus on "therapy" was replaced by a broader concern for "intervention": "*expression plus large et moins rattachée à une lecture pathologisante des problèmes vécus par les femmes*" (Corbeil and Bourgon 1990, cited in Vandal 1997:31).

Feminist intervention rapidly percolated through the Québec women's movement. At MSSS, De Koninck et al. contend, the absence of a tradition of practices for intervening in the newly problematized field of conjugal violence, coupled with the influential presence of feminist activists among its professionals favoured the diffusion of feminist intervention and gave it legitimacy¹⁷ (1994:194). From 1979 to 1986, Vandal recalls, numerous conferences and colloquia were organized, and training sessions were sponsored by MSSS. These attracted activists from women's groups as well as feminists from the health and social services network (1997:33). Influential and widely circulated texts were produced by feminist professionals (see De Koninck et al. 1994 for references). Finally, feminist intervention found its way into the social work curriculum of Québec Universities.

All these factors and events prompted the development of more

¹⁷ De Koninck et al. also report that feminist intervention seemed to be "falling from grace" in Québec's institutional milieux in the 1990s, following of a more general "backlash" against feminism (1994:162-163).

specific practices of feminist intervention in local women's service groups. They also played an important role in the constitution of models of feminist intervention at the provincial *Regroupements* of shelters and CALACS. Principles and precepts of feminist intervention were largely diffused among member groups in the second part of the 1980s through *Regroupement*-sponsored training sessions.

At the outcome of this process of cross-fertilization, "*l'intervention féministe*" practised in Québec local women's groups has been shaped, I propose, by a dialectical, historical "*aller-retour*" between the twin poles of the theoretical and practical knowledges of feminism, on the one hand, and of psychology and social work, on the other; as well as between the twin sites of movement organizations and of professional, institutional settings. Influence from the latter, D. Lamoureux (1988, 1990) argues, has irremediably thwarted the deployment of a "truly feminist" practice of services. Against such an argument (also shared by Johnson 1981, Morgan 1981, and Randall 1988) for which "feminist counselling" is nothing but a contradiction in terms (all the more so when it is state-funded), a more nuanced view of the feminist intervention practised in SLSJ women's service groups is required.

Regarding struggles over subjectivities, Rose (1994) suggests that representations (new explanations, alternative identities and meanings, etc.) achieve their effects not through a simple "immersion" of human beings into systems of "ideas" but through the ways in which and to the extent that these representations become "practical". The probability that these representations become, in Rose's term, "inculcated" is linked to their entwining with practical routines and techniques that potentially

achieve an "in-folding" into "the self" of the meanings and conducts associated with the production of particular kinds of subjects.

Counselling, Fairclough concedes, "is indeed used to bring the insides of people's heads into the domain of power/knowledge" (1992:59). In this sense, counselling can be seen as a "technique of power" in the Foucauldian sense. Yet, Fairclough continues, counselling "is also a technique for asserting the value and individuality of people". The complexities of the relationship of counselling to "power", suggests Fairclough, and the possibility of its "tactical polyvalence" - i.e., of its articulation to different discourses and political projects - mean that the "liberating dimensions" of counselling are not "just illusory" (59).

Counselling rests on the guided production of personal narratives. Personal narratives - the stories we tell each other about ourselves and our place in the world - are not "reflections of experience", but reflection *on* experience. They are the main self-reflexive devices through which we as human beings arrest and make sense of the flow of existence, giving it "cognitive and emotional coherence" (Bauman 1986:113), "defining, organizing and expressing the meanings of events and experiences" (Mishler 1991:105). Personal narratives are selective reconstructions that are not fixed but potentially vary according to the discursive resources and structures of signification individuals rely on, incorporate or resist at different times (106-107). In this perspective, it can be argued that counselling - the guided, serial production of personal narratives - operates as a technique for the "in-folding" of new meanings, new ways for individuals to understand themselves, events and

experience, and for directing their own conduct.

Movement activists practising "*l'intervention féministe*", I propose, used feminist counselling as a technique for transforming women's subjectivities, and to produce a particular kind of subject. The desired subject was to be autonomous, independent, in solidarity with other women and eventually with women's struggles, capable of making choices and of "taking charge of herself". This desired subject was clearly a feminist subject: a "woman" subject able to take action, by herself and with others, ideally on the basis of a feminist knowledge of her situation, in the making of her own destiny. Injunctions, advice and representations to that effect were not only thrown out as "ideas". They were entwined in the practice of intervention and in the social relations established between the *intervenantes* and the women that came for help.

Suggestions of new meanings for the selective re-making of the personal narratives told by women in the course of counselling sessions presented subjects with possibilities for "in-folding" new ways to understand themselves and their emotions, to give meaning to the events that brought them to seek help, and new prescriptions as to how to change themselves and to conduct themselves in the world. Through feminist-oriented counselling, women's groups undertook an intellectual and practical labour aimed at altering women's initial emotions and perceptions of themselves, replacing blames addressed to "the self" by system-blaming, and enhancing desired capacities (i.e., self-esteem, self-confidence, self-affirmation, solidarity). They also inculcated new conducts. Women were enjoined by the *intervenantes* to become active subjects - to state their own needs, to make decisions on their own basis

- starting with the intervention process itself. In this, *l'intervention féministe* worked as a "technique of subjectification" - that is: as a technique for changing subjectivities and for the production of new subjects (Rose 1994).

In addition, informing women of their rights provided them with new knowledge: it offered them the possibility to think of themselves as "subjects with legal and social rights" (i.e., to protection, to divorce, to trial, to benefits and to compensation) that could be acted upon. Accompaniment by *intervenantes* ensured that women effectively engaged in the new conducts entailed by the exercise of these rights. At the same time, it demonstrated both symbolically and practically the "solidarity" thereby instituted between activists-as-women and women-as-women.

6.4: Doing outreach

"Doing outreach" refers to attempts at transforming the representations about women and gender relations that orient the conducts of women and the population. Outreach addresses collective, rather than individual audiences. In SLSJ women's groups, outreach encompassed activities of information, education, prevention, and "*sensibilisation*" (awareness-raising), and aimed at "changing mentalities" and behaviours among women from the community and the general public. This section shows how and to what extent the different groups appropriated the space for outreach permitted by MSSS funding. Finally, I propose to understand outreach activities as part of the "struggle over subjectivities" in which local women's groups were engaged.

a) Doing outreach in local shelters and in the CALACS

All shelters and the CALACS organized activities destined to reach out to women, the general public, and organizations from their community on topics such as conjugal violence, sexual aggression, sexual harassment, pornography, and sexism in advertising¹⁸. Information, prevention, education of the public and awareness-raising were deemed essential to social change.

La problématique de la violence conjugale est sociale, donc à tout le monde, donc tous doivent être au courant. C'est important pour nous de faire du changement social, de changer les mentalités. C'est pour cela que nous faisons de la prévention, de la sensibilisation, et de l'éducation auprès de la population en général. (Halte-Secours, FDR:8.1)

Services were not enough: "*La violence est inacceptable (...). Il faut en parler, parler de l'ensemble du problème et non seulement offrir de l'hébergement (...). C'est la base d'un changement social éventuel.*" (La Chambrée, FDR:10.1) Action had to be taken "beyond help and services", for addressing and changing the attitudes and mentalities, myths and prejudices, "images" and behaviours that condoned or even promoted violence (Halte-Secours, La Maison ISA, La Chambrée, L'Aquarelle). In local groups, the terms "information", "prevention", "education" and "*sensibilisation*" were used interchangeably for activities that were geared towards raising public awareness of the phenomenon of violence against women, and towards diffusing the alternative representations and analyses advocated by women's organizations (see Chapter 5).

¹⁸ Pornography and sexism in advertising were termed "*la violence en images*".

If all groups engaged in such action, CALACS La Maison ISA and shelter Halte-Secours stood out for placing outreach front and center in the description of their main, regular activities, on par with direct services. Among the other shelters, investment in outreach activities was more variable.

Typically, local shelters and the CALACS offered information sessions and "*sensibilisation*" meetings for community and school groups. For example, in 1990-91 representatives from La Maison ISA facilitated sessions with 15 different organizations (342 persons), ranging from local "*Maisons de jeunes*" and women's centers to groups of CEGEP and University students (Annual Report 1990-91). Shelter Halte-Secours had established a regular presence in the local high school for three years, meeting in 1989-90 with twelve classes of grade 12 students (264 persons) (Annual Report 1989-90).

All groups made a point of disseminating information and being visible in the community by participating in annual events such as the "Crime Prevention Week", the "Day of Action Against Violence Against Women", International Women's Day and, in some cases, the "*Salon de la femme*". Information booths were set up, pamphlets and leaflets were distributed and articles published in local newspapers. Groups were also solicited by the press when issues related to violence against women made the news. For instance, in 1991-92, ISA was repeatedly invited by the local media to comment on the judgement of the Supreme Court regarding the legal use of rape victims' sexual past, as well as on the Bill on "consent" proposed by Federal Minister of Justice Kim Campbell. From a more pro-active stance, shelter Halte-Secours published a weekly column in

local newspaper *Le Point* that was also aired on the local radio. "*Cette chronique avait pour objectif d'informer la population sur leurs droits, leurs recours et de faire connaître les mythes juridiques* [about the issue of conjugal violence]" (Halte-Secours, Annual Report 1989-90).

Another way Halte-Secours and Maison ISA saw the actualization of their "information and sensibilisation" mandate was to "train" health and social services professionals. Information sessions on "receiving women victims of sexual assault" were given by ISA to two groups of nurses (35 people) from the Emergency of the Chicoutimi Hospital in 1991-92, and to students from the social work programme at *Université du Québec à Chicoutimi*. ISA also prepared a session on "Surviving incest"¹⁹ for a group of 41 "*intervenantes du milieu*" in 1990-91. Halte-Secours met yearly with students from the CEGEP's nursing programme to train these future health professionals to "recognize conjugal violence" and to intervene adequately.

Through this array of activities, SLSJ local shelters and the CALACS appropriated the space the *Politique d'aide* had discursively defined as "prevention services". In so doing, they also promoted their own version of what informing, preventing and raising awareness "among their clientele, MSSS professionals and the public" entailed. If space could be made within the terms of MSSS funding for doing feminist-oriented outreach, investment in outreach activities, however, remained highly variable. While shelter L'Aquarelle exhibited a practical involvement close to the one displayed by Halte-Secours and ISA, at L'Auberge de

¹⁹ Based on a research document prepared by the Cowansville *Collective par et pour elle*.

l'amitié, Centre féminin and La Chambrée outreach was limited to statutory public appearances, or left to the changing winds of "the milieu's requests", or to particular individuals' tastes, abilities or availability.

What distinguished shelter Halte-Secours and CALACS Maison ISA from the other groups was an organizational commitment to fulfil a mandate of "information, prevention and *sensibilisation*." At Halte-Secours, a three-person permanent committee of the Board of Directors was responsible - and accountable - for planning and realizing outreach. At the CALACS, the very name "ISA" (an acronym for *Information, Sensibilisation, Aide*) was regularly used as a reminder of the organization's mission, and members of the collective were expected to enrol into the organization of outreach activities. It is important to note that the objectives of Halte-Secours and Maison ISA included a clear outreach mandate, which was not the case in most of the other shelters (Chapter 5).

The intensity of involvement "beyond services" and into outreach in SLSJ local shelters and in the CALACS, I would like to argue here, was a political decision that relied on the political sensibilities²⁰, choices and traditions of local organizations, rather than on constraints placed by funding or by the demand for services. Examination of the funding protocol shows that outreach could be legitimately organized within the boundaries of MSSS funding. An additional margin of manoeuvre could be carved out from a recourse to activists' volunteer labour, as Halte-Secours and ISA exemplify. Requests for services were heavy on all groups

²⁰ I am grateful to Michèle Roy, from the *Regroupement Provincial des Maisons d'hébergement*, for suggesting this line of analysis to me (Roy, Interview 14-03-1996).

(shelters' occupancy rates varied between 74% and 93% in 1989-90 and ISA was coping with yearly increases in women's requests for help), yet some managed to do considerable outreach. The variable investment of local shelters and the CALACS in outreach reflected their different objectives and priorities of action: that is, the different ways in which they constituted and exerted their agency.

b) Doing outreach in women's centers

Contrary to shelters and the CALACS in which outreach remained, even in the best of cases, a sporadic activity, women's centers organized outreach activities on a regular basis (i.e., as a part of their regular functioning). The importance of these activities stemmed directly from the centers' *raison d'être*, that is: from an initial project anchored into the rationale of meeting "women's needs for a place and for information on women's issues". At the end of the 1980s, however, outreach had become defined not only as "information", but as "*sensibilisation*" and "*conscientisation*" (awareness-raising and consciousness-raising) of women and of the general public, and even as "*formation*" (training) for women of the community.

"*Soupers-causeries*", "*après-midis rencontres*" and other "*rencontres d'information*" were offered by all women's centers. These weekly or monthly sessions were advertised in the groups' pamphlets or in the local newspaper. They touched upon the vast array of issues local women's centers deemed "of interest to women" (Maria Chapdelaine). Information was generally transmitted by a guest speaker; questions, discussion and exchange followed. Topics varied from the militant to the mundane: from

recognizing and fighting sexual harassment to developing "*une saine alimentation*" (healthy eating habits), from the impact on women of the most recent governmental reform of social benefits to the interpretation of dreams. Notwithstanding the theme, a similar concern underlay the organization of these sessions: "*sensibiliser et conscientiser les femmes*". With variable degrees of difficulty and success depending on the topics, conscious efforts were made not only to approach the latter from a "women's perspective" but often explicitly to diffuse a "feminist message" - that is, to provide their female audiences with a feminist way of making sense of their experience and of interpreting social reality.

Le but principal de cette activité est de sensibiliser et de conscientiser les femmes (parce que nous on fait de l'intervention féministe) à tous les stéréotypes véhiculés. On a toujours des messages à "ploguer", sur ce que la société nous offre comme modèle, on débâtit les stéréotypes et les publicités sexistes. Des fois, ça va jusqu'à faire signer des pétitions pour que certaines choses arrêtent. Les femmes parlent, elles viennent valider les sentiments qu'elles ont. (Quatre-Temps, FDR:8.3)

As this citation also illustrates, "*intervention féministe*" in Québec local groups was not limited to counselling practices. Research by De Koninck and Savard concurs: "feminist" intervention was also developed and deployed in practices such as workshops, information sessions and other activities of "*conscientisation*" (De Koninck and Savard 1992, cited in Vandal 1997:37).

Like shelters and the CALACS, women's centers also advertised their availability for organizing sessions of "*information-sensibilisation*" for groups from their community. For example, in 1989-90 women's center Maria

Chapdelaine met with four different women's organizations (a total of 236 women from three local chapters of L'AFEAS and from one association of single mothers) on the topics of violence against women, and of women's personal and financial autonomy (Annual Report 1989-90).

With the exception of La Source, SLSJ women's centers organized regular "classes" or "workshops". Classes of 30 to 45 hours and series of 10 or 12 workshops were held with the specific objective of providing tools and training ("*formation*") to "help women take charge of their own life" and to "develop their autonomy". Although related to specific topics - for instance, "personal growth", "menopause", or "job search techniques" - workshops and classes aimed in a more general way to enable women to acquire "new knowledges", a new way to interpret the world ("*démystifier certaines problématiques*"), as well as new abilities and practical skills (CCFC, FDR:8.1; Maria Chapdelaine, FDR:8.3; also Quatre-Temps).

Like shelters and the CALACS, women's centers also participated in the organization of yearly women's events, such as the Day of Action Against Violence Against Women, and International Women's Day. Even while celebrating the latter, raising women's awareness was not ignored.

C'est une fête [March 8], mais il y a toujours des messages. (...) Cette année, on voulait s'amuser et souligner le 10ème anniversaire de La Source. On a fait des activités sur la publicité sexiste: les femmes de la salle avaient des produits (comme une gaine 18 heure, des Nutribar, etc.) et elles faisaient des publicités sexistes pour vendre ces produits aux hommes (gaine pour homme, Nutribar contre la bedaine de bière). On a eu des discussions sur "Souffrir pour être belle", "l'obsession de la minceur". (La Source, FDR:8.2)

Women's centers used the local media mainly on special occasions.

Women's center La Source, however, published a weekly column in the local newspaper *L'Etoile du Lac* since 1982. Through the column, La Source announced its activities, challenged or praised popular T.V. series ("*Lance et compte*", "*Les filles de Caleb*"²¹) for their imagery of women, interrogated perceptions of feminism and circulated information on women's issues (from breast cancer to depression to recent developments in divorce laws). According to activists from La Source, the column was a local hit:

C'est tellement lu et ça sensibilise tellement de monde que ça a une grande importance. C'est toujours sur des sujets chauds. (...) On a souvent des appels, on en entend parler beaucoup, des gens [nous] arrêtent sur la rue, même les gars la lisent et en parlent! Il y a des gens qui commencent à lire leur journal par la chronique, avant de lire le reste. (La Source, FDR:8.3)

The SOC guidelines allowed for most of the "outreach" repertoire of women's centers (save for research and colloquium organizing), this as long as a regular involvement in meeting "women's priority needs in the health and social services field" could be demonstrated. The latter encompassed issues of violence against women, women's poverty, and women's mental and physical health (MSSS 1989). The field of action recognized to women's centers also included "the development of women's autonomy", a discursive device that stood for women's centers' project (see Chapter 5) at the same time that it mediated in a gendered way MSSS' project of "responsible and self-reliant citizenship".

Acting as a core political metaphor, "developing women's autonomy"

²¹ These Québécois series were aired in English Canada by the CBC under the titles of "He shoots, he scores", and "Emily".

within the boundaries of the health and social services field potentially encapsulated a wide, and largely un-charted universe of activities and issues. Local women's centers appropriated this space for outreach. In doing so, they also defined this space and its boundaries on their own terms. As I have tried to make clear through the examples provided, women's centers regularly intervened on a variety of topics that formed a continuum of "women's issues". This continuum ultimately reveals the very eclectic construction of the local versions of feminism displayed by SLSJ women's centers. Classical themes related to "women's physical health" and "violence" co-existed with others that expressed a broad definition of "women's mental health". Topics of "loneliness", "massotherapy", "antigymnastics" or "*obsession de la minceur*", for example, were articulated to popular discourses of self-help, of alternative mental health, and to feminist discourses on the basis of their contribution to "developing women's autonomy". Including "women's poverty" as a legitimate component of women's centers' field of action opened the door, through a similar mechanism, to activities and issues related to women's access to the job market, to state provided welfare, and to financial protection in case of divorce (e.g., *Loi sur le patrimoine familial*).

Because of the discursive possibilities for articulating "the development of women's autonomy" within the field of action granted by MSSS to women's centers (1989), and because global funding at the SOC called for an equally global mode of reporting (see chapter 7), it is difficult to ascribe limits to the topics that could be legitimately taken up under the auspices of MSSS funding.

Not only were these boundaries uncertain; they were further blurred

by the existence of a second source of operational funding, the Secretary of State, whose objects considerably overlapped those of MSSS. With the exception of "personal growth", core funding to women's centers by the Secretary of State allowed for outreach activities centering on a wide range of women's issues, including health and social welfare, and extending to feminism, mainstream politics, and women's organizing for change. Finally, it is worth noting that funds from MEQ's OVEP programme, as well as from project funding by other governmental sources were usually allocated by women's centers to outreach activities - permitted or not by MSSS funding. "Doing outreach" in women's centers was thus not limited to what has been exposed in this section. Chapter 8 will provide the necessary complement to this picture.

c) "Changing mentalities": struggling over subjectivities

The expression "changing the mentalities" used by SLSJ women's groups to describe the objective of their work of "information, prevention, *sensibilisation*" points to activists' awareness of the importance of "changing the way people see the world" as a strategy for social change. Changing mentalities through outreach is part of a struggle over subjectivities that includes both changing "representations" and changing "conducts". More clearly than Schild (1994), whose definition of subjectivities underlines one's sense of self and of one's place in the world of social relations, Rose (1994) emphasizes, in addition, the prescriptions and instructions in "appropriate forms of conduct" (11) that are entwined with the ways we view and define ourselves. Instructions in the (self-) government of behaviour, in ways to act upon ourselves and

upon others, it appears, are inseparable from the representations "by which human beings are rendered thinkable" (3). There is an intimate link between changing representations and changing conducts, and that is what local women's groups are after when intervening in civil society to "change the mentalities".

In their struggle over subjectivities - that is: over gendered representations *and* conducts - local service groups have prioritized different targets. Women's centers, in particular, have engaged in a wide array of thematic "*information-conscientisation*" activities aimed at women from their communities. These activities provided their audiences with new spaces for "making sense", collectively and in a feminist way, of issues related to women's experience in the world of social relations; with new knowledges (either in the form of making existing knowledge about women's rights, for example, accessible, or of proposing new vocabularies and understandings); and with new possible avenues of conduct in terms of acting on these new knowledges and representations. More clearly oriented towards the acquisition of new skills and new capacities, workshops and classes directly aimed at enabling women to not only "know differently" and "feel differently", but to act differently.

Besides women, other audiences have been targeted in this struggle over subjectivities. Local service organizations problematized different collective representations and social conducts that they sought to change. Efforts at changing specific audiences' subjectivities included providing the milieu's professionals with a "training" into new understandings of conjugal violence and sexual assault, and into what "appropriate professional conduct" in these cases would consist of. They also included

using group discussions to question representations and conducts among high school students regarding "appropriate behaviour" in the field of gender relations.

On n'arrivait pas là en disant: on a l'expérience et asseyez-vous et écoutez-nous. On disait: c'est quoi vos expériences, qu'est-ce que ça te dit les rapports avec les filles. On essayait de parler leur langage: Ca t'arrives-tu de pogner les fesses des filles et tu penses-tu que les filles aiment ça? Quand il y avait des filles dans la classe, elles leur répondaient toutes seules. Ca, pour nous autres, on avait gagné beaucoup. (ISA, Interview 5:39)

Part of the work of "changing mentalities" in which local service groups engaged, however, was much less "practical" or "technical" than were their efforts at changing subjectivities among small groups of women from the community or other small, selected audiences. Much more diffuse and sporadic means of "influence" - public appearances at yearly events, interventions through the local media - meant that "the population in general", dominant representations and problematized collective conducts remained a much more elusive target.

As Schild points out, struggles for subjectivities are "struggles", and changing subjectivities is "a slow and uneven process." (1994:65) First, competing "authorities", "practices of subjectification", representations and injunctions jostle in unequal battles for the shaping of subjectivities and the government of conducts (Rose 1994). Second, human beings have an emotional investment in their "sense of self", which makes changing the subject into a difficult, sometimes painful enterprise (Schild 1994:74). Third, human beings are not passive recipients or objects of the practices attempting to make them into particular kinds of

subjects (Schild 1994, Rose 1994), be they "alternative" or emancipatory. Yet this last point - that people are agents in their relation to their subjectivities - is the avenue that gives to movements' interventions in the "politics of subjectivity" the possibility of contingent outcomes.

6.5: Doing advocacy

"Doing advocacy" refers to the work of political representation aimed at transforming state discourses and institutional practices. More specifically, doing advocacy refers to an involvement in the sphere of democratic representative institutions, public policies, and the political system, that is: in the sphere of mainstream politics. There were three main ways in which SLSJ shelters, women's centers and the CALACS did advocacy work at the end of the 1980s. They participated in movement coalitions. They sat at "concerted action" tables with state institutions. They also deployed a more traditional repertoire of pressure and protest.

MSSS possessed a tradition of supporting funded groups' advocacy work. From its inception to the first half of the 1980s, the SOC programme funded organizations "destined to represent the community", and "to protect its interests" (MSSS-SOC 1978-79 to 1983-84) in the field of health and social services. After 1984, the operational character of SOC funding provided a "grey zone" that permitted the carving out of space for doing advocacy in all funded groups. The 1985 *Politique d'aide* reaffirmed SOC's support for organizations and activities aimed at "defending rights (*la défense des droits*)" (MAS 1985:52). The policy also planned the creation of regional structures of "concerted action" in which women's

service organizations were "invited" to participate (1985:34). By the end of the 1980s, supporting "relations of co-ordination with other community groups or partners from MSSS network" was part of SOC funding (MSSS 1989:5). This provision meant the recognition of two major changes in women's and community groups' approaches to mainstream politics. The first was their increased participation in intra- and inter-movement coalitions. The second was their growing engagement in institutionalized modes of political representation that associated "community" and "state" actors.

a) Coalition work

In 1990, all ten SLSJ women's service groups participated in intra-movement coalitions of women's movement organizations. Eight SLSJ women's service groups participated in the activities of their provincial *Regroupements* and eight were part of the regional *Table de concertation des groupes de femmes RECIF-02*²². Some groups were also affiliated regionally or provincially to the *Fédération des femmes du Québec* and participated in the - more sporadic - actions of a regional Pro-choice coalition²³. SLSJ women's service groups also participated in a variety of inter-movement coalitions. Most of the latter were regional in scope. Six groups belonged to the *Regroupement des OVEP*, which grouped community

²² By the end of the 1980s, "concerted action" tables regrouping feminist and women's organizations existed in almost all of Québec's regions. Typically, these tables were funded by grants from the Secretary of State's Women's Program, and received technical support (animation, secretariat, mailouts) from the regional offices of Québec's *Conseil du statut de la femme* (for more information see CSF 1989, 1994).

²³ The coalition was very active at the time of the "Chantal Daigle" affair, in 1989, which resulted in the Supreme Court of Canada rejecting Canadian Laws criminalizing abortion. After this event, participation in the coalition ebbed.

organizations doing "popular education"²⁴. Four were affiliated to newly created *Association des ressources alternatives et communautaires en santé mentale* (ARACSM) (alternative and community mental health resources)²⁵. Four participated in the foundation, in the spring of 1990, of a regional coalition against the reform at MSSS. Two were members in *Solidarité populaire Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean*, a regional coalition of union and community organizations. A few other local associations counted women's service groups among their membership.

Like other endeavours of SLSJ groups, participation in coalitions varied. CALACS Maison ISA, shelters Le Centre féminin, L'Aquarelle, L'Auberge de l'amitié, and women's center CCFC were involved in one to three coalitions. Shelters Halte-Secours and La Chambrée, women's centers Maria Chapdelaine, La Source and Quatre-Temps counted between four and eight affiliations.

Coalition life placed heavy demands on participants. Shelter Halte-Secours, for example, was member of four coalitions. Listed in its Annual Report, in 1989-90, were seven regional meetings, two committee meetings and two provincial meetings of its *Regroupement*; eight meetings of the Executive of *RECIF-02* and four "regular" two-days meetings; three meetings of *ARACSM*; a General Assembly of *OVEP*. Also listed were participating with

²⁴ The *Regroupement des OVEP* included groups funded by MEQ's OVEP program, as well as other groups identifying with objectives of "popular education". In existence since the 1970s, *OVEP Regroupements* were present in most of Québec's regions.

²⁵ The creation of these types of groupings followed MSSS' new *Politique de santé mentale* (mental health policy) in which MSSS partly "disengaged" from the mental health field by providing new funding for community organizations in exchange for their fulfilling of service contracts. On this policy and this type of partnership see in particular the work of J. Lamoureux (1994).

all the staff in two *Regroupement*-sponsored training sessions ("the cycle of violence" and "feminist intervention") and in one *OVEP* training session; organizing two internal meetings about the *Regroupement's* new Charter of intervention; and taking all the staff to a day of information on the upcoming "*Régionalisation*" at MSSS organized by a coalition of provincial *Regroupements*.

All intra- and inter-movement coalitions included, among their objectives, clear mandates to take position on women's, or other issues and to represent these positions in the field of mainstream politics. Coalition work entailed direct involvement in the coalitions' political battles. In these, the main allegiance of SLSJ women's service groups was to their provincial *Regroupements*. For most groups members of provincial *Regroupements* of women's services, coalition-related advocacy work entailed local participation in the "fights for funding" of the end of the 1980s. Maison ISA sent letters to MSSS, to Prime Minister Robert Bourassa and to Health and Social Services Minister Thérèse Lavoie-Roux, and successfully lobbied the Official Opposition's critic for Health and Social Welfare Issues, local MP Jane Blackburn. It obtained letters of support from more than thirty local institutions and organizations. It participated in the *Regroupement's* "visibility campaign" by holding press conferences in January and April of 1989, and by writing articles in local newspapers and speaking on the local CBC radio. SLSJ women's centers undertook similar actions, and joined L'R's demonstration in front of the Québec Parliament in June 1989. Involvement in coalitional politics also took the form of sending representatives to regional decision-making structures (through Table *RECIF-02*), signing petitions and staging the

occasional protest.

"Doing advocacy through coalitions" also entailed participating in the elaboration of coalition positions, as well as in strategy-making. Shelters Halte-Secours, La Chambrée and L'Auberge de l'amitié held regular regional meetings "to organize actions and strategies at the regional level" (La Chambrée FDR:20.4). They also represented "shelters' position", for example sending a brief to Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean's CRSSS about women's groups participation in trilateral committees on mental health. Women's center Maison au Quatre-Temps well described the "process" aspect of this type of advocacy work:

Notre participation à cette coalition [contre la régionalisation] est très importante puisque nous pouvons discuter ensemble des impacts de la régionalisation, pour ainsi décider ensemble des stratégies à prendre dans le futur. (...) C'est un lieu important de réflexion pour les groupes à cause de toutes les analyses que nous faisons ensemble.
(FDR:20.8)

Yet, as the account of coalition work at Halte-Secours indicates, there was more to coalition work than "advocacy politics" strictly speaking. Coalitions seldom existed solely for advocacy purposes. They existed to favour the development of their members, for example through training sessions and the diffusion of information, and by favouring contacts and exchanges among member groups. When asked about the benefits they saw to their participation in coalitions, SLSJ groups did not only underline the political advantages and increased negotiating power that ensued from such participation. Technical support and help, the deepening of their analyses, the acquisition of a more "global vision", and most of

all, the end of their isolation were also strongly underscored.

Besides "doing advocacy politics", part of what was involved in coalition work was a political process of coalition-building, that is, of constituting the actors of advocacy politics. This process involved more than setting up coalitions, increasing membership, and developing member groups' technical and political capacities to act. It also entailed constituting the unity of the coalition itself as a truly "collective" actor, a unity realized not only around a shared project, but also through the development of a solidarity of member groups among and between themselves. Unity and solidarity were not a given, but an outcome of a process that could take time.

Ca va très bien, on a une bonne collaboration de tout le monde. Au début, il y a quatre ans, il y avait beaucoup de compétition entre les maisons. Maintenant non, on a une très bonne franchise, on est très liées. Même si on est différentes dans notre fonctionnement.

C'est important d'avoir une certaine solidarité par rapport à tous les groupes de femmes. On doit construire sur nos différences, en se respectant, et c'est pas évident à faire. (Auberge de l'amitié, FDR:20.2, about relations between members of shelters' Regroupement at the regional level)

Establishing unity and solidarity in inter-movement coalitions also offered increased possibilities for social struggles to "spill over" (Meyer and Whittier 1994) and to become discursively articulated to one another. Adopting the identity of "community organizations" was the discursive device through which women's services attached themselves to other struggles, and articulated "women's issues" to an expanded field of struggles. While SLSJ women's services groups did occasionally represent "women's views" to inter-movement coalitions, participation in the

Regroupement des OVEP, in the coalition on régionalisation and in *Solidarité populaire SLSJ*, in particular, presented the potential for an extension of the commitment of women's services to socio-political change. Maison au Quatre-Temps saw the benefits of its participation in *Solidarité populaire* in these terms:

Ca nous apporte des éléments d'analyse sociale, une prise de conscience des inégalités sociales qui conduisent à l'appauvrissement de notre clientèle. (...) Il est important d'y participer afin de développer une solidarité et une force dans le milieu populaire pour revendiquer et promouvoir d'autres choix que ceux que le pouvoir de l'argent veut nous imposer via les gouvernements et les médias. (FDR:20.10)

b) Seeking institutional change "from within"

The advocacy work of SLSJ local groups also involved their formal participation in "tables" or "committees" for concerted action, where they sat with local institutional actors. The regional table of concerted action against violence put in place by the *Politique d'aide* was replaced by local tables regrouping representatives from local agencies from MSSS (CLSCs, Hospitals, Youth protection), the *Ministère de la Justice* (crown prosecutor, police), and women's groups. The implementation of these tables was left to local actors; some geographical areas did not have one. Shelters L'Auberge de l'amitié, Le Centre féminin, CALACS La Maison ISA and women's center La Maison au Quatre-Temps represented issues of violence against women in these formal arenas.

At the Chicoutimi table, for example, the name of the table was an issue for representatives of the rape crisis center, who fought successfully for the more encompassing appellation "violence against

women" rather than "conjugal violence" (ISA, Interview 6:20-21). At issue were also the administrative (mis)handling of the medico-legal kit by the police, and the confidentiality of the real-life cases used in the table's internal activities²⁶. Such participation exemplified the possibilities and constraints of fighting for institutional change "from within". Representation by La Maison ISA at this table was instrumental in the establishment of a satisfactory protocol for the treatment of victims of sexual aggression at the Chicoutimi hospital. Working relationships with the crown prosecutor and the police were improved as problems could be discussed formally. Institutional change from within was seen as a promising, and largely inescapable avenue. It was also considered a slow, frustrating, and difficult process.

Tu m'aurais demandé ça la semaine passée, je t'aurais dit que la table ne donne rien. Mais non, je pense que ça donne quelque chose, mais c'est sûr que ça n'avance pas à la vitesse que je voudrais. (ISA, Interview 6:43)

In this process, important limits were posed by differences in participants' mandates, organizational cultures, individual capacities and skills, and visions of the world (also in ISA "Réponse au questionnaire de Femmes en tête, mars 1989").

Je n'ai pas envie de prendre leur défense, mais je pense que c'est cela la réalité aussi. Ils vont dans la limite de ce

²⁶ Real life examples were set up as "typical cases" to develop procedures and protocols for "concerted action" between the table's participants. ISA successfully opposed the breach of confidentiality represented by using real women's names. Nobody else seemed to have given it a thought...

qu'ils sont capables de faire comme êtres humains, et par rapport au mandat [dont] ils ont à répondre. La marge de manoeuvre qu'on a pour collaborer, elle varie à chaque fois. Ce sont des limites qui sont imposées par celles [des] organismes, de ce qu'on est capables de faire comme individus (...) de la pression qu'on a, des personnes qui travaillent avec nous autres, puis de la philosophie. (...) on tente de changer les institutions par l'intérieur et ça, là, c'est par du monde qui sont en dedans avec les limites qu'ils ont. (ISA, Interview 6:44, 45)

Other institutional arenas for concerted action in which SLSJ women's service groups were engaged included "committees for crime prevention", and "Services d'accueil et référence" (SAR). Local crime prevention committees were funded by the *Ministère de la Justice*. They regrouped representatives from Federal and provincial justice agencies, local MSSS agencies, and voluntary, community and women's organizations. Women's centers La Maison au Quatre-Temps and La Source, shelters L'Aquarelle and La Chambrée, and CALACS La Maison ISA were present on these committees. Involvement varied from participating in the "Crime Prevention Week" (for most groups) to taking responsibility for raising the specificity of "women's issues" in feminist terms (ISA).

Nous, l'importance de notre présence là, on se disait: pour la semaine nationale [de prévention] du crime, oui, mais la table locale c'était important pour qu'à la prévention du crime ils parlent aussi des femmes. Et je ne voulais pas que ce soit eux qui en parlent. (ISA, Interview 6:59)

Local and regional *Services d'accueil et référence* aimed at favouring concerted action on local "training needs". They were composed of representatives of educational institutions and professional training agencies, as well as *OVEP* groups and women's groups. Representing women's

training needs was the rationale for participating (CCFC, FDR:20.2). "*Je voulais être là parce que c'était important qu'on soit là, parce que notre vision de la problématique des besoins de formation [des femmes] était importante.*" (La Source, Interview 11:56) Yet, these attempts at "representing women" also proved frustrating. Institutional representatives at local tables had no decision-making power (60, 65), and the regional table spent more time in setting up structures and procedures than in taking action (53).

c) Pressures and protest

Doing advocacy also took the more conventional form of pressure and protest politics. SLSJ women's service groups engaged occasionally in *actions de pression*, largely linked to "*des enjeux d'actualité*". In 1989-90, for example, women's center Maria Chapdelaine circulated petitions against pornography, against the GST, for gun control, for the maintenance of the "*Jeunes volontaires*" employment programme, and for "the recognition of the community movement" (Annual Report 1989-90). CALACS La Maison ISA joined its voice (letters, phone calls) to Québec CALACS' in a political intervention on the judicial treatment of rape victims triggered by a specific judgement. Maison ISA also wrote to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney protesting against Canada's involvement in the Gulf War (Annual Report 1990-91). These examples show that the political challenges mounted by MSSS funded groups were not necessarily limited to issues of "health and social services".

Letters of protest, petitions and briefs were the favoured elements of this action repertoire. Although this form of advocacy work, by its

very nature, was sporadic at best, women's centers and the CALACS, in particular, tended to see such actions as part of their day-to-day work.

On se veut aussi un groupe de pression, on est à l'affût, on se tient prêtes à réagir. (La Source, FDR:19).

Les questions relatives à l'actualité en général, les événements qui ont trait à la justice, la paix et aux conditions de vie humaine interpellent le centre dans son rôle d'agent de changement. Ce dernier n'est pas que témoin ou observateur, il est partie prenante de cette réalité. C'est pourquoi il interpelle ou est interpellé régulièrement, afin de prendre la parole ou d'agir face à certaines questions. Quatre dossiers spécifiques ont nécessité ce genre d'intervention cette année. (La Maison ISA, Annual Report 1990-91, Introduction to the section on "Actions")

The broader "representations of the project" that women's centers and Maison ISA aligned with included powerful symbolic injunctions that made advocacy work more likely than in shelters. Favoured modes of intervention making "*actions collectives*" one of women's centers priorities entailed orientations towards a politics of representation and protest. Affiliation to the *Regroupement québécois des CALACS*, i.e., of the "*Centres d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel*" committed Maison ISA to the twin dimensions encapsulated in the very name of "CALACS": "*l'aide et la lutte*" ("helping" and "struggling"). However, conceptions of "collective actions" in women's centers, and of "struggle" in CALACS (see Racine 1994), were not restricted to advocacy work. Rather, they directed action towards a public space for collective representation(s) and debate that encompassed doing advocacy in the field of formal politics, while including other forms of political intervention on the terrain of civil society (i.e., outreach, organizing).

In the project of Québec shelters, involvement in struggles in formal politics was a later addition that was granted only one mention among the many articles that made up the 1990 *Charte d'intervention* of the *Regroupement provincial des maisons d'hébergement* (1990a). On the other hand, "political struggle" in shelters was not limited to investing mainstream politics. Speaking on behalf of Québec's shelters, Lacombe writes:

(...) les luttes dites "politiques" ne se mènent pas toujours dans la rue ou à coup de pétitions et de rencontres avec les ministres. Elles résident aussi dans nos interventions quotidiennes, dans notre acharnement à dénoncer les lacunes et les injustices, à lever le voile sur des problèmes tabous. Les maisons d'hébergement ont donc mené leurs luttes dans leurs milieux respectifs, sur le plan des mentalités et des institutions en s'attaquant aux mythes et aux préjugés.
(1990:108-109)

Conclusion

The transformations of the substance and repertoire of action in SLSJ women's service groups, over the 1980s, followed the same direction as the changes in their representations of the project. Rather than a "depoliticization", under state funding, of initially feminist politics of services, the trajectory of these changes shows a politicization and a broadening of practices, the substance of which increasingly informed by an identification with feminism.

At the end of the 1980s, doing services in state-funded women's service groups was undoubtedly "doing transformative politics". Practices of "*intervention féministe*" aimed at transforming women's subjectivities

and making the "woman" subject into an active agent of her own circumstances were the trademark of direct service work in the CALACS and in the shelters (with the exception of the more traditional, mainstream-oriented Centre féminin). Outreach activities proposed feminist readings of women's issues that relied on socio-political analyses of the situation of women. SLSJ groups aimed not only at informing women and the general public, but at "*sensibilisation, conscientisation, et formation*", that is: at transforming collective representations and conducts. Advocacy work, some forms of which were relatively new venues for local service groups, was invested with an unprecedented intensity. If the balance of services, outreach, and advocacy work varied among groups, weights had shifted, their repertoire had broadened, and their action, in and outside direct services, was increasingly politicized. Provincial *Regroupements* played an important role in strengthening, at the local level, practices oriented towards "changing mentalities" and towards representation in formal politics.

What was the role of MSSS funding? The institutional forms that regulated the funding of MSSS-funded women's groups were largely inclusive - that is: permissive - of the main activities of local shelters, CALACS and women's centers. Although recognition was sometimes more implicit than explicit, it remains clear from the 1985 *Politique d'aide* and the SOC guidelines that no significant prescriptions or exclusions affected the programming of funded groups. MSSS funding thus facilitated the undertaking of local service groups' chosen modes of action, and did not hinder their politicization. MSSS also supported the development of feminist intervention in Québec. The literature suggests, still, that

funding may work more subtly, reinforcing the service dimension in groups whose initial mission was linked to "helping women". This was not the case. First, if the *Politique d'aide* was biased towards services, MSSS funding legitimated a wider array of modes of action. Second, SLSJ shelters and the CALACS, although profoundly attached to direct services, did increasingly engage in outreach and advocacy action. That this engagement varied is best explained by internal factors such as political sensibilities, current "representations of the project", and the degree of alignment with the broader projects defined at the level of the *Regroupements*.

There is one area, however, in which MSSS funding, and other, state-related "external factors" shaped the action repertoire of SLSJ women's service groups. SLSJ groups' involvement in formal, institutional modes of political representation at the local and regional level was, in part, a direct consequence of the *Politique d'aide*, which created mechanisms of concerted action. Yet, there were more of these institutional instances: *Comités de prévention du crime*, SAR and SRAR, and the various "Tables" to which RECIF-02 delegated representatives to speak on behalf of women. In these "associational modes of governance", as I want to call them, official participation was requested from women's and community groups to represent designated constituencies. Stemming from governmental and ministerial initiatives, the existence of these tables, and the possibilities for "change from within" they potentially harboured, shaped the development of these forms of advocacy in SLSJ women's service groups. These new forms of governance, however, arose from complex political situations in which movements' struggles for inclusion as legitimate

political actors, and for the democratization of policy-making played a role²⁷.

Was there a gap between local groups' representations of their project and its actualization? Practice was generally congruent with goals that were diverse in their orientations and priorities. Overlaying these goals were "horizons of becoming" created by the projects defined at the level of the *Regroupements* (re.: L'R's "*Cadres de référence*", the CALACS' "*Base d'unité*", the shelters "*Charte d'intervention*"). Local practices of the end of the 1980s followed a "trajectory of alignment" of local groups' actions with provincially-defined collective projects. That this process of alignment was progressive and not automatic explains the discrepancies noted, for example, between local projects that drew on the broader and more politicized goals of the *Regroupements*' Charter (L'Auberge de l'amitié, La Chambrée) and an action repertoire that still leaned heavily towards direct services. Finally, broader objectives of "struggling against all forms of domination and oppression" (Maison ISA, CCFC) seldom fostered action. Schechter suggests such goals may be seen by activists as "too abstract" (1982:246), that is: as having little bearing on the groups' everyday life. I propose they have to be seen more as a declaration of solidarity, and as a potential "horizon of becoming" for the groups who formulated them.

The substance and character of the action repertoire deployed by

²⁷ These new forms of governance emerged under the first mandate of the Parti Québécois (see Bélanger and Lévesque 1992:729). Their existence was entrenched throughout the 1980s, and participation was simultaneously extended to "community organizations". My postdoctoral project proposes to examine the issues related to these changes for women's movement politics of representation.

SLSJ women's services at the end of the 1980s show affinities with the changes noted in the forms of collective action in Québec's popular and community movements over the same period. Between the 1970s and the 1980s, "revolutionary" forms of movement politics based on confrontation with authorities, mass mobilization, ideal/utopian goals, and spectacular, but sporadic public actions considerably receded. They were replaced by forms of collective action marked by an acceptance of the rules of democratic political representation, including less conflictual forms of concerted action, a more systematic and regular involvement in day-to-day transformation, notably, but not exclusively through "service" work, and by more "pragmatic" demands for specific and concrete substantive changes²⁸ (Hamel 1991, Favreau 1992, Bélanger and Lévesque 1987, 1992, Racine 1994). These transformations, Favreau (among others) has argued, did not signify a "depoliticization" of movement politics, but a change in *the forms* of politicization. Founded for the most part in the 1980s, SLSJ women's service groups developed their action along the lines of this second type of repertoire.

These transformations indicate that the processes and means of action through which movements pursue their transformative politics and potentially achieve their effects are not static, but that they are shifting and changing. If one of the important changes in women's services "politics of inclusion" is certainly their participation in institutionalized, associational forms of governance, the other is their

²⁸ One of Racine's informants eloquently captured this passage from ideal-utopian goals to more substantive claims: "*On ne lutte plus contre la terre entière maintenant, on lutte sur des affaires plus précises et on gagne plus aussi, à cause de ça.*" (1994:109)

increased involvement in coalitions. Coalition participation does not only increase movement actors' individual and collective capacity to pressure the political system (Chapter 2). It also plays an important role in unifying local actors, and in potentially "reshaping" both women's services and the movement sector around expanded agendas of social change. How this dynamic situation will contribute to further changes is an avenue for future research.

Finally, close analysis of the direct service and outreach activities of SLSJ shelters, CALACS and women's centers illuminates the practical workings of women's services "politics of identity and influence". This chapter permits a better understanding of the ways "cultural-discursive" innovations are fed into movement politics, in civil society, and into the daily life of people. First, this chapter shows that such a politics involves investing the available public spaces of collective representation in civil society to introduce new issues, new meanings, and new actors into public debates. The action repertoire of SLSJ women's groups points at these spaces and indicates how they have been occupied on behalf of women. Women's services "politics of influence" also entailed creating and operating new public spaces in civil society. Women's centers, in particular, through the regular organization on their own premises of "*causeries*", conferences, and other information and awareness-raising meetings functioned as such spaces.

Yet, an important part of these "politics of influence", as seen from the activities of local women's groups, consists in a "struggle for subjectivities" set at both the individual and collective level. In this perspective, I have underlined the way SLSJ groups undertook, under the

label of "*intervention féministe*", what I have called a "technique of subjectification" aimed at producing a particular kind of "women" subjects. More collective effort aimed at changing subjectivities used other, sometimes less practical (and maybe less "efficient") procedures to transform problematized representations and conducts. Women's movement organizations, it follows from my analysis, have to be counted among the array of "authorities" that seek to govern "the conduct of conducts".

The invention and deployment of "techniques of subjectification" - of practical procedures for making human beings into particular kinds of subjects - Rose suggests, is not the sole prerogative of "the state" (1994:25) or, for that matter I will add, of other dominant authorities. A whole array of heterogeneous authorities, "have, at different times and places, problematized human conduct and developed more or less rationalized programmes and techniques for its shaping and reshaping (...)" (3). Political projects of all kinds - including movement projects, it has to be acknowledged - enjoin people to understand and to act upon themselves in different ways. If, as Rose underlines, we as human beings "cannot be freed from government", it is important, then, I argue, to go beyond the diverse assemblage of "authorities", "injunctions", and other "practices of government" to address this variety in more political terms. Doing so would involve putting on the agenda of both studies in governmentality and of studies in social movements the following questions. In which projects are these ways of subject-making and of governing conducts inscribed? How are they situated and how do they compete in a field of power relations? And what are the stakes in the - unequal - battles waged over subjectivities? The task of the analyst would

thus become, not to denounce "techniques of subjectification" and their agents as undifferentiated expressions of "power" but, as Rose proposes, to ascertain "the costs and benefits, not of being freed from government, but of governing ourselves differently." (Rose 1994:35)

CHAPTER 7: ORGANIZATIONAL FORMS AND INTERNAL DYNAMICS IN MSSS-FUNDED LOCAL WOMEN'S SERVICE GROUPS

Introduction

Questions related to organizational forms and dynamics have attracted considerable attention from feminist scholars. The debates that currently arise are similar to the ones encountered in Social Movement Theory, and more recent work is often informed by developments in this latter field. Current debates address the relationship between feminist/women's movement project(s) and organizational structures, the question of formalization of internal functioning, and the issue of professionalization.

Many feminist theorists consider women's organizations themselves to embody "the feminist project". In this perspective, informal, participatory and collectivist organizations are viewed as a prefigurative experiment in feminism (Arnold 1995:276-277, Riger 1994:276). Because the organizational forms adopted by women's groups are understood as a direct expression of the emancipatory politics of the women's movement, their fate is a predominant concern in the literature on state funding of women's organizations. State funding, it is argued in various ways, is responsible for imposing a formalization and a hierarchization of decision-making, for inducing specialization and bureaucratization in work processes, and for fostering the professionalization of activism. All these changes, it is further contended, debase "feminism" as embodied in the organizational dimension of the movement.

An intrinsic condition of state funding is the implementation of

structures meant to ensure the financial, administrative and, sometimes, the political accountability of the beneficiary organization. Funding-seeking movement organizations are thus forced to incorporate (Ng 1988; also Johnson 1981, Morgan 1981, Schechter 1982:95 on United Way). The incorporation process establishes a structure of accountability that legally places decision-making and responsibility in the hands of a "board of directors" (Ng 1988). It is generally argued that institutional funding imposes formal structures and hierarchies of officials on the informal and egalitarian organizations favoured by women's groups (Johnson 1981, Morgan 1981, Schechter 1982, Ng 1988, 1990, Barnsley 1988, Couillard 1994).

State funding also requires a demonstration of accountability through the production of documentary evidence. Such documentary requirements are said to (re)shape the functioning of women's groups. They force routine protocols to be developed for bookkeeping and data collection. Specialized skills become necessary to undertake the "increasingly complex methods of bookkeeping and reporting, with flowcharts, priority charts" (Schraeder 1990:190), statistical accounts and the "personalized forms of lobbying" (Couillard 1994:60) demanded by state funding. Undifferentiated and collectivist work processes become fragmented and specialized. Previously informal, non-hierarchical and anti-bureaucratic organizations become formalized, hierarchical and bureaucratized (Schechter 1982, Adamson, Briskin and McPhail 1988, D. Lamoureux 1990, Ng 1990, Couillard 1994, Matthews 1995).

State funding is also said to contribute to the "professionalization" of women's organizations. Funding enables women's service groups to hire personnel to perform the organizations' day-to-day

tasks, thereby transforming volunteer activism into paid work (D. Lamoureux 1988, 1990). In response to funders' demands for professional credentials (Schechter 1982:96, Barnsley 1988:20) or to the new career opportunities offered by funded groups, increased numbers of university-educated women are drawn to women's service organizations (D. Lamoureux 1990, Couillard 1994, 1995a, Tardy 1995). Engagement on the terrain of the state further leads groups to develop and defend an "expertise" in service and representation (Schechter 1982:108, D. Lamoureux 1990:39, Couillard 1994:54, 1995a). The shift towards paid, educated and "expert" movement personnel curbs participation from "the base" and threatens the "political" character of movement work (Schechter 1982, D. Lamoureux 1988, 1990, Couillard (1995a).

These transformations, others also argue, are not inevitable (see in particular Schechter 1982, Rodriguez 1988, Dobash and Dobash 1992). Requirements of funding protocols about organizational forms, procedures and modes of operation vary (Schechter 1982, Ng 1990). We also have to be open to the possibility that women's groups may be able to strategize around these requirements, or that their organizational structures may be the product of their own choices and decisions (Dobash and Dobash 1992:30, Riger 1994:277). A more profound challenge to pessimistic analyses, however, is posed by recent developments in feminist social movement scholarship. Assumptions that only informal, collectivist, non-bureaucratic, and non-professionalized forms of organizing are compatible with "feminism" are increasingly under attack (Schechter 1982, Freeman 1983, Staggenborg 1988, Buechler 1990, Martin 1990, Dobash and Dobash 1992, Riger 1994, Acker 1995, Ferree and Martin 1995, Freeman 1995, Gelb

1995, Reinelt 1995, Mueller 1995, Staggenborg 1995).

"Feminism", it is now contended, is much less unitary than earlier work often suggests, and feminist/women's movements are more diverse in their structures and modes of operation. "The plethora of organizations calling themselves feminist and pursuing feminist goals," Freeman writes, "question the proposition that collective decision-making and participatory democracy are prerequisites to being feminists." (1995:406; also Martin 1990) Rather, different feminist projects historically coexist that adopt different organizational forms (see for example Schechter 1982:45 and Freeman 1983:200-203 on the U.S. women's movement of the 1970s). Preferences for a collectivist model, rejection of bureaucracy and anti-professionalist stance are rooted in specific times and places and versions of feminism rather than in "feminism" or "the movement" as a whole (Riger 1994, also Schechter 1982).

The "ideal" model proposed for feminist organizing, Reinelt remarks, rests on a set of rigid dichotomies that assumes informality, collective decision-making, and grass-roots participation to be inherently emancipatory while formalization and bureaucratization, hierarchies and professionalization are deemed inherently dehumanizing, anti-feminist and oppressive (1995:91-92). These dichotomies do not address the power relations hidden in informal structures (Freeman 1972), nor the "oppressive, unresponsive elements in collective practices" (Reinelt 1995:92; see also reviews in Staggenborg 1995:343, Riger 1994). They leave no room to consider the "positive effects" (see Martin 1990:195, also 1987), fairness and accountability inscribed in bureaucratic practices (Riger 1994:290; also Mueller 1995:270-271). In addition, they forego the

benefits of the knowledges, authority, and political and organizational skills of professionals for movement action.

Contemporary feminist/women's movement organizations, it follows from this critique, possess no essential organizational characteristics (Martin 1990). Rather, different organizational forms, structures and modes of operation may be adopted that do different movement jobs, and present different advantages and inconveniences for movement work (Ferree and Martin 1995:10, Riger 1994:283, 295, Staggenborg 1988, 1995). Organizations are not only diverse among themselves, but they display internally different "mixes" of organizational arrangements (Ferree and Martin 1995:6, Riger 1994:288). These mixed arrangements may "produce varying outcomes" (Staggenborg 1995:345). In this perspective, Riger proposes, "Instead of asking whether certain organizational structures are 'more' or 'less' feminist, the critical question is whether they are useful for reaching particular goals" (1994:295).

As a consequence of this new scholarship, the issues raised in the literature on state-funded women's groups are recast within a more fundamental controversy over the relationship between organizational features and feminist/women's movement politics. In this chapter, I want to take a position in these debates by arguing, first, that visions of the "initial project" of women's services as experiments in informal, collectivist/participatory, non-bureaucratic and non-professional structures are misguided. Not only do they bear little historical validity in the case under study, but they assume a consensus on a "feminist organizational project" that simply did not exist among Québec women's service groups in the 1980s. With respect to the constitution and

transformations of women's services organizational forms and dynamics, I document the organizational demands and constraints of MSSS funding, as well as the extent to which SLSJ groups formalized, professionalized, and adopted hierarchical structures over the period. I argue that the presence of these features, far from being the sole effect of funding conditions, reflects decisions and choices made against a much larger backdrop of historical traditions and factors internal to the groups and to a broader movement sector. Finally, I propose a historical and political understanding of "organizational feminism(s)", and I discuss, in conclusion, some organizational issues raised by current concerns for the representation of women's diversity.

7.1: Organizational models, funding and feminism

Early women's service groups in SLSJ were not particularly concerned with organizational models. Traditional forms of organizing (i.e., formalization of decision-making and control by a board of directors) were adopted un-problematically. Rather than rigid funding conditions, boards and internal hierarchies were "hegemonic" in the Québec context. The adoption of collective forms of organizing in SLSJ groups was a later development in articulating feminism, and collectivist organizations differed from the "ideal" model in significant ways. Feminist organizational projects, or "organizational feminism", I contend, should be both de-linked and distinguished from the notion of feminist organizations.

a) Organizational forms and funding imperatives: the "board model" as hegemonic

One of the first actions of founders was to incorporate their fledgling organizations. Charters were usually obtained in the first year of operation, sometimes even before the launching of the groups' first public activities (ex.: Centre féminin La Source). Reliance on financial resources originating from external sources explains this haste: most funders demanded their beneficiary organizations to be incorporated. In Québec in 1985, the overwhelming majority (Romaine-Quellette 1986:121) of women's organizations were incorporated as non-profit organizations regulated under part III of the provincial *Loi sur les compagnies*, L.R.Q. c. C-38 (St-Martin 1991).

Requirements of part III of the *Loi sur les compagnies* (hereinafter referred to as "the Law") included the establishment of procedures that introduced a certain degree of formalization in organizational functioning, and that steered women's groups towards hierarchical modes of decision-making. The Law required a Board of Directors responsible for the administration of the affairs of the corporation. The Board was to be elected by a General Assembly of Members, yet the Law gave the Board most of the authority. "*La seule véritable 'autorité' que puissent revendiquer les membres, c'est celle d'élire les administrateurs et, si les conditions requises sont remplies, de les destituer si ils en sont insatisfaits.*" (Martel, Lebel and Martel 1988 cited in St-Martin 1991:9) The Law also prescribed the naming of a "president" to act as the main officer of the corporation, and of a "secretary" (or other special officer in charge of book-keeping). The Law also required the production of official documents regulating the functioning of the corporation: *Lettres patentes* (Charter)

stating the "objects"¹ for which the corporation was constituted, *Règlements généraux* (rules and regulations) governing organizational conduct, and financial statements to be submitted annually to a General Assembly of Members (St-Martin 1991).

All SLSJ women's service groups first incorporated as board-led organizations with a hierarchy of officers (president, vice-president, secretary). Yet, organizing as a board-led corporation is best seen as the adoption of an hegemonic model than as compliance with inflexible funding conditions. The model was hegemonic, first, in the sense of being the most widely, if not the only model available *in practice* for women's organizing. The "democratic model" to which the movement sector subscribed included a General Assembly of Members and an elected, decisional Board (Panet-Raymond 1987:75). In local communities in Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean, existing community, popular, and women's organizations like AFEAS all functioned as board-led corporations. This is not to say no information existed about collectives as alternative forms of organizing, but experiments were rare, and information was scarce. Proposals for collective organizing were submitted to Centre féminin La Source in 1983 by a new activist to be met only by a lukewarm reception. "*Ca se parlait,*

¹ There were important differences between the U.S. and Québec in the effects of "incorporation" on movement organizations. U.S. movement organizations were incorporated under rules governing "tax-exempt" status that considerably limited the "objects" (i.e., organizational goals and mandates) that could be pursued (McCarthy, Britt and Wolfson 1991). The majority of Québec movement organizations were incorporated under Provincial "non-profit" regulations (i.e., the Law, op-cit) (Favreau 1988:179). The latter were much less limitative regarding the objects for which the corporation was constituted (St-Martin 1991). Limits on the "political" character of goals were more likely to stem from attempts to obtain additional status as "charitable organizations". Chapter 8 discusses the extent of these limits.

mais quand ça s'est parlé, ce n'était pas prêt. Parce que c'était... nouveau... un peu sauté pour le temps." (La Source, Interview 5:42)

Second, the board-led model was hegemonic in the sense that it was the only one that was recognized in the language of the Law and of funding protocols. The Law itself only referred to board-led corporations. Examination of MSSS and Women's Programme grant application forms reveals repeated demands for information under such categories as "Board members", "number of Board meetings", "General Assembly of Members", and "President". This language created pressure towards board-led organizing at the same time that it pre-empted alternative models, such as egalitarian collectives, to be granted existence in funding applications². Still, applicants sometimes contested the categories for making their collectives visible: La Source filled in its 1988-89 application to MSSS by answering "Members of the collective" to the question about "Board members".

Still, the language of funding requirements did not prevent groups to develop their own organizational structures. Internal practices were often developed that did not correspond to the "official" model. For example, a 1985 survey by the *Conseil du statut de la femme* mentions the adoption of consensual forms of decision-making in boards and the sharing of board responsibilities by a larger pool of activists (Romaine-Ouellette 1990:83). Naming "straw officers" (i.e., naming official representatives without granting them hierarchical power) and maintaining only the appearance of a board while functioning more collegially were among the

² The exception being the OVEP form, which demanded the name and addresses of the members of the Board *or its equivalent* (MEQ-DGEA, OVEP application form 1984).

practical arrangements of some SLSJ groups. The Law, St-Martin (1991) writes, simply did not prescribe the rules and regulations that were to govern *la régie interne* (internal decision-making). Decisions could be taken by consensus, hierarchies could be relinquished, tasks could be shared or rotated. Nothing prevented collective forms of organizing from being developed, at least as "internal practices".

What was less clear was the legality of women's collectives in the eyes of the Law - that is, as "official" practices - and their legitimacy in the eyes of funders. In this regard, the 1991 text by St-Martin - a legal opinion entitled *L'encadrement juridique des collectives* - was an intervention in a political struggle. Commissioned by the *Regroupement québécois des CALACS*, the *Regroupement provincial des maisons d'hébergement*, *L'R des centres de femmes*, the *Regroupement des centres de santé des femmes* and the *Collectif des femmes immigrantes*, the document mobilized juridical expertise to establish the legality of women's collectives within the framework of the Law. In doing so, the *Regroupements* pursued two different, although related objectives. First, the document served to enhance the public visibility, among women's groups, of the feminist, egalitarian forms of organizing that had been developed (St-Martin 1991:5-10). Second, it provided legal advice to existing collectives and legal grounds for legitimating collective organizing should the issue become contentious for funders (9-10).

b) Turning to collectives: a later development in "feminism"

Rather than constituting an "initial organizational project" displaced by the requirements of funding, the collective model has to be

seen, rather, as a later development in "articulating feminism". Even among Québec CALACS, where organizing under the label of "collectives" was the norm in the second half of the 1980s, the majority of member centers started first as board-led corporations (Regroupement québécois des CALACS 1991:8). In Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean, only shelter La Chambrée formed a collective in the emergence period. Rape crisis center La Maison ISA, as well as women's centers La Source and Maria Chapdelaine turned to collectives in 1988. The CCFC experimented briefly with a collective, but went back to the board model. Although the stories of individual groups show that reasons for overthrowing the traditional model varied, the timing of these changes - the second part of the 1980s - corresponds with the development of a stronger identification of local groups with feminism that affected, as we have seen, other dimensions such as goals, analyses, identity (Chapter 5), and action (Chapter 6). Eventually articulating feminism to organizational forms was part of this particular historical trajectory. Yet, as the following cases highlight, organizing collectives in local groups was also the outcome of organizational conjunctures and of broader "movement" factors.

At Centre féminin La Source, general dissatisfaction with internal functioning prompted the revision of the center's organizational structure. Resignations and funding problems had depleted the membership of the Board. Meetings were irregular and involvement by Board members was lacking. Responsibility for the life of the center - orientations, actions, and major decisions - fell heavily on the two paid co-ordinators. A larger sharing of the work and of the leadership, they felt, was imperative.

Moi, je ne trouvais pas ça normal de prendre la responsabilité financière toute seule, de faire des demandes de subventions. On voulait pas tout décider à nous deux. Fallait qu'il y ait d'autre monde qui soit là puis qui s'engage avec nous autres dans des demandes, dans des rapports...

Ce qu'on avait besoin, c'est de sentir qu'il y avait du monde qui nous soutenait à quelque part. Qui nous soutenait par leur présence, par les idées qu'elles sont capables d'émettre, par les orientations qu'il faut prendre. Pour nous autres, c'était important de sentir qu'on n'était pas juste deux à gérer ça, parce que c'était lourd. (La Source, Interview 5:14, 16)

Further experiments with a new Board fostered an emergent critique of hierarchical decision-making, as well as the development of internal practices that were not yet identified as "organizing as a collective".

On s'est mis à travailler en CA. Sauf que là-dedans, nous autres on n'était pas bien, on n'aimait pas ça qu'il y ait une seule personne qui décide [présidente], une seule personne qui soit tout le temps mise en évidence même si t'as besoin d'un répondant. Alors on se disait, on aimerait ça être partie prenante des décisions, on aimerait ça trouver un mode de fonctionnement où chacun pourrait... Souvent, on travaillait plus en collective, mais on ne le savait pas. (La Source, Interview 10:66)

The turn to a collective model of organizing at La Maison ISA was intimately linked to the process of its "*autonomisation*" from shelter Le Centre féminin. Grievances against the shelters' Board abounded which can be summed up as a lack of consultation and representation of activists and workers from both the shelter and the rape unit, and the existence of strong divergences over ideas, analyses, and the involvement of Board members in the life of the organization (Maison ISA, Interview 1988; also Interviews 5 and 6). In addition, membership in the *Regroupement québécois des CALACS*, sought by activists from the rape unit, required autonomy from

the shelter, and a collective organization (see *Regroupement québécois des CALACS* [1988]). In this perspective, the unit's activists experimented with more egalitarian and collective modes of decision-making.

Tout au long de 1987, c'est ça qui s'est passé (...) On a commencé à faire des réunions plus officielles, juste nous autres, pour discuter de comment on la voyait la prise d'autonomie, quelles actions on faisait. On fonctionnait en collective parce que les autres centres fonctionnaient en collective, et on avait commencé à lire là-dessus. Les rapports égalitaires ça nous satisfaisait comme fonctionnement, on essayait de les mettre en pratique, et F. avait une expérience de collective. (Maison ISA, Interview 5:84)

Contacts with the provincial *Regroupements* and with activists and groups with experience of collective functioning provided information on the collective model. *L'R des centres de femmes* offered La Source the opportunity to draw on the experience of other women's centers; activists from *Cowansville Collective par et pour elle* were called on to act as a resource. Maison ISA benefited from the principles promoted by the *Regroupement québécois des CALACS* (see *Base d'unité* [1988]), and from the experience of a recruit from another CALACS. At Maria Chapdelaine, one activist "knew about collectives", and additional information was obtained from La Source. At shelter La Chambrée, finally, the training of the founders in feminist social work more likely provided knowledge of collective forms of organizing.

Rationales were developed that loosely linked the adoption of collectives to an alignment with feminism. Echoing the position of its *Regroupement*, Maison ISA saw organizing as a collective as being "more compatible with feminism" (Minutes, October 12, 1987). Women's center

Maria Chapdelaine contrasted collective and traditional models of organizing on gender grounds: "*L'idée, c'est parce que c'est un fonctionnement qui ressemble plus aux femmes. Un C.A., c'est une structure hiérarchique, une structure d'homme.*" (FDR:26.1) Activists from La Source also understood the collective model as part of "the feminist project" (La Source, Interview 4:6, Interview 1988).

SLSJ collectives adopted the following principles governing this particular mode of organizing³: the sharing and rotating of tasks and responsibilities among members of collectives, and the practice of consensual and egalitarian forms of decision-making. At the same time, however, they presented significant variations from the "original" model described - and criticized - in the literature, notably by Freeman (1972) and Mansbridge (1973)⁴.

First, SLSJ collectives were formalized. Modalities of collective functioning were inscribed in official documents - that is, in agreed-upon sets of rules and regulations (*Règlements généraux*). Eschewing the ideal of informality associated to earlier versions of "feminism" enabled SLSJ groups avoid the "tyranny of structurelessness" decried by Freeman (1972). On the one hand, the formalization of procedures and modes of functioning of collectives and its inscription in the groups' "*Règlements généraux*" can be seen as stemming from the Law's requirements for such documents. On the other hand, formalization and documentary inscription should also be

³ For more details on the principles and experiences of collective forms of organizing, see Anadon, Masson, Tremblay and Tremblay (1990) on SLSJ groups, as well as Ristock (1990) on Canadian collectives.

⁴ Reviews of these and other criticisms can be found in Riger (1994), Staggenborg (1995), and Reinelt (1995).

seen as a way of entrenching the features of a model identified with feminism and ensuring its continuity in the life of the organization. Quite explicitly, this was the intent of the document on the juridical dimension of collectives sponsored by the Québec *Regroupements* (St-Martin 1991).

Second, SLSJ collectives developed "mixed" structures that borrowed from other organizational forms. Some of these mixed arrangements accommodated the more stringent requirements of funding. For example, collectives conformed to the Law by naming officers (a president, a vice-president) to "represent" the corporation. Principles of collective organizing, however, meant that these positions only involved responsibilities for "signing papers". They were "cosmetic compromises" that did not carry organizational power, and did not compromise the spirit of the collective model. In another variation on the "pure" model, two collectives were accountable to a General Assembly of Members composed of the groups' activists and other collaborators (20 to 35 people). This mixed structure can be viewed as accommodating subtle pressures from funders for "representativity" (see St-Martin 1991:11). Accounting back to a General Assembly of Members, however, was also the primary mechanism whereby Québec popular and community organizations lived out their commitment to participatory democracy.

Finally, contrary to many early and contemporary American and Canadian collectives, these ones were not absorbed - or devoured - by issues of process. Despite the development of a certain level of concern for internal processes, SLSJ collectives remained largely task-oriented. Together with the diffusion of previous experiences of collective

functioning, this focus on task favoured the adoption of formal mechanisms destined to limit the drawbacks of consensual and participatory decision-making. The risks of endless or recurring debates were curbed in three ways. Voting was requested when consensus proved unattainable. Minutes were taken and filed of to ensure continuity in decisions. Eligibility criteria were devised to ensure a relative ideological homogeneity of collective members. Eligibility was tied to identification with "feminism" and to adhesion to organizational goals and analyses. Not only were these provisions destined to ensure common orientations: they were also meant to prevent the resuscitation by newcomers of debates whose re-enactment, it was felt, would only stall the organization (La Source, Interview 10:79, 83, Interview 17:160).

c) Feminism and organizational projects

With the exception of shelter La Chambrée (founded in 1984), which adopted a collectivist model from the beginning, initial projects in SLSJ women's service groups did not encompass a feminist critique of, or feminist alternatives to, traditional organizational forms. Were these groups, and the organizations that were still led by boards at the end of the 1980s "less feminist"?

It is a mistake to equate feminist organizations with specific organizational forms. Such views are essentially normative, or take "the fundamentalist wing of the movement" for the whole. Martin (1990) has convincingly argued that the feminism of women's organizations is to be found in their ideology, goals, values and identification with a movement rather than in "essentially feminist" organizational characteristics whose

existence is both hotly contested and largely elusive. As we have seen, the goals, identifications, and transformative politics of SLSJ board-led corporations were no less "feminist" than those of their collectivist counterparts. The only difference between them is that the former did not clearly articulate feminism to issues of structure and process. I agree with Martin (1990) and Ferree and Martin (1995) who define "feminist organizations" simply "as the places in which and the means through which the work of the movement is done" (13). This conceptualization has the immense advantage of defining feminist organizations in a way that respects the organizational diversity of contemporary women's movements. Such a position, however, tends to obscure what should be thought of as another issue: the issue of the development of specifically feminist organizational project(s).

The initial "organizational" projects of SLSJ women's service groups were feminist in a very basic way: they took "women" as a position from which to organize, within political imaginaries of emancipation. The first real attempt at what I will call "organizational feminism" - that is, at articulating feminism to questions of organizational structures and processes - was organizational separatism (women-only groups). As a feminist principle, separatism was shared to a very large extent by emerging women's service groups of SLSJ and Québec - but not by all⁵. Collectives were a subsequent development in organizational feminism, and one in which a much smaller number of groups partake. Finally, at the end

⁵ For example, in the second half of the 1980s, both Le Centre féminin and Halte-Secours counted at least one man as Board member. Le Centre féminin did not appear overly concerned with organizational separatism. Halte-Secours, for its part, spoke of the necessity for feminist struggles of creating "alliances" with men who were sympathetic to feminism.

of the 1980s, new "mixed models" favouring the implementation of more participatory and egalitarian forms of decision-making in board-led corporations were promoted, in the name of feminism, notably by the *Regroupement provincial des maisons d'hébergement* (1990a, see also Lacombe 1990:102,103).

7.2: Documentary requirements and organizational dynamics

Benefiting from MSSS funding was conditional on meeting criteria demonstrating the "proper management" of the grant. Recipient groups were subjected to a certain number of documentary requirements. The production of documentary evidence imposed by the SOC set in motion particular administrative and organizational procedures: of data collection, bookkeeping, reporting, and "authorizing" organizational documents. There is no doubt that the production of documentary evidence required by MSSS shaped work processes in local women's service groups. Yet the degree to which it did so was not considerable, and other factors played a role in these changes.

a) Documentary requirements of the SOC programme

Funders generally express a strong preoccupation with "proper management". Proper management usually requires that beneficiary organizations provide assurances and guarantees regarding their capacity for the *saine administration* (healthy administration) of the funds bestowed on them. Funding protocols demand evidence from recipients that they administer the grant "in ways which accord with the project proposal

and guidelines of the particular funding programme and that there is no mismanagement of funds by the project." (Ng 1990:170, see also Pal 1993) Audits can be understood as a legitimate request for financial and operational accountability in the use of public, corporate, or charitable funds. Requirements of proper management, however, are often more idiosyncratic. They can extend to other domains, and include other demands.

The criteria for eligibility and for analysing grant applications listed in the SOC guidelines reveal the substance of MSSS' demands for proper management. Monitoring was done "at a distance" rather than "on site"⁶; it was textually mediated through documentary evidence. Meeting criteria for proper management at the SOC meant textually demonstrating not only accountability to MSSS, but also performance, viability and "proper organizational functioning". I will present these in turn.

MSSS' concern for "proper administration" translated, first, into demands for the financial and operational accountability of the funds granted. The SOC guidelines demanded the production of a yearly financial report detailing the utilization of the grant received. This report had to be verified by a chartered accountant if the grant was over \$25,000, in compliance with the *Loi de l'administration financière*. The guidelines also demanded the yearly submission of a narrative report, which meant the production of an "activity report" specific to the MSSS grant until this condition was relaxed, in 1987-88, in favour of the production of the

⁶ MSSS agents paid only yearly visits to funded groups.

organizations' Annual Report'.

Second, meeting MSSS' criteria entailed providing indicators of "performance". Statistical information on the "clientele" of the recipient organization was requested in the yearly grant application form. In 1989-90, all funded organizations had to complete a "*Rapport synthèse de la dernière année d'opérations*" describing activities undertaken and mentioning for each the "mode of intervention used" according to ten pre-set categories, the "type of clientele" (no categories provided), and the number of participants. These reports on activities, I want to point out, could only produce heterogeneous statements that were quite impractical for the establishment of statistical series. Providing standardized statistical data was, however, demanded of shelters. A special section of the grant application form requested figures on yearly occupancy rate, mean length of stay, and total number of persons sheltered annually with a breakdown by sex and age (five categories). They were also required to fill in an additional "statistical appendix". Such demands on Québec shelters (women's, youth, and others) were most probably linked to their much higher grants, as well as to the weight of shelters' funding in the SOC budget (40% in 1992-93 - MSSS 1992-93).

Third, meeting conditions of proper management involved demonstrating the viability of the organization. SOC funding being core funding for MSSS's "partners-in-welfare", the programme favoured stable, established organizations that offered guarantees for the future. To this end, the SOC guidelines demanded that beneficiary organizations

⁷ This change is one more indication of MSSS' shift from supporting "projects" to supporting the very existence of community organizations as partners-in-welfare.

demonstrate their capacity to undertake activities and projects, and their successful integration in the community. Information was evaluated in light of the following criteria: the general "*dynamisme*" and "*rayonnement*" of the organization, the importance of volunteer action and community involvement in support to its activities, its "collaboration" with the institutional and organizational milieu, and its ability to diversify its funding sources (MSSS-SOC 1978-79 to 1989-90). The organization's Annual Report, and the "synthesis of activities" and "history" to be provided in the yearly grant application provided evidence of the recipient's past successes. A section was reserved in the grant application form to document the number of volunteers and their hours of free labour. Another section requested the applicant to state its relations with "the organizations and resources of the milieu", especially MSSS agencies. The global financial report accompanying the application provided further evidence of the amount and diversity of financial resources the group was able to muster besides the MSSS grant.

Finally, the SOC guidelines were also concerned with the "proper organizational functioning" of funded groups. Demonstration of proper functioning also rested on the production of specific documents. Copy of the organization's Charter and of its Rules and Regulations were to be provided with the first application, certifying the applicant's incorporation under part 3 of the *Loi sur les compagnies*. Rules and regulations, it was specified, were to concur with the objectives of the Charter. Both documents had to be regularly updated and modifications transmitted to MSSS. The SOC guidelines stated that Rules and Regulations, as well as the annual financial and activity reports, had be "duly

adopted" - that is: authorized - by the organization's General Assembly of Members, and that the financial report be "signed by the president and the treasurer of the organizations' Board of Directors" (MSSS-SOC 1989-90). The grant application form itself had to be duly signed and approved by a resolution of the organization's board (MSSS-SOC grant application form 1989-90).

b) What effects on organizational dynamics?

Complying with funders' documentary requirements does impose the undertaking of certain procedures on recipient groups. Not only are groups obliged to devote time and resources to actually "producing documents", but they must also engage in regularly documenting and even producing the particular evidence requested by funders. Influential work by Roxana Ng (1988, 1990) strongly suggests that documentary requirements considerably shape work processes and alter internal relations in women's groups.

One of the characteristics of the case studied by Ng was "the huge volume of documentary materials it [the center] has to produce for the purpose of maintaining continual funds from Outreach^a" (1990:170). Another, I want to point out, was the degree of detail demanded of data collection and, thus, the minuteness and complexity of the labour involved. Yet another was the high frequency of monitoring through documentary production. Monthly financial reports by Outreach, Ng mentions, forced the development of an elaborate and time-consuming internal record-keeping system that kept track of working hours of staff,

^a A programme of the Federal Department of Employment and Immigration (EIC).

benefits, overtime, and of the balance between the expense account and the bank account. Quarterly statistical reports involved "three additional sets of documentary processes": 1) producing an "Application form for employment" for each client, 2) generating and updating a "Client's Record Book" on a monthly basis, 3) generating staff's "Daily service sheets" and compiling these on a weekly and monthly basis (171). Semi-annual narrative reports also had to be produced, and the center had to comply with any extra statistical or informational demands from Employment and Immigration Canada officials (173). It is in this particular context of documentary production - huge volume, minute and complex documenting tasks, multiple and distinct documents, frequent monitoring - that Ng observed that documentary requirements transformed work processes and internal relations towards a greater bureaucratization, internal differentiation, specialization and hierarchization (175).

The production of the documents required by the SOC programme also demanded the observance of different administrative and organizational procedures. These involved, in particular, data collection, bookkeeping, reporting, and "authorizing" documents. The requirements of SOC, however, were considerably lighter than those of other protocols⁹ and notably of the one reviewed by Ng. Inquiring into the organizational changes produced by SOC conditions, it follows, also entails specifying the extent to which these requirements shaped administrative and organizational behaviours.

First, I would like to argue that SOC's documentary requirements did not require the development of a heavy and time-consuming record-keeping

⁹ The requirements of a Health Canada project obtained by La Source were almost equally stringent. For another example, see the case of OCJP funding in Matthews 1995:296-297; see also Schraeder 1990:190.

apparatus of the type encountered by Ng. Only three distinct documents had to be produced: a grant application, a financial report, an activity report. The frequency of their production was annual, and the degree of detail demanded was low¹⁰. Examination of the material produced for MSSS by SLSJ local women's groups shows SOC's documentary requirements were met with huge variation in content and detail, and even showed gaps in the information provided. Tremblay's complaints (1987:29, 42) about the lack of clear and complete information in the files of SOC's beneficiary groups suggest loose data collection and reporting methods on the part of the groups, and little enforcement of the requirements on the part of the Ministry.

Second, SOC's demands on beneficiary groups remained low, all things considered, throughout the period. Requirements for the production of monthly reports to the CSS by shelters were abolished in the 1985 *Politique d'aide* (MAS 1985:54), and so was the production of a separate activity report concerning the use of the MSSS grant in 1987-88. Although there was an increase in statistical demands over the decade, these remained relatively un-standardized and light, except in the case of shelters. The *Regroupements'* stand on the "confidentiality of files" meant that no "client files" were transmitted to the Ministry - nor were they demanded by the latter. Where such files were generated, it was in

¹⁰ Similarly, the documentary requirements of SLSJ groups' other main funding sources - Employment Development programmes, Women's Programme, and even OVEP Programme - were much lighter than in the case documented by Ng.

function of the groups' internal needs and according to their own formats¹¹.

Internal factors, as well as other external factors played a role in the shaping of documenting and reporting processes in local women's groups. There was, indeed, a certain amount of administrative work associated with keeping track of the money, the activities, and the participants in SLSJ women's service groups. Yet, it is important to see that the development of such data-generating system and reporting systems predated demands of the SOC programme. The funding programmes that supported the groups' action prior to SOC all demanded some form of documenting and reporting. Yet, such procedures were also required for internal organizational purposes, such as evaluating action, planning future activities, and reporting back to the board, collective and/or General Assembly of Members, not only in observance of the formal accountability demanded by the Law, but also to ensure political accountability to formal leaders and to "those who were represented".

Standard bookkeeping practices were also needed. No matter the source or the amount of funding, bills had to be paid, accounts balanced, budgets drafted. As employers, women's groups had to keep track of hours worked, to issue pay checks, and to make all the deductions requested by

¹¹ Although the "categories" imposed by MSSS did "make women into clients" for the purpose of reporting, this was about the extent of the "bureaucratically structured labels" (Transken 1994:37) imposed on women at the end of the 1980s. Analyses of the type presented by Ng (1988, 1990), Heald (1990) and Transken (1994) arguing the summoning of women's groups into "politically organized processes of subjection" through the imposition of an "impersonal institutional order" on "factual reality" would find very little grounding in the case of the SOC program. Nor did reporting categories raise the ire of SLSJ groups, contrary to the case documented by Matthews (1995:295-296).

Revenue Canada and Revenue Québec (taxation, pension plans, U.I., etc.). Finally, in women's centers and CALACS, the production of standardized statistical information was initiated at the very beginning of the 1990s, not by the Ministry, but by the provincial *Regroupements* (L'R 1992: annexe 1:1; Regroupement québécois des CALACS 1991:2). Producing a better knowledge of "women's needs" and of the centers' action was L'R's justification; changes in the funding context at MSSS (*régionalisation*) may have played a role as well in the development of such procedures.

Internal and external demands for data collection, reporting, and bookkeeping in SLSJ local women's service groups did require, it follows, some degree of internal differentiation in work processes, some level of specialization, and some amount of paper work. Collecting and organizing the evidence and producing the appropriate documents took time. "Autonomy" from shelter Le Centre féminin made these costs clear to activists from La Maison ISA:

On s'est rendues compte de plein de tâches qu'on ne faisait pas et qu'on est obligées de faire et qui prennent beaucoup de temps." "(...) les demandes de subvention c'était le comptable du Centre féminin qui faisait ça. Là, c'est nous autres qui le fait. Le rapport d'activité et les projets, c'est nous qui les faisons, mais toute la tenue de livre et tout ça..." "Le temps partiel qu'on a de surplus, il est juste pour absorber ce qu'on faisait là-bas. Le centre [ISA] ne peut se développer plus, parce que le demi-temps fait la comptabilité. (Interview 5:115)

Bookkeeping was the least shared and the most demanding task. Not only did it require specialized knowledge, but the task lacked lustre. Usually only one person was responsible for bookkeeping. At Quatre-Temps it was a member of the Board, at La Source and Maison ISA it was a member

of the paid staff. Although the knowledge required was specialized, it did not exceed the educational level of a secretarial course. At La Source, a very complex accounting task involving juggling numerous funding sources and their respective budgetary restrictions and conditions was managed by a high school graduate with some on-the-job training.

Data collecting and reporting usually befell paid staff. In this regard, there was an internal differentiation of work processes, most of the administrative work being undertaken by the "*permanentes*". In groups with collectives, members were often called on to take on part of the reporting and grant application work. This task-sharing also happened in some board-led organizations. In groups with few employees, like women's centers and the CALACS, paid activists remained *polyvalent*, assuming administrative tasks as well as the ones related to services, outreach and advocacy. In shelters, however, the co-ordinator and the secretary did most of the administrative work, while the 10 to 14 paid "*intervenantes*" did mostly direct service work. The exception was La Chambrée, where tasks were shared and rotated according to the principles of the collective model.

SOC required the production of official organizational documents, their yearly updating, authorizing, and endorsing by the competent authorities. These requirements merely restated those of part 3 of the *Loi sur les compagnies*. In reaffirming these rules, however, SOC reinforced a strictly bureaucratic understanding of accountability vis-à-vis "those who are represented". It promoted a classical, liberal model (Phillips 1991) that eschewed the more political dimension of accountability embodied by participation, debate and representation. Requirements of the SOC did

nothing to grant a more important role to General Assemblies of Members that were typically convened only once a year, according to the minimalist rules of the Law.

In addition, the documentary requirements of SOC restated and recalled the dues attached to the "partnership" with MSSS. Among the contributions expected from women's groups were volunteer labour ("*le bénévolat*"), the involvement of "the community" in its own welfare ("*le partage des responsabilités entre la communauté et l'État*"), collaboration with MSSS agencies ("*la complémentarité*"), and a diverse financial base ("*le financement partiel*"; on this, see Chapter 8). Far from being innocent, requirements for documenting and reporting on volunteers, community support, collaboration and funding sources forced a regular questioning on the part of women's groups. Did the organization have "enough" volunteers, enough links with the "right" organizations and institutions from the community, enough diversity in financial resources to meet MSSS' criteria?

c) A minimal bureaucratization

I have been arguing so far that the documentary requirements of MSSS funding had an impact on organizational dynamics in MSSS-funded women's groups. In particular, these requirements demanded the development of particular administrative and organizational procedures for producing, collecting and organizing the financial, statistical, and narrative "evidence" required by MSSS, as well as for reporting - that is: writing up documents - and authorizing them. In this, MSSS funding *did* shape work processes in SLSJ women's service groups. The extent to which it affected

these work processes, however, was *not* considerable.

The documentary requirements of the SOC programme, I have emphasized, were light and somewhat lax. This should not be surprising. Ng herself mentions that, in contrast to the administrative demands of Outreach, those of EIC's Canada Works Programme and of the Secretary of State's programmes were relatively few, and much less stringent (1988:35, 1990:180). Pal's (1993) work on the latter programmes suggests that the upholding of a liberal tradition of separation between "the state" and "the community" was responsible for the Secretary's minimal interference with "the autonomy of volunteer work" (114), and thus, for the low and loose demands its programmes placed on funded groups (262-263). As we have seen in Chapter 4, MAS/MSSS subscribed to a similar tradition in the *Politique d'aide*. The minimal requirements characterizing the SOC programme throughout the 1980s were consistent with "respecting the autonomy of *le communautaire*", a principle that MAS/MSSS affirmed, and that women's and community organizations, for their part, doggedly defended.

Moreover, other funding sources, as well as internal factors helped making data collection, reporting, bookkeeping and authorizing an inescapable feature of organizational life in SLSJ women's service groups. Is the adoption of these practices sufficient to conclude to the "bureaucratization" of these groups? First, as Riger suggests, the "multi-dimensionality" of bureaucracy should be considered (1995:288, also Martin 1987:546). Two different types of inquiries, I propose, are needed. First, it means unpacking the notion of "bureaucracy", which is too often used indiscriminately, into its different components: a specialized

division of labour; a hierarchy of positions; and a functioning relying on formal procedures and policies, as well as on textually-mediated production involving the standardized categories of an impersonal institutional order. Second, it means considering the wide range of variations in the extent, intensity, and scope of "bureaucratic" practices adopted by different women's organizations, from those of national organizations like NAC (Canada) or NOW (U.S.) to those of small, local women's groups.

In both these senses, the bureaucracy of MSSS-funded women's groups remained minimal. The development of administrative and organizational procedures was accompanied by a weak degree of internal differentiation; specialization especially concerned accounting tasks. The emergence of a division of labour was not in itself linked to a shift towards formal hierarchies. Board-led corporations already adhered un-problematically to hierarchical arrangements, while internal relations based on equality and the sharing of tasks continued to be pursued in collective structures. Textual production and reliance on organizational texts were low. SLSJ women's groups confided little in the written word beyond the requirements of their funders and the Law, and maintained few, and somewhat jumbled records - much to our initial dismay as researchers¹² trained in an academic culture that worships texts.

SLSJ women's groups, finally, saw themselves as non-bureaucratic organizations. Theirs, however, was not the wholesale "anti-bureaucratic" stance suggested in the literature on feminist organizational projects. As

¹² I am referring here to my field experience and to similar reactions on the part of my co-researchers in the "Women and Regional Development" project at Université du Québec à Chicoutimi.

we have seen, SLSJ groups did adopt some bureaucratic features. Rather, "bureaucracy" was typically defined by the groups as the impersonal and rule-bound functioning of local social service agencies (CLSCs), from which they sought to distance themselves.

7.3: The issue of "professionalization"

In this section, I examine the issue of the "professionalization" of women's service groups along two different lines. First, I inquire into the professionalization of SLSJ groups as movement organizations. Second, I explore the related, but somewhat distinct question of the "*académisation*" (professional credentialization) of movement leadership (paid staff and formal leaders). Regarding the first question, I argue that women's service groups fell within the category of "professionalized movement organizations" in a very broad sense, but that they also presented significant variations from this model, notably a much stronger link of paid activists to the movement. With respect to the second, I show that the level of educational attainment of women's service groups' leadership was, indeed, higher than in the overall female population, but less than the trend noted in the literature. I then discuss some issues raised by the presence of paid, and higher educated leaders.

a) Professionalized movement organizations?

Certainly state funding, and in particular the routinization of funding from MSSS, enabled women's service groups to pay people for undertaking organizational labour. The increase in paid staff raises an

issue familiar to RM theorists: the question of the professionalization of movement organizations. Professionalized movement organizations typically rely on relatively small numbers of paid activists rather than on the mass-mobilization of the "beneficiary base" as sources of labour. Resources are provided by institutions or by "conscience adherents"¹³ who do not benefit directly from the actions of the movement. Members are "paper members rather than active participants" (Staggenborg 1988:585, see also McCarthy and Zald 1973, 1977). How "professionalized", then, were SLSJ women's service groups at the end of the 1980s?

SLSJ shelters, women's centers and the CALACS did not rely on the mass-mobilization of members for financial resources and labour. Funds originated overwhelmingly from state sources (see Chapter 8). Although some groups did boast a large number of card-carrying members (200 to 300), dues were almost symbolic (\$3.00). Group membership was largely made up of "paper members". Typically, SLSJ women's service groups did not entertain objectives of mobilizing a large membership base, preferring to concentrate on recruiting and maintaining a small number of committed activists. The number of active members who put their labour into the organization and that attended the groups' General Assembly of members oscillated between 20 and 35. This core of activists was usually composed of paid staff, of the members of the collectives and boards, and of a few other sympathizers, project workers, interns, and volunteers.

The presence of paid staff was significant in that they assumed the

¹³ In RMT terms, "conscience adherents" are sympathizers who provide resources to a movement (labour, money, etc.) but are not part of the movements' "beneficiary base". Contrary to the latter, they do not stand to benefit politically from the attainment of movement goals (Freeman 1983:197, McCarthy and Zald 1977).

"*permanence*" - that is, they were responsible for the day-to-day work of the organizations. The number of paid employees was directly linked to the groups' financial resources. Shelters' budgets, about \$200,000 annually, enabled them to hire more people than women's centers and the CALACS that usually operated with a quarter or less of these amounts. Each shelter employed between 10 and 14 women, while the women's centers made do with one to four employees and the CALACS with three. In 1990-91, out of 74 paid workers in SLSJ women's service groups 62 were employed in the five shelters. The importance of paid staff in organizational life, thus, varied importantly among the different types of groups.

These raw numbers, however, mask the precariousness of employment in women's service groups. First, they do not differentiate between regular full-time positions (n=46), part-time positions (n=17), and occasional or short-term (usually project-funded) workers (n=11). Of the three employees of Chicoutimi's CALACS, for example, only one was full-time. Second, until 1989-90 only the shelters had obtained a three-year funding policy from MSSS and could therefore offer some assurance of "permanent" employment to their workers. Third, in women's centers, "full-time" employment was only attained through strenuous efforts to combine funds from various sources (see Chapter 8). Even so, none of the women's centers could afford to pay its employees year-round, rather only for nine or ten months.

In addition, salaries were low. Half (23) of the full-time workers were paid a "yearly income"¹⁴ of \$15,000 to \$19,999, one quarter (12) were paid less than \$15,000, and another quarter (11) was paid \$20,000 or more.

¹⁴ "Yearly income" expresses the remuneration attached to the position. Real salaries were lower in women's centers, whose paid staff was employed only for 9 or 10 months a year.

Not only did women shelters have the financial means to employ more full-time workers: they could also pay them more. All but four of the 34 full-time employees earning more than \$15,000 annually were shelter employees. These salaries were substantially lower than what was paid for comparable work and qualifications in state agencies.

Comparative figures are provided by Dumais and Côté (1989:18). Salaries in CLSCs in 1987 were between \$18,000 and \$25,000 annually for "community workers" (employees with a CEGEP diploma), and between \$23,000 and \$39,000 for "community organizers" (employees with a B.A. degree). Dumais and Côté deem the work of community organizers to be comparable to the work of the animators in popular groups. In SLSJ local women's service groups in 1990 (three years later), only 8 "*intervenantes*", 2 directors and 1 director-adjunct (all in shelters) earned more than \$20,000 annually¹⁵. Needless to say, the annual earnings of the 28 part-time, occasional and project workers were even more meagre, often below poverty level (L'R 1986:24).

Precariousness, insecurity, low salaries and contributions in free labour were the defining features of paid staff's life in women's services, even in the case of shelters' more stable and better paid jobs.

(...) les permanentes vivent l'insécurité, les problèmes financiers, elles font nécessairement des concessions, parfois sur leurs salaires ou leurs conditions de travail. C'est du militantisme, finalement, parce que souvent elles font beaucoup de bénévolat. (La Source, Interview 10:94)

¹⁵ Of these workers, only two were university-trained. Among the other eight paid activists with university training, three were full-time employees and earned between \$15,000 and \$19,999. Five earned less than \$15,000: one full-time coordinator, two PDE workers, and two part-time employees.

Paid staff regularly contributed hours of unpaid work to their organizations. Some volunteered after hours, or between periods of employment, or worked full-time while being paid only part-time. Board and collective members volunteered their time for meetings and committee work, often taking on some administrative or advocacy tasks. The collectives' regulations and principles required significant participation. Although board members' involvement was more variable, it could also be considerable, as at shelter Halte-Secours.

Contributions in free labour are difficult to evaluate because they were generally not systematically recorded. CALACS La Maison ISA kept such records as a mean to recognize and make visible the volunteer commitment of its activists. Maison ISA estimated the numbers of unpaid hours provided in 1989-90 by the groups' regular "militants" (staff, members of the collective and occasional collaborators) to equal the number of paid hours of its staff (over 2,000 hours/year). Another evaluation by shelter L'Auberge de l'amitié provides similar estimates:

La façon dont ça marche, c'est que le MSSS donne des subventions qui représentent 50% de nos besoins réels (et même moins). L'autre 50%, il faut aller le chercher. Par le bénévolat des membres du C.A., par les heures bénévoles données par le personnel en dehors de leur travail. Je reçois aussi beaucoup de stagiaires du Cégep ou de l'Université (...) Mais à chaque année c'est à recommencer. (Auberge de l'amitié, FDR:18)

Despite the presence of paid staff, volunteer labour remained undoubtedly an important resource in women's service groups. Both the *Regroupement québécois des CALACS* and *L'R des centres de femmes* stated that a large part, if not most of the work in their member groups was

performed on a volunteer basis. Without such volunteer involvement, the groups could not survive (Regroupement québécois des CALACS 1993:35; L'R 1986:25).

Still, volunteer labour was not un-problematic. Politically, *le bénévolat des femmes* was suspect. Local service groups voiced reservations against what was seen, ultimately, as another form of exploitation of women's unpaid labour, and felt it was taken advantage of by the government.

Une de nos grandes difficultés, c'est de pouvoir concilier [le fait d'utiliser des bénévoles] et en même temps avoir une équipe de 12 femmes payées régulièrement. Nous faisons comme tenir une contradiction que nous avons dénoncée maintes fois dans notre discours sur l'exploitation des femmes par le bénévolat. (L'Aquarelle, FDR:19)

Je ne suis pas contre le militantisme et les heures bénévoles. Je pense que c'est correct qu'on en fasse. Là où je ne suis pas d'accord, c'est qu'on fasse du travail pour quatre personnes et que le gouvernement en paye juste une et demie. Le gouvernement va dire qu'il n'a pas besoin d'en donner plus. (Maison ISA, Interview 5:117)

Ce qui est ennuyeux là-dedans, c'est que le gouvernement s'attend à ce qu'on aie le soutien du milieu et il en profite pour nous donner moins. Mais ce soutien-là, penses-tu, il faut aller le chercher, et ça en prend du temps et de l'énergie pour ça. (Auberge de l'amitié, FDR:18)

As this last citation indicates, volunteers were also considered technically difficult to recruit and to mobilize. Training took time. Tasks performed by volunteers needed supervision and co-ordination, and organizational procedures were necessary to integrate volunteers. The term "free labour" is misleading: as with other resources, volunteers' labour came with a price tag attached. SLSJ groups preferred relying on the

already-skilled, already-committed and more readily available members of their staff, collectives and boards. These activists typically provided the bulk of the volunteer work in local service groups. Other sources of volunteer labour were mobilized, yet more irregularly and mostly for non-specialized tasks - giving a hand for March 8 celebrations or for special activities.

b) Educational qualifications of leadership

Unlike other protocols mentioned in the literature (Schechter 1982, Barnsley 1988), SOC funding did not require specific professional credentials for the staff or board members of women's service groups. However, an increase in the formal qualifications and the skills of movement leadership, it has been suggested, has accompanied the growing reliance of women's organizations on institutional funding (Schechter 1982). In particular, it has been argued, a disproportionate number of university-educated women, with credentials in the more "interventionist" disciplines of the social sciences (social work, psychology/counselling, *animation*), have been drawn to women's service groups in the pursuit of movement careers or to meet the growing complexity of movement tasks (D. Lamoureux 1990, Couillard 1994, Tardy 1995). Figures from SLSJ women's service groups show that staff and formal leaders have higher levels of education than the overall population of women. Yet, this assertion needs to be nuanced.

Women in the labour force, especially younger women¹⁶ tend to be

¹⁶ Most paid staff in SLSJ women's service groups were between the ages of 25 and 45 in 1990-91.

more educated than the female population in general. Yet, the paid staff of SLSJ women's service groups was more educated than women in the labour force¹⁷. Out of the 45 paid employees for which information about educational levels was available in 1990-91 (8 out of 10 groups), about one quarter (22.2%, n=10) had a high school education or less, a little more than half (55.5%, n=25) had started or completed a CEGEP degree or equivalent, and less than a quarter (22.2%, n=10) had undertaken or completed a university degree (undergraduate level only). Out of these last 10, it must be noted, only 6 were full-time workers.

Educational characteristics of board and collective members, although only available for the three case studies, help throw more light on the issue of the qualifications of movement leadership. Formal leaders at women's centers La Source (9 members of the collective) and Maison au Quatre-Temps (8 members of the Board) were schooled in proportions roughly similar to the ones noted for the staff of SLSJ groups: one quarter were women with only a high school degree or less, 50% were CEGEP trained, and one quarter had attended University.

A closer look at University attendance, however, reveals a number of women over 40 who took advantage of existing policies (mature student admission) recognizing "pertinent experience" in lieu of a CEGEP diploma to access university. Often with little previous education and work history, or with working-class experience, these women typically obtained one-year university certificates in "gerontology", "animation", and the

¹⁷ In the SLSJ region, 51% of women in the labour force had a highschool degree or less (primary school at 7% and secondary school at 44%), 30% had undertaken or completed a CEGEP degree, and 14% had attended university (CSF 1991).

like. This type of University attendance does not credentialize them as "professionals" the way a three-year CEGEP technical course in social work, or a university degree in psychology or nursing can.

Educational attainment, it must be added, was valued in SLSJ women's groups. In Québec, there was a strong feminist tradition of equating women's access to higher education to greater independence, autonomy and equality. Schechter (1982) aptly notes that the anti-professionalist stance of early feminist groups in the U.S. was developed specifically in opposition to mainstream professionals' treatment of abused women (2). Rejection of "professionalism" as such was not a shared position in the U.S. women's movement. Moreover, "working-class women," Riger writes, "have been baffled by some middle-class feminists' rejection of 'professionalism' (...): to them professional skills are a way to escape dead-end, dehumanizing jobs." (1994:293)

Finally, the occupational and educational backgrounds of formal leaders in the two women's centers were more varied than the literature suggests. Leaders with a high school degree or less had trained and worked as secretaries or office clerks; those with CEGEP schooling or the equivalent had been trained in teacher's college, nursing, social sciences and administration; leaders with a university degree had studied in social sciences, law, folklore, and social work. By contrast, the collective of Maison ISA resembled the portrait proposed by the literature: five out of six members had B.A.s - in social work (3), in psychology (1) and in law (1) - while the last had a CEGEP diploma in nursing.

While some individual groups made exception, the proportion of university-educated staff and leaders in SLSJ women's service groups did

not comply with the general trend noted in other studies of Québec women's organizations. It was substantially lower. Couillard found 56.6% of university-educated women¹⁸ among the staff and core activists of women's organizations in the Québec region (1994:42). Similarly, Tardy's study found 60% of university-educated women¹⁹ among the staff and core activists in member organizations of the *Fédération des femmes du Québec* (1995). The SLSJ situation may express regional trends to out-migration of the educated segments of the population towards Québec's urban cores (Montréal, Québec City). Yet, comparative evidence shows a substantially lower proportion - 32% - of university-educated employees in shelters (Pelletier and Craig 1988:28). Tardy also notes that movement leadership in women's service groups is less "professionalized" in terms of formal education than in other types of women's organizations.

Les membres des groupes de service sont également moins scolarisées que celles des autres groupes même si, nous l'avons vu, la scolarité est relativement élevée pour l'ensemble des militantes. En effet, dans les groupes dits de service, deux femmes sur trois ont un niveau de scolarité universitaire, alors que trois femmes sur quatre ont atteint ce niveau dans les groupes de pression. (1995:66)

Part of the explanation for the lower levels of educational attainment in women's service groups may lie in hiring principles that favoured knowledge of the "*problématique*" (of feminist analyses of women's issues), feminist identification, and acquired experience in women's

¹⁸ Includes undergraduate and graduate degrees, undertaken or completed.

¹⁹ Includes completed undergraduate (including certificate) and graduate degrees. My calculations from Table 4 in Tardy (1995:49).

organizations over, or on par with academic training. Such preferences were clearly expressed in hirings held at shelter La Chambrée and at CALACS La Maison ISA at the end of the 1980s. According to Pelletier and Craig's survey, these principles were largely shared in Québec shelters (1988: 38-39, see also Lacombe 1990:101-113), where the largest numbers of personnel were employed.

The argument of an increase in highly educated and credentialized personnel in Québec women's service groups (D. Lamoureux 1990:39, Couillard 1994:61, Tardy 1995:131), I contend, lacks comparative historical evidence. To put it simply, we still await reliable information on the qualifications and socio-economic backgrounds of core activists during the emergence phase. At issue is also the validity of the claim to the take-over of movement leadership by credentialized "experts" originating mostly from social work professions (D. Lamoureux 1990, Couillard 1994, 1995a). Data from SLSJ groups, as well as the hiring preferences of shelters, in particular, suggest there may be more diversity in the qualifications of movement leadership on both counts of educational attainment and disciplinary training.

c) Discussing the "professionalization" of SLSJ service groups

By coining the term "professionalized movement organizations", McCarthy and Zald (1973) intended to highlight what they saw as a new trend in movement organizational forms: the move away from mass-based mobilizations of people and resources. SLSJ women's service groups of the 1980s can be deemed "professional movement organizations" in the sense that the main elements of their organizational structure were

institutional resources, paid staff and paper members. They differed from the model, however, in a number of important ways.

First, paid employees in SLSJ groups were not the free-lance entrepreneurs described by McCarthy and Zald, making a career out of hopping from one cause to the other. Second, rather than being "conscience adherents" (McCarthy and Zald) or "professional organizers"²⁰ from the outside (Piven and Cloward 1979), paid employees were wholly "indigenous resources" (McAdam 1982): they were drawn from the "imagined constituency" of the movement (i.e., the social group of women). Third, various devices were employed to ensure that new employees' commitment to the movement would be less tenuous than those of career-seeking entrepreneurs. Advertisements for jobs, for example, demanded candidates with a feminist analysis (of conjugal violence - La Chambrée; of sexual assault - La Maison ISA). Internal job training socialized new employees to organizational platforms; the various training sessions sponsored by the provincial *Regroupements* did the same for intervention and larger political orientations. Finally, SLSJ women's service groups relied as much on the unpaid work of their staff and core activists as on paid labour. The acceptance of precarious working conditions, low salaries, and volunteer work by SLSJ groups' paid staff further testifies to a strong commitment to organizational and movement goals.

These differences signal that the link between paid staff and

²⁰ "Professional organizers", paid or not, typically come to the movement "from the outside" to "organize" discontent: for example, from unions, extreme-left organizations, churches, or social service institutions (see Piven and Cloward 1979, see also Godbout and Collin 1977 on the leadership of popular movement organizations in Québec in the 1960s and 1970s).

movement was much stronger - more "organic" - in SLSJ groups than in the professionalized movement organizations analysed by McCarthy and Zald. Some Québec scholars have maintained, however, that paid staff in women's service groups were more committed to their jobs than to the goals of the movement, and were thus more likely to promote less "radical", less "political" goals and claims, less disruptive strategies and tactics, and to "accommodate" state demands (D. Lamoureux 1988, 1990, Côté and Couillard 1995, Couillard 1994). Paid activism led to a focus on services (D. Lamoureux 1988), and risked *"de fragiliser l'engagement politique"* (rendering political engagement fragile) (Côté and Couillard 1995:123).

Is there a necessary relation between the presence of paid, professionally credentialized, or even career personnel and the "de-politicization" of goals and strategies? Many "professionalized" women's movement organizations have promoted highly political and even "radical" agendas, as demonstrated, among others, in the work of Staggenborg (1988) on pro-choice organizations; of Gornick, Burt and Pittman (1985) on rape crisis centers; and of Buechler (1990) on NOW. Changes in forms of political action and social change strategies in Québec women's services are better understood in the larger context of historical decline of "revolutionary" politics (Chapter 6). Finally, suggesting paid activists' lack of commitment to "the cause" seems gratuitous considering the historical politicization of the goals and analyses of SLSJ women's service groups, their radicalization towards a clearer identification with feminism (Chapter 5), and the increased political character and range of the transformative politics they have undertaken (Chapters 6, 8). Paid staff, Staggenborg has underlined, are critical to the maintenance of

their organizations. Unlike volunteers, they can be relied on an ongoing basis, thus ensuring stability, continuity, and the possibility of responding quickly and efficiently to new political opportunities (1988:597-598). Volunteerism is no more a guarantee of "good politics" than paid staff is antithetical to social change; to suggest otherwise is only to give in to another "myth on the Left".

The higher levels of educational attainment generally possessed by the leadership of women's service groups raise more serious issues. The over-representation of CEGEP- and University-trained activists among staff and formal leaders in SLSJ groups can be understood, as Tardy does (1995:49, see also Bagguley in Chapter 2), simply as one more instance of the classical role played by intellectuals in political organizing. Couillard (1995a), however, suggests that their prominence is problematic. Couillard contends that this over-representation is but one symptom of the development of a feminist expertise on women - that is: of what she calls a feminist "expert-system". Part of a larger trend in "the governance of modernity", this expertise is embedded in relations of power/knowledge which carry with them definite effects of power. The most notable of these effects is the positioning of feminist experts from women's movement organizations as "relays" of an administrative logic of needs/claims management and of bureaucratic mechanisms of "surveillance" of populations.

There are, it must be said, major problems with Couillard's argument. Indiscriminately transforming feminist experts into just another brand of technocrats enrolled in the service of endlessly normalizing processes does not adequately represent the role of oppositional

intellectuals, nor the dynamics of socio-political struggle. On this subject, Fraser (1989), in particular, argues that social transformation on behalf of subaltern groups is inseparable from an engagement in politics of needs interpretation and in politics of representation. In these politics, the role of oppositional intellectuals and professionals is the one of "the expert wing of an oppositional public" (11). Movement experts, her analysis suggests, are located at "a point where oppositional discourses and expert discourses intersect". From this vantage point, they are engaged in building "bridge discourses", a tricky but inescapable affair which, even though it entails risks of translating oppositional claims into "objects of state administration" (11), does contain at the same time the potential for opening up institutional space for democratization and socio-political change (11-13). In this contentious political process, the expertise of feminist oppositional professionals and intellectuals from women's movement service groups is an asset, not a liability.

This being said, what Couillard's intervention does suggest is the necessity of a further inquiry into the relations of power/knowledge attached to the position of intellectuals and professionals in organizations of the women's movement. Yeatman's reflections on "the politics of intellectual authority" (1994:32-41) are useful here. Yeatman argues that oppositional intellectuals and professionals, although moved by loyalty and solidarity ties to their own subaltern constituencies (34-36), are positioned in a contradictory relationship to intellectual authority (34). As knowledge producers, oppositional intellectuals and professionals necessarily partake in "the domination which is inscribed

into the knowing subject/object relationship" (36). They, however, can make choices as to how to operate within their positionality.

"Up until now," Yeatman affirms, "oppositional intellectuals have been intellectuals *who hold on to their authority as intellectuals*, but place it in service to non-dominant groups or classes." (37, my emphasis) In upholding claims to the monopoly of valid knowledge, movement intellectuals and professionals do participate in "practices of professional domination - the determination of the needs of others by those armed with professional knowledge - in relation to those constituted as the object of professional knowledge." (38) Yet, Yeatman proposes, practices of contestation of professional/intellectual domination are possible that do not entail jettisoning the reflexive, critical, and strategic value of oppositional expertise for civic and democratic processes. Democratizing intellectual and professional authority entails, rather, opening up this authority to challenge and to accountability, and "working with non-intellectuals to develop an experimental practice of partnership in harnessing knowledge to the needs of the polity they together comprise." (38)

I agree with Yeatman that we have to acknowledge the "contradictory relationship" of movement intellectuals and professionals to their own intellectual authority. There has been a strong political commitment in the discourse of Québec women's service organizations to women's "experience" and "expressed needs" as a basis for intervention and for the production of feminist knowledge. Investigating further the issue of the closure or the openness of "professionalized" activists to challenge and accountability is beyond the possibilities of this dissertation, and a

question for future research. Such an inquiry, I suggest, should broaden the question of "professionalization" to the issue of "expert" knowledges acquired by all activists through organizational learning²¹ in women's services rather than resting solely on the previous educational attainments of some. It should also consider the case of the provincial *Regroupements* where full-time activists are paid for "articulating feminism" to large-scale issues of organizing, action and strategies. Finally, it must challenge essentialist or univocal assumptions that deny "experts" and professionals all possibility to adequately represent "women".

Conclusion

The initial projects of SLSJ women's service groups, I have argued in this chapter, were not characterized by the informal, anti-hierarchical, anti-bureaucratic, and anti-professionalist stance too often assumed in the literature to be typical of feminist organizations. Incorporating, formalizing objectives and procedures, and adopting a board-led model occurred very early as state funding was sought for hiring activists and support organizations' emergence. Structures and processes were unproblematic, and at least for the first half of the decade, largely

²¹ The majority of our informants at La Source, Maison au Quatre-Temps and Maison ISA totalled 5 to 8 years of activism in their organization. How do we understand the positionality of women (including those with university degrees) who have become (feminist) movement intellectuals through their participation in women's service groups? Have former housewives with a high school diploma become a different type of "feminist movement intellectual" than their fellow activists who came to the group with a university degree?

un-problematized. SLSJ women's service groups, nevertheless, were "feminist organizations" in the sense promoted in this dissertation. They were organizations that articulated goals, analyses, means of action and organizational identities from a feminist perspective - that is, as I argued in Chapter 2, from taking "women" as a position from which to act within political imaginaries of emancipation. "Organizational feminism", I proposed, should be distinguished from feminist organizing: the former should be used to refer specifically to "feminist organizational projects".

My findings in this chapter converge with those of feminist scholars who argue that, rather than conforming to ideal-types, contemporary feminist/women's movement organizations adopt a variety of "mixed" organizational arrangements without necessarily conservatizing, or putting a damper on their feminist politics. SLSJ women's service groups organized as board-led corporations and as "modified collectives". They adopted some "bureaucratic" features, such as formalized decision-making processes, relatively low-impact data collecting, bookkeeping and reporting procedures, and a certain division of labour (to a degree that varied depending on the groups). They also expressed a deep-seated preference for small-scale organizing relying on paid, permanent staff and on the unpaid work of a small number of experienced or credentialized activists. As the other chapters of this dissertation amply demonstrate, these "mixed arrangements" did not detract SLSJ women's service groups from developing politicized goals, analyses, action repertoire, and from identifying with feminism.

I have argued that MSSS did play a role in the adoption of many of

these features. The conditions of SOC funding, notably, reinforced the hegemony of the board-led model, and required the development of particular data collection, bookkeeping, reporting, and authorizing procedures. It also favoured an increased reliance on paid staff. The degree to which MSSS shaped the organizational dynamics in women's service groups, I nevertheless contended, was not considerable. The hegemony of the board-led model was successfully countered by the diffusion of collective forms of organizing, and SOC's documentary requirements were light. Other external factors, such as the requirements of other funding sources, and internal factors played a role in shaping these dynamics. Among the latter were, I suggested: internal organizational demands for evaluation, planning, and accountability; *Regroupements'* politics; and, regarding paid staff, the necessity of ensuring a day-to-day continuity that could not be attained with volunteers. Organizational arrangements in SLSJ women's service groups were the result of decisions and choices that reveal adjustments to funding conditions as well as internal imperatives. They also reveal the ways in which "feminism" was articulated to issues of process at the end of the 1980s.

Beyond "women-only" organizing, organizational feminism in SLSJ groups, my findings show, was mostly limited to "collectives": more exactly, to a critique of hierarchical decision-making and of binding task specializations. Formalization was deemed desirable by local groups for short-circuiting some of the most well-known shortcomings of collectives, and by the *Regroupements* for entrenching the collective model more firmly. No wholesale anti-bureaucratic or anti-professionalist stance was adopted by SLSJ women's service groups. Formalization, minimal bureaucratization

and the use of paid, relatively educated staff should not be seen as a "failure to organize in a feminist way". Rather, it should be understood as features of particular versions of feminism in which little importance was given to internal issues of structure and process over externally-achieved socio-political change.

From the start, I have shown in the previous chapters, SLSJ groups were characterized by an action logic oriented towards external, rather than internal objectives. "Getting things done" for women of the community and for women in general were the goals. Such a task-oriented logic also proved resilient in the organization of SLSJ collectives. The requirements of external-instrumental *versus* internal-processual action, many scholars contend, compete and sometimes diverge. To put it simply, "Excessive focus on internal processes (...) interferes with actions to achieve change in a world that does not wait." (Acker 1995:141) The development of "mixed" organizational models in collectives and even in boards may be a "feminist organizational strategy" to accommodate, in various and if only provisionally satisfying ways, what may very well be a largely irresolvable tension.

Articulating a feminist vision to internal issues of structure and process is what is at the heart of reflections on "organizational feminism". Yet, as we have seen in the introduction to this chapter, there is much contention over the "appropriate ways" to embody in organizational forms what is increasingly understood as multiple, diverse, and shifting feminist projects. Propositions for "feminist" organizational models, I propose, have to be seen as historical and political products. The outcomes of these efforts are thus not only contingent, but, as the

current debates in the literature suggest, only provisional.

Understood in this light, that is: as a historically situated concern, the growing recognition of diversity and differences among women by feminist theorists and by movement activists raises important issues regarding organizational dynamics in women's movement organizations. Acknowledging diversity means that making claims and getting things done on behalf of "women" becomes a much more complicated affair. An important consequence is that organizational feminism ceases to be mostly a matter of prefigurative politics (i.e., an experiment in egalitarian, "feminist" internal relations). Rather, internal processes become directly implicated in the definition of external-instrumental action - that is, in the representation of diversity in externally-directed attempts at social change.

Participation in liberal democratic political forums is conventionally understood as the central mechanism for ensuring the representation of diversity. In this sense, we have to acknowledge that the organizational forms developed in women's movement organizations may pose obstacles to such representation. For instance, in SLSJ women's service groups, participation was foreclosed in various ways. General Assemblies of Members were used for largely procedural, rather than for political purposes. Not all women could equally participate. Membership in the "active core" was associated with prior identification with "feminism" - not an easy label to wear in small communities²². The growing complexity

²² As one of the informants put it: *"C'est qui qui va se lever deboutte un matin, puis qui dit: "Bon, moi, j'vas faire partie [du centre de femmes]"? (...) Faut que tu affrontes les préjugés, les tiens, ceux de ton mari - parce que tout le monde est marié ici - ceux de ton amie qui reste à côté de chez vous. Ca fait que, t'imagines-tu, t'identifier à un*

of intervention and of administrative and organizational tasks, as well as the level of organizational learning achieved at the end of the 1980s made the integration of inexperienced or less qualified members more difficult, and less likely. These changes, and the growing involvement of women's service groups in institutionalized political representation (Chapter 6) have rendered participation conditional on a capacity to intervene in increasingly demanding decision-making processes - what Guberman et al. have aptly termed "*la démocratie exigeante*" (a demanding democracy) (1994:55). Instrumentally-oriented collectives, finally, require a certain degree of homogeneity: they cannot function effectively, as Acker has underlined, "where there are large differences of knowledge and experience between participants." (Acker 1995:141)

In highlighting these obstacles to a more diverse participation, I do not mean to make the representation of diversity a simple, transparent process resting on the bodily presence of women of different types. Such "mirror representation" is highly problematic. Theoretically, it presupposes the presence of already-there, already-constituted political interests that only need the presence of people with the right characteristics - gender, class, race, sexual orientation, etc. - to be expressed. Phillips (1991) argues convincingly that essentialism - the mere presence of individuals with certain social characteristics - cannot be relied on to ensure the representation of particular constituencies. "The entry of women [or of any other category of people] as individual actors on the political scene," she writes, "does not mean that these interests are actively pursued." (70) Politically, it is also important to

groupe pro-féministe..." (La Source, Interview 8:115).

see that mirror representation may very well be antithetical to social change: not all women are willing to promote feminist positions.

Representing women, I want to argue here, is first and foremost about representing "women". Women's movement organizations represent "women" in the sense that they represent a particular way of thinking about "women", who they are, and what their issues are. They achieve this through articulating "feminism" to women's lived experience. Because the latter is not immediately accessible but always has to be interpreted, political representation is always about constituting and articulating historically and politically situated claims. Representing "women" is, thus, representing a constructed position from a particular political perspective. Still, representing "women" is also about representing people: however elusive or incommensurable it remains, "experience" is the unavoidable basis for political representation. In this context, Phillips contends, the physical absence, in arenas of political representation, of "bodies" of sorts that are politically posited as salient regarding differences in experience - poorer women, less educated women, abused women, women of colour, lesbians, etc. - is always suspect (65).

Since individual actors cannot be relied on, what needs to be built in are mechanisms of group representation and accountability. Active "democratic publics" or "communicative communities" (Young 1990, Phillips 1991, Yeatman 1994) are needed to provide the political conditions for the collective articulation of differentially positioned claims and to ensure that representatives do effectively represent the constituencies they claim to speak for. Yet, two issues raised earlier in this chapter remain unresolved. One is the classical dilemma of direct, participatory

democracy: *la démocratie exigeante*. Or, as Phillips sums up: "when a democracy sets high demands on people's activity and involvement, participation becomes a minority affair (...)." (1991:20) The other, then, is the political issue of the accountability of this minority, and, among this group, of those who make a profession of "articulating experience", that is: of movement intellectuals.

CHAPTER 8: PLAYING THE STATE: LOCAL WOMEN'S SERVICE GROUPS IN THE GRANT ECONOMY

Introduction

If MSSS was the major institutional funder of SLSJ women's service groups by no means, however, was it the only one. Women's shelters, women's centers and the CALACS all made use - although to varying degrees - of funds from other state sources, notably employment and welfare programmes, the Secretary of State's Women's Programme, MEQ's OVEP, as well as more short-term programmes. In this chapter, I want to raise the question of the space for women's movement politics made available by the existence of funding protocols other than MSSS's.

Most scholars commenting on the funding of women's organizations see only constraints and problems in resource mobilization strategies that rely on multiple state sources. It is generally argued that accessing different and changing programmes forces, or at least pressures women's groups into altering and adapting their programming, discourses, and forms of self-presentations to accommodate the priorities of funders (Schechter 1982, Adamson, Briskin and McPhail 1988, Heald 1990, Guberman et al. 1994, Couillard 1994, 1995b). Hunting down, applying for and managing multiple grants is time-consuming, and juggling programmes increases the administrative work associated with the production of documentary requirements (Schechter 1982, Adamson, Briskin and McPhail 1988, Heald 1990, Guberman et al. 1994, Couillard 1994, 1995b). Multi-source funding, it is also argued, is a strategy fraught with uncertainties, making revenues generally unstable, continuity problematic, and long- or even

medium- term planning impossible (Schechter 1982, D. Lamoureux 1990, Heald 1990, Couillard 1994). Finally, it fosters competition among women's movement groups, as well as with other movement organizations (Adamson, Briskin and McPhail 1988, Schraeder 1990, Couillard 1994). Relying on multiple state sources, in short, simply multiplies the negative discursive, programmatic and administrative effects associated to state funding, and has a few unsavoury consequences of its own - notably financial instability and divisiveness of the movement sector.

No real margin of manoeuvre, this kind of work implies, can be gained from multi-source funding. The state, it is assumed, is monolithic and its operations are essentially directed at maintaining or renewing the dominance inscribed in existing relations of power. If this is so, variations among funding programmes, and the possibility for women's organizations to play with these variations becomes irrelevant. In no way can funded groups escape the corrosive effects of domination and rule, and choosing among funding programmes only amounts to choosing how they will participate in the process of their own subjection. As I argued in the first chapter of this dissertation, however, it is not only possible, but imperative, theoretically and politically, to think differently about the state.

The state, I have contended, is better understood as a historical product of social struggles, and as such as a disunited collection of actors and institutions that do not occupy a "fixed place" vis-à-vis gender (or even other) relations of power. To say that socio-political struggles really make a difference in the genesis of the varied historical forms of the state-system, its institutions, arenas and processes is also

to say that no "indomitable logic of domination" moves its parts. The existence of different funding programmes originating from different "sites" in the state, then, becomes an interesting question. If the possibility of pursuing social change "with and despite" the state is not foreclosed, then we can start thinking about these protocols as not just constraining, but also as opening up different possibilities that can be seized by collective actors for the pursuit of movement politics. I have explored this argument at length with MSSS funding; I want to extend it now, albeit more briefly, to the other sources of state funding used by women's service groups.

In this chapter, I want to take seriously Ng's proposal that it is "impossible to have a formulaic approach to state funding" (1990:180). Adopting a more institutionalist stance is required to take into account what specific funding protocols entail and permit. The issue of protocols, however, needs to be relocated within a broader analysis of the ways movement organizations exploit the sectorialization and fragmentation of the modern state to mobilize its resources in support of movement politics. Despite pressures from MSSS for them to "diversify" their resource base, I argue in this chapter, SLSJ local women's groups made their own strategic choices and decisions about multi-source funding and the opportunities historically offered to them by the "grant economy". In this process, they made use of different programmes that differently constrained as well as enabled the pursuit of feminist politics. To gain a better picture of the margin of manoeuvre that could be gained from "playing the sectorialized state", I will explore how different local women's service groups appropriated the space offered by multi-source

funding and what costs such a strategy entailed.

8.1: Characteristics of MSSS funding

Three features of MSSS funding are important to understand the extent to which the different women's service groups in SLSJ played the card of diversifying their sources of funding. First, MSSS funding was "partial". Second, MSSS preferred established organizations that could prove their viability through an already diverse resource and support base. Third, there were important discrepancies in funding levels between shelters, CALACS, and women's centers.

First, an important condition of SOC funding was that it was only "partial". The 1985 *Politique d'aide* made explicit SOC's tradition of "partial funding", and discursively articulated it as the expression - and the condition - of the Ministry's commitment "to respect community organizations' autonomy" (see Chapter 4). Respect for women's groups autonomy was thus recognized in the policy, but at the cost of being tied to a status of "community organizations" that authorized and legitimated their under-funding by the Ministry.

By defining its support as only "partial", the Ministry made it clear that its funds were to be insufficient to finance fully women's groups' contribution to the new welfare mix proposed in the *Politique d'aide*. The "community", it appears, was not only expected to share responsibilities and to collaborate with the Ministry in providing solutions to violence against women, it was also expected to throw in its own resources in the pursuit of "the common good" defined by the policy.

As a way of enforcing this principle, SOC guidelines requested applicants to show they could supplement the Ministry's funds. Selection criteria included demonstration by the applicants of their "efforts" towards diversifying their funding base, and of the involvement of volunteers and local communities' institutions in support of their activities (MSSS-SOC 1983-84 to 1989-90).

Second, MSSS preferred "established organizations". The Ministry emphasized "communities' dynamism", their remarkable responsiveness to "new needs", praised "initiatives from the milieu" (MAS 1985:32), and made available start-up grants (*Aide au démarrage*). Yet the Ministry maintained control on "needs determination" (Fraser 1989), by setting itself up as the ultimate judge of the needs for women's services identified locally (MAS 1985:32). In addition, start-up grants required applicants to demonstrate broad community support and to prove their viability, which meant that first-time applications were generally, and almost systematically rejected. Access to SOC funding was often only granted after two, or even three refusals (L'R 1986:23).

Jonquière's shelter La Chambrée, for instance, was repeatedly denied SOC funding between 1985 and 1988 on the grounds that "needs" did not justify a new shelter on a territory already served, according to MSSS, by Chicoutimi's Centre féminin.

Le ministère a longtemps utilisé l'argument de l'existence de services à Chicoutimi pour nous refuser notre accréditation. (La Chambrée, FDR:37)
La maison est là depuis trois ans sans subvention. C'est parce qu'on a de l'aide du monde, sinon on ne serait pas là. (La Chambrée, Interview 1988)

Only after three years of operating on a shoestring with local support (notably monetary donations from a chapter of the social club *Les Lionnes*), Employment Development projects and an impressive amount of voluntary labour (that led to the "burn-out" of the first core of activists) did La Chambrée finally win funding from MSSS and recognition for the local needs it claimed to represent.

As a consequence of MSSS' preferences for established organizations, many groups such as La Chambrée, and women's centers La Maison au Quatre-Temps and La Source had already developed an extensive practice of relying on a mix of committed activism, local donations, and funding from a variety of other state sources by the time they obtained MSSS funds.

Finally, large discrepancies in funding levels existed between shelters, rape crisis centers, and women's centers. Shelters obtained the largest grants from MSSS. At the end of the 1980s, each shelter typically received about \$200,000 yearly from the SOC. CALACS were granted between \$25,000 and \$65,000 and women's centers between \$15,000 and \$40,000. Differentials in funding levels, I will suggest, influenced SLSJ women's groups decisions about "diversification".

8.2: Shelters, the CALACS and women's centers: different stances towards diversifying

SLSJ groups made different strategic decisions about whether to deploy a strategy of mobilizing resources from multiple state sources. The extent to which groups had developed such a strategy in 1989-90 was highly variable. Diversification profiles, however, were not idiosyncratic; definite patterns existed. Three factors combined in different ways in

shelters, the CALACS, and women's centers to foster different stances towards diversifying. These included: differences in the levels of stable funding that could be attained through MSSS; differences in political position of provincial *Regroupements* vis-à-vis diversifying; and the existence of more and less entrenched organizational histories of diversification prior to MSSS funding.

By the end of the 1980s, MSSS was the single largest funder of shelters, women's centers and the CALACS in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean (see Table 1). Still, MSSS's proportion of the total revenues of each group varied widely. As Table 2 shows, the SOC grant represented anywhere from 30.6% to 96.4% of the groups' income in 1989-90. The remainder came from other provincial and federal programmes, as well as from an array of small local sources.

SLSJ shelters were the type of groups that relied the most on MSSS funding. SOC grants amounting to \$187,000 to \$215,000 provided between 74% and 96% of shelters' operational funding (see Table 2). An apparent discrepancy for shelter 1¹ disappears if we deduct a special CMHC grant² (\$225,000) for the construction of a new house. Most shelters obtained MSSS funding in the first half of the 1980s, Le Centre féminin as early as 1979-80. The exception was shelter La Chambrée, which opened in 1985, and received its first MSSS grant in 1988-89. Only shelter 2 supplemented

¹ Three shelters and three women's centers have specifically requested information about their 1989-90 revenues to remain confidential. I will thus avoid mentioning groups' names in this section.

² Funding to shelter 1 came from *Operation Refuge*, a program of the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). Shelters 2, 4 and 5 received, rather, yearly installments of approximately \$10,000 from an acquisition and building program administrated through the *Société d'habitation du Québec* (see Table 1, category "Other Québec sources").

TABLE 1: Revenues of SLSJ women's service groups in 1989-90, Total amounts and amounts by source: MSSS, Other Québec, Federal, and Local sources

Group	\$Total	\$MSSS	\$OtherQ	\$Federal	\$Local
Shelter 1	443000	197000	400	225000	20600
Shelter 2	233300	171800	9900	32000	19600
Shelter 3	223000	215000	0	0	8000
Shelter 4	220614	200400	5990	0	14224
Shelter 5	206053	187168	13109	0	5776
WCenter 1	114345	35000	26800	51945	600
CALACS	65408	50000	0	10787	4621
WCenter 2	59597	25000	9228	19839	4030
WCenter 3	43940	25000	5160	9350	4430
WCenter 4	37100	15000	9900	8500	3700

TABLE 2: Revenues of SLSJ women's service groups in 1989-90, percentages by source: MSSS, Other Québec, Federal, and Local sources

Group	%Total	%MSSS	%OtherQ	%Federal	%Local
Shelter 1	100	44.5	.1	50.8	4.7
Shelter 2	100	73.6	4.3	13.7	8.4
Shelter 3	100	96.4	0	0	3.6
Shelter 4	100	90.8	2.7	0	6.5
Shelter 5	100	90.8	6.4	0	2.8
WCenter 1	100	30.6	23.4	45.4	.5
CALACS	100	76.4	0	16.5	7.1
WCenter 2	100	41.9	15.5	33.3	6.8
WCenter 3	100	56.9	11.7	21.3	10.1
WCenter 4	100	40.4	26.7	22.9	9.9

Other Québec sources: *Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec, Programme OVEP; Ministère de la Main d'œuvre et de la sécurité du revenu, Travaux communautaires; Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, des sciences et de la technologie; Société d'habitation du Québec, Ministère de la Justice.*

Federal sources: Secretary of State, Women's Program; Employment and Immigration Canada, Employment Development program (PDE), *Programme DEFI*; Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

Local sources: membership fees, activity fees; income from rentals, internship supervision; fundraising campaigns; donations from social clubs, religious communities, municipalities, schoolboards, local MPs, regional *Centraide* (United Way), CLSCs, unions.

Source: FDR Survey, question 35, my computations.

substantially its operational budget with other state sources, obtaining a \$32,000 grant from a Federal Employment Development Project (PDE). Shelter 4 obtained a small sum (\$5,000) from the OVEP and *Travaux communautaires* programmes³.

The marginal interest expressed by SLSJ shelters for broadening their pool of institutional funding, I suggest, can be understood as the outcome of the following factors. First, since 1980, the *Regroupement provincial des maisons d'hébergement* had pressed for the complete funding of shelters' costs by MSSS. That the state should subsidize the entire amount the *Regroupement* considered the "vital minimum" for operating a shelter, a position adopted in 1981 (*Regroupement provincial des maisons* [1985b]), was at the core of the shelters' battle for funding. In this regard, MSSS's requirements for a "diversified" resource base were repeatedly denounced by the *Regroupement*. In 1987, the members of the *Regroupement* officially refused to supplement MSSS funding.

Les maisons refusent de maintenir leurs services à bout de bras en continuant de les gérer par des campagnes de financement, des coupures de poste, des réductions de salaire, des projets temporaires d'emploi, de la sollicitation, des marges de crédit. (Motion adopted by the Regroupement's Special Assembly, February 28, 1987, cited in Pelletier and Craig 1988:16)

This position was a principled one that has to be understood, as Pelletier and Craig (1988) correctly suggest, as a strategic move in shelters' political negotiations with MSSS. The strong reliance on MSSS funding and the relative absence of diversification of SLSJ shelters' financial

³ I will provide further detail on these programs in the next section.

sources can be interpreted, in this perspective, as conforming to the watchword issued by their *Regroupement*.

That the two non-member shelters adopted a similar stance, however, suggests another concurrent explanation. I propose that the level of funding of shelters at MSSS, although deemed unsatisfactory by shelters, may have been high enough to deter groups from pursuing a strategy of multi-source funding that was generally seen by community organizations as energy-absorbing, time-consuming, and marred by uncertainties (Hamel 1991:141-142). I want to suggest that MSSS funding was high enough to permit the operation of shelters - albeit on low salaries that did not recognize the qualifications and expertise of shelters' personnel. I am not saying that shelters had it easy, but rather, that they seem to have been able to afford not to diversify, either for political or internal organizational reasons, and to resist MSSS' demands for diversifying. Pressure towards diversifying may have been much stronger on groups that received much less funding from MSSS, such as the women's centers and the CALACS.

The position of Chicoutimi's CALACS regarding multi-source funding was very different from the shelters'. The SOC grant (\$50,000) made up 76% of its revenues (Table 2). Maison ISA had been funded through MSSS since its inception as the "rape unit" of the Centre féminin, and did not have a history of multi-source funding. On the surface, its profile was similar to the shelters'. In 1989-90, Maison ISA received only one state grant other than MSSS's - a \$10,787 PDE from Employment and Immigration Canada. The 1989-90 profile, however, does not reflect the decisions Maison ISA made in 1988-89 regarding diversification, and whose results were more

apparent in later years.

By 1988-89, a growing demand for services and exhaustion of activists had put serious stress on the group's resources (see Chapter 4). In addition to abandoning its emergency service (*garde 24/7*) and to getting actively involved in the fight for funding led by its *Regroupement*, Maison ISA decided to allocate some staff time to develop a diversifying strategy. An inventory of existing funding programmes was made, and funding conditions were examined (Annual Report 1988-89:33; ISA, Interview 4). Like many of the decisions at ISA, choosing among funding programmes was guided by a clear "cost-benefit" analysis. How much "energy" will be required and will it be worth the trouble?⁴

Moi l'an passé quand j'ai travaillé, j'ai mis une demi-journée de plus par semaine pour la recherche de financement. Puis les places autres comme les projets au Secrétariat d'Etat, les PDE. A part ça on doit mettre beaucoup d'énergie pour monter des projets. C'est un peu compliqué des fois, il faut interpellier les décideurs, ce n'est pas toujours évident. Et c'est plus des affaires publiques qu'ils veulent, comme des colloques médico-légal. Puis on n'avait pas d'énergie pour ça. (...). (ISA, Interview 4:39)

Previous experience with the Secretary of State's Women's Programme also informed these decisions. *"Il faut mettre du temps pour aller chercher de l'argent. Le projet de formation [Secretary of State 1987-88], c'est une bénévoles qui l'a mis sur pied. Si on ne l'avait pas eue, ça ne se serait pas fait."* (ISA, Interview 1988). In addition to soliciting a PDE grant in

⁴ I witnessed many such discussions in the course of my participation in Maison ISA as a member of the collective in 1991-92. A similar calculus underlay ISA's decisions regarding its participation in coalitions and *Tables de concertation*.

1989-90, Maison ISA applied for a charitable tax number at Revenue Canada and for accreditation at the OVEP programme (Québec). It also applied for DEFI grants from Employment and Immigration Canada in 1990-91 and 1991-92.

The decision made by Maison ISA in 1988-89 to move towards multi-source funding was the outcome of pressures on resources the group perceived as being stretched thin. It was also consistent with the position taken by its *Regroupement*. In contrast to the *Regroupement* of shelters, the *Regroupement québécois des CALACS* never demanded complete funding from MSSS for its member centers. Rather, it claimed "*non pas la totalité, mais une contribution du MSSS entre 60 et 75% du budget requis*" (*Regroupement québécois des CALACS* 1993:42, 44). This position, however, did not express an acceptance of SOC's requirements for diversification. Like many popular and community movement groups in Québec, I suggest, it is on the grounds of maintaining their autonomy and a relative "independence" from a single source of funding that the *Regroupement des CALACS* limited its demands on MSSS. That MSSS re-signified to its advantage the equation of partial funding with autonomy was, on the other hand, the very object of the contestation of shelters, and the basis on which they made their claims that were, rather, for "total funding and total autonomy".

Financial information on SLSJ women's centers in 1989-90 shows a consistent pattern of diversification. Women's centers relied on the SOC grant only for 31% to 57% of their annual revenues. In 1989-90, they all benefited from core funding from the Secretary of State's Women's Programme (between \$8,500 and \$9,350), and La Source also had project funding (\$21,500). They were all accredited to the OVEP programme from

which they received between \$1,800 and \$6,900. They had obtained PDE and DEFI grants from Employment and Immigration Canada, had appealed to the *Travaux communautaires* programme from Québec's *Ministère de la Main d'oeuvre*, and had used "the small print" of more episodic, special programmes to present women-oriented projects.

The multi-source profile of women's centers revenues in 1989-90 was by no means exceptional, but the reflection of a well-entrenched practice. Three factors played a central role in the development of a strategy of diversification in women's centers. First, by the time they finally got MSSS funding, SLSJ women's centers all had a prior history of operating with diverse funding sources - and, in some cases, had accumulated a precious wealth of experience and strategizing in "playing the grant economy". Although La Source was established in 1981, it did not obtain MSSS funding until 1985-86. The CCFC and Maison au Quatre-Temps were founded in 1980 and 1983 respectively, but received their first SOC grant only in 1988-89. A women's center and shelter existed in Dolbeau since 1983 (Halte-Secours, see Chapter 1), but the women's center (Maria Chapdelaine) obtained MSSS funding only in 1989-90. Second, MSSS funding to SLSJ women's centers was meagre (between \$15,000 and \$35,000 in 1989-90). Unlike shelters that could perhaps afford to abandon diversification schemes once they were awarded MSSS funding, women's centers could not.

Third, the trademark of the work of women's centers - their polyvalence - called for a multi-source strategy. Since no part of the Québec or Canadian state funded women's or community organizations for themselves - that is, providing them with sufficient operational funding without channelling programming in certain directions or placing

restrictions on what could be done⁵ - women's centers were compelled to combine different programmes to support the different aspects of their action. This is the sense of the position taken by *L'R des centres de femmes du Québec* in 1986. MSSS would support direct services, the Secretary of State would support "collective actions", and the OVEP programme of Québec's Ministry of Education would fund educational activities (L'R 1986). In its negotiations for a funding policy, L'R demanded from MSSS a contribution covering two-thirds of a women's center yearly budget, an estimated \$70,000 in 1987 (L'R 1987:28-29).

A final note on funding possibilities from local sources is in order. Financial resources gathered in 1989-90 from "local" sources - i.e., from membership fees to religious communities - ranged from \$600 to \$20,600 (Table 1). The higher amounts garnered by shelters 1, 2, and 4 should be nuanced: shelters 1 and 2 organized special, large-scale fund-raising campaigns in 1989-90 to help them move into a new location. Most of the local revenues of shelter 4 came from renting part of its space to another community group. Besides rentals and the occasional fund-raising campaign, the amounts provided by local sources were small: about \$4,000 or \$5,000 annually. L'R identified different structural factors that limited the efforts of women's groups at self-financing: women's poverty (as individual donators), difficulties in convincing donors that services and activities for women were a "worthy" cause, Revenue Canada's restrictions regarding the status of "charitable

⁵ Although Employment Development Project (PDE) and DEFI funds from Employment and Immigration Canada could be and were used that way by SLSJ women's service groups, they remained short-term grants that were not meant to support operations.

organization", and tight competition for donations (1986: 25-26). There was (and still is) no tradition of municipal government funding for community organizations in Québec. In addition, demanding "user fees" from women (save for special events) was considered politically unacceptable by the vast majority of groups. In this context, as Hamel underlined more broadly in the case of Québec's community sector, finding financial support elsewhere than in the state could only be a fragile and highly limited option (1991:136). For SLSJ groups, relying primarily on MSSS, or on a combination of funding from different state sources was unavoidable.

8.3: Playing the grant economy

The groups that did "play the grant economy" appealed to different parts of the state that possessed their own policy agenda. The different funding programmes that were solicited differently constrained as well as enabled the action of women's service groups. Starting with the most favoured programmes - the employment-oriented programmes and the Secretary of State's Women's Programmes - and then moving on to smaller, or more episodic programmes, and finally to attempts to gain charity status from Revenue Canada, I will examine more closely the different conditions with which local women's service groups had to contend, the objects for which they were able to successfully obtain funding and the strategies they deployed to establish a correspondence between the programmes' objectives and their own agendas. How was the "space for movement politics" made available by these protocols appropriated and at what costs?

a) Taking advantage of employment-oriented funding programmes

Programmes promoting employment have historically helped the expansion of the community sector in Québec. Classical examples include the Secretary of State's *Perspective Jeunesse* programme (1971), Employment and Immigration Canada's *Programme d'initiatives locales* (1971) and later *Programme de développement communautaire du Canada* and *Programme de services communautaires canadiens*. Notwithstanding their political rationales, these programmes were successfully mobilized at the local and neighbourhood level to support the development of a variety of popular and community organizations (Hamel 1983, Diné and Bellavance 1990, Hamel 1991). They served emerging women's groups as well (Brodeur et al. 1982, Beaudry 1984, Fournier and Gagnon 1991, see also Chapter 4).

The employment-oriented programmes that were opened to women's and community groups at the end of the 1980s - PDE, DEFI, *Travaux communautaires*⁶, article 38, PAIE were the responsibility of Employment and Immigration Canada and Québec's *Ministère de la Main d'oeuvre et de la sécurité du revenu*. They were part of a series of attempts at restructuring Canadian and Québec employment and welfare benefits policies. In the second half of the 1980s, new orientations redirected existing programmes towards "developing employability" among specific target-groups: *chômeurs de longue date*⁷, students and social assistance recipients. Officially aimed at "the adaptation of labour to the needs of

⁶ The *Travaux communautaires* program was replaced by *Programme Extra* in 1989, but SLSJ groups generally used the old appellation, and I will continue the practice here.

⁷ "*Chômeurs de longue date*": persons having cumulated 24 weeks of unemployment in the course of the last 52 weeks.

a changing market", the programmes subsidized work experience and training for the most vulnerable fractions of the labour force. In doing so, they created a pool of low-wage, marginalized labour and of correspondingly precarious jobs, ostensibly to "help" private enterprise and "boost the economy". These programmes were also designed to take people off welfare rolls, although this tended to prove short-lived for participants and often only benefited the governments' public image (Dinel and Bellavance 1990). Although these programmes became increasingly oriented towards the private sector after 1985, community organizations remained eligible.

SLSJ groups regularly drew resources from these programmes, first, to finance their day-to-day operations; second, to fund particular projects. Although SOC funding was technically operational, it was also partial - that is, it was insufficient to cover the full costs of rent, equipment, supplies, and, most importantly, salaries. Finding supplementary funds for operations meant seeking funding for additional personnel. Employment-oriented programmes provided this opportunity. Shelter La Chambrée, for example, regularly obtained additional personnel from PDE (Federal employment programme for the unemployed), DEFI (Federal summer employment programme for students), and *Travaux communautaires* (Québec employment programme for social assistance recipients). CALACS Maison ISA first applied for a DEFI grant with similar aims: "*Le projet DEFI, moi, ce que j'avais en tête, c'était d'amener une ressource supplémentaire pour l'équipe, pour venir en aide [aux travailleuses].*" (ISA, Interview 4:12).

Employment-oriented programmes were also used for specific projects the groups wanted to pursue. Some were directed towards meeting particular

organizational objectives. Consider the following three examples. First, three women were hired for 20 weeks at women's center La Source in 1988 thanks to a PDE grant. The project *O.P.A.* - for "*Organisation, Promotion, Auto-financement*" - broadly aimed at the organizational restructuring of the center. This project permitted, among other things, to allocate people, time and money to examine "the collective model" and to devise new rules and regulations for a collective before adopting it as the group's official decision-making structure.

Second, in 1988-89, women's center Maria Chapdelaine obtained a PDE to survey women's needs and expectations vis-à-vis the center.

C'était pour savoir les besoins des femmes [de la MRC] par rapport au centre de femmes, leur vision du centre de femmes, les activités qu'il y pourrait y avoir. Pour coller plus aux besoins des femmes. Ca a pris la forme d'un questionnaire postal qu'on a analysé. Maintenant (...) on oriente nos sujets d'ateliers et de rencontres à partir de ce qu'elles ont dit, pour le calendrier d'activités (...). (Maria Chapdelaine, FDR:10.3, 12.3)

In other words, the PDE grant enabled Maria Chapdelaine to collect information it saw as necessary to better align its action with the situation and desires of women of its community.

Third, CALACS Maison ISA used employment programmes to develop its services and its outreach. The 1989-90 PDE project inventoried methods and practices of Québec CALACS regarding support groups for women victims of sexual assault. The 1990-91 and 1991-92 DEFI projects respectively focused on sexual harassment and sexist advertisement. The employment grants were all used to produce organizational "tools": procedures for animation and group intervention, pamphlets and *sensibilisation* techniques that

formalized and routinized Maison ISA's discourses and intervention. In doing so, Maison ISA worked at creating better conditions for the further pursuit, by its volunteers and staff, of activities related to support groups, harassment and sexist advertisement without ISA having to constantly "reinvent the wheel" or to rely unduly on the abilities of particular individuals.

Employment-oriented funding programmes, the PDE in particular, were also sought for special projects that groups saw as arising from demands of local feminists or of women from the community⁸. For instance, women's center Maria Chapdelaine obtained a PDE grant in 1989-90 for a survey of the situation of working women in the MRC⁹. The project, it declared, was drafted following a proposal made on International Women's Day, whose theme that year was employment equity. At La Maison au Quatre-Temps, comments from participants in a PDE geared towards setting up a support group for single mothers (1989-90) led the center into another PDE aimed at tackling practical issues related to the re-entry of women on the job market (1990-91).

Cette année, le PDE "Femmes et réinsertion [sur le marché du travail]" découle directement du PDE "Femmes et monoparentalité". L'année passée, les femmes nous disaient "ya pas de job, on sait pas comment remplir les CV, comment faire reconnaître nos compétences." (...) Cette année, on a un PDE pour la reconnaissance des acquis des femmes qui travaillent à la maison. On demande [aussi] une formation par ARFENT pour

⁸ Of course, perceiving and satisfying "local needs" is a process that is not immediately transparent. By no means is it independent from the groups' own interpretation of the situation of "women" and from the opportunities available (or not) to answer to certain types of "needs".

⁹ MRC: *Municipalité régionale de comté*. Here: the territory attached to this supra-municipal level of local government.

monter un groupe comme Accès-Travail-Femmes¹⁰ (...) parce qu'on n'est pas desservies par le Saguenay et qu'on est dans un milieu plus rural. (Maison au Quatre-Temps, FDR:12.1)

Other PDE-funded "special projects" stemmed more clearly from the groups' understanding of what were current "women's priority issues". Among these was a survey by women's center La Source, in 1988-89, on women's job training needs versus the available institutional training programmes. Other projects by La Maison au Quatre-Temps in 1987-88 and 1988-89 aimed at informing and raising awareness on violence against women and at developing a holistic perspective on women's health.

Employment-oriented programmes contained no direct programmatic demands or restrictions regarding the objects for which the grants were to be used. *"En autant que tu as des objectifs clairs, c'est surtout au niveau du budget qu'ils vont regarder, et comment tu as intégré la formation"* (La Source, Interview 6:90). The variety of projects, themes and activities for which SLSJ women's groups obtained support convincingly shows that SLSJ women's service groups were fully able to develop their own organizational and programmatic agendas. The examples provided also demonstrate, I suggest, that the groups were in a position, in these programmes, to draft grant applications that fitted their agendas without much compromising on content.

Employment-oriented programmes, I am arguing, left relatively free

¹⁰ ARFENT (Association regroupant les femmes en métiers non-traditionnel) and Accès-Travail-Femmes were two women's organizations based in Jonquière (SLSJ). The former was regional and promoted the involvement of women in non-traditional occupations. The latter was local and funded by Employment and Immigration Canada to provide training in non-traditional occupations for women on social assistance or with little education.

rein to women's service groups regarding programming. "Relatively", that is, as long as groups remained within the limits of what was "politically acceptable". These limits were unwritten, but not necessarily unspoken. In this case as in the case of other programmes, project agents could be probed for clues: *"ils te disent... pas vraiment quoi dire, mais quoi ne pas dire, et qu'est-ce qu'il serait mieux de dire, et, des fois, à tel moment, qu'est-ce qu'il serait mieux de présenter."* (La Source, verbatim, Fieldwork diary:160) These limits also shifted. Projects that were not "politically acceptable" yesterday could be tomorrow, and vice-versa.

Mais comme je te le dis, souvent, les projets sont demandés soit pour un besoin, soit parce que politiquement parlant c'est un projet qui va passer. A ce moment-là [1986], c'était plus favorable pour la garde en milieu scolaire. Pour nous autres, ça tombait pile qu'on niveau politique on puisse présenter un projet comme ça. Aujourd'hui, on essaierait de le passer et ça ne passerait pas. Sûrement pas. (La Source, Interview 10:40, about a PDE project obtained with local Garderie Trotte-menu for developing an after-school childcare facility in the community)

Calculations based on "*l'air du temps*" and current political fashion were part of the strategizing of women's groups. The orientation of many grant applications by SLSJ women's centers towards job training and women's employment at the end of the 1980s can be considered, I propose, as an expression of such more general, political trends. However, these trends were not, I want to emphasize, so much "state-defined" as they were the result of the temporary prominence attained, in the universe of political discourse, by certain issues linked to women's struggles (for example: childcare, employment equity for women), or to widely recognized economic, social or political "problems".

The margin of manoeuvre for the pursuit of feminist politics that could be gained through employment-related programmes was important. However, it had a cost. At the end of the 1980s, these programmes concerned themselves chiefly with the employment of the defined target-groups and the training to be provided by the host enterprise or organization (Dinel and Bellavance 1990). Both these were problematic.

C'est dur avec les PDE (...) Parce qu'ils demandent de la formation et qu'ils ne donnent presque pas de frais de formation. Ils donnent juste des salaires. T'es toujours obligée de réengager du personnel nouveau. (La Source, Interview 17:147, 148)
Ca prend des chômeuses de longue date et il n'y a aucune des filles qui travaillent actuellement au centre qui va pouvoir être engagée. (La Source, verbatim, Fieldwork diary:160, similar comments made by Maison au Quatre-Temps, FDR:12.1)

Funding conditions restricted the pool and qualifications of persons to be employed and women's groups had to draw on their own personnel and time to ensure the mandatory training. Experienced activists were often not eligible for these programmes, and women trained on these projects kept drifting away as they could not be easily re-hired. Funded projects were granted only for 20 weeks (PDE) or for even shorter terms (DEFI) and salaries were low: minimum wage for PDE and DEFI, and a supplement to welfare benefits and to the host organization in the other programmes. PDE and DEFI projects typically brought in \$10,000 apiece to SLSJ groups in 1989-90.

Finally, programmes aimed at unemployment insurance recipients (*article 38*) and social assistance beneficiaries (*Travaux communautaires*, PAIE) included punitive and exploitative dimensions that divided Québec's

popular and community movement. Some took a principled stance, condemning these programmes as offshoots of governments' neo-liberal restructuring of welfare policies. Other groups used them for the small relief these programmes could provide for real people on welfare (on this see Dinel and Bellavance 1990:29, also Joannette and Bellavance 1994:20-21). Similar divisions existed among SLSJ groups. Women's centers Quatre-Temps and Maria Chapdelaine did employ women whose salaries were funded through the *Travaux communautaires* programme to work at the reception and as office help, and integrated them through a variety of tasks related to the centers' activities. On the opposite side of the debate, activists from La Source were vehement in their rejection of the programme.

On est contre ça, on ne veut pas embarquer là-dedans. C'est vraiment de l'exploitation. C'est pour les assistés sociaux. On les paye 25\$ par semaine. Ça fait pas cher de l'heure. Au Centre, ça nous donne aussi 25\$ par semaine, pour toute la gestion et la supervision de ces gens-là. Ça n'a pas d'allure, on ne l'a jamais fait et ça ne nous intéresse pas. (La Source, verbatim, Fieldwork diary:113)

In addition, the margin of manoeuvre permitted by employment-oriented programmes was increasingly being eroded. The revised programmes explicitly favoured the private sector¹¹ after 1985, with the effect of curtailing the funds available for women's and community organizations. Budgets for the PDE programme, in particular, were subjected to a 18% cut between 1984-85 and 85-86, followed by others in the subsequent years. Budgets for the DEFI programme felt yearly cutbacks as well (Favreau

¹¹ Interestingly, this new orientation towards the private sector was accompanied by a relaxing of the controls on the organizations' internal grant management (Dinel and Bellavance 1990:17).

1988:187, Dine1 and Bellavance 1990:16-20, Hamel 1991:135, Bélanger and Lévesque 1992: 727-728).

b) Dealing with state feminism at the Women's Programme

Only one institutional source other than MSSS provided core funding for day-to-day operations. These funds came from the Secretary of State's Women's Programme and were reserved for women's centers. The Secretary of State's Women's Programme also offered project funding to a wide array of women's organizations. The programme was created in 1974, following a recommendation from the Canadian Royal Commission on the Status of Women (Bird Commission)¹². At the end of the 1980s, the programme explicitly supported organized feminist action in civil society:

Through the Women's Programme of the Department of the Secretary of State, the government provides financial assistance to women's groups and other voluntary organizations, working to improve the economic, social, and legal situation of women, whether in the home, the workplace, or the community. (Secretary of State 1989:1)

Its general objectives aimed at the organizational development of women's groups, the promotion of public awareness of women's issues and institutional change (2).

Core funding to SLSJ women's centers from the Women's Programme ranged from \$8,500 to \$9,350 in 1989-90 and represented between 8% and 23% of their annual revenues. The operational character of the grant directed

¹² For a detailed history of the Women's Programme and of the creation of this feminist site within the institutional structure of the Canadian state, see Pal (1993).

funds towards organizational maintenance (*permanence* and infrastructure) and day-to-day action, in particular to activities of "representation", "concerted action", "lobbying", and "*sensibilisation de la population*" (2). In addition to its contribution to the operational costs of SLSJ women's centers, this funding also enabled them to broaden the activities of representation, lobbying, and concerted action that they could legitimately undertake under MSSS funding.

In addition, funding by the Women's Programme offered support for women's centers to tackle issues that could not or could only with difficulty be claimed within the - admittedly blurred but not boundless - limits of the field of health and social services. Among the activities and themes for which SLSJ women's centers sought core funding from the Women's Programme in 1988-89 and 1989-90 were organizing International Women's Day, publishing articles on the situation of women, holding workshops and information sessions on pornography, employment equity and women's participation in politics (schoolboards, municipal governments, federal and provincial politics), as well as theatre events taking the form of "procès populaire" (people's trials) against violence against women, and even feminism itself¹³ (La Source, Maison au Quatre-Temps,

¹³ "People's trial" is an element of the action repertoire of women's and community groups in Québec. This theater form asks for the public's participation in voicing or opposing preconceptions and prejudices regarding a particular theme or situation. It is used as an awareness-raising technique. Maison ISA also organized a "*Procès populaire des agressions à caractère sexuel*." The following quotation well describes this form:

"Sous forme de procès où l'accusé est le féminisme et les chefs d'accusation les préjugés, les avocats de la couronne et de la défense ont livré leur plaidoyer. Des témoignages spontanés de la salle venaient à tour de rôle s'exprimer pour ou contre le féminisme. La grande retombée de cette activité fut sans doute la

Grant application). The Women's Programme also supported modes of action that were not fundable at MSSS, such as doing research, and organizing conferences and colloquiums.

Some SLSJ women's service groups took advantage of the project funding offered by the Women's Programme. Maison au Quatre-Temps obtained a grant in 1990-91 for a project on violence against women in music videos aimed at producing a document for awareness-raising sessions with high school students. La Source received funding for organizing a regional colloquium on pornography and violence against women (*La violence en images vaut mille maux*, 1989-90), and another colloquium on women in non-traditional occupations (*Casser le moule*, 1990-91). Maria Chapdelaine obtained a small sum for a colloquium on employment equity it organized with other local groups and institutions. Earlier uses of the programme included a colloquium on women and business entrepreneurship organized by La Source (1986-87). CALACS La Maison ISA also obtained project funding for awareness-raising information sessions with high school students on sexual aggressions (1985-86), as well as for training new activists (1987-88). As these examples show, core and project funding from the Secretary of State could be mobilized by local groups for outreach on issues that were not limited to the most sedate, or the most "liberal" ones.

Funding from "state feminism", that is: from feminism in an official capacity, complicates our understanding of the issue of "state funding" in a very interesting way. The creation of women's bureaus, women's programmes, women's advisory councils and the like historically carved a

démystification du mot féminisme. Pour la première fois dans le secteur, nous avons parlé du féminisme, ensemble, des gens de trois générations, hommes et femmes." (La Source, Annual Report 1988-89).

niche for feminism in the institutional structures of many states, and provided a foothold from which to make emancipatory claims on behalf of "women" (Watson 1990, see also Eisenstein 1990, Ryan 1990, Yeatman 1990, Pal 1993, McBride Stetson and Mazur 1995). By entering the state, "feminism" was transformed. It acquired certain attributes of the state, notably elements of its bureaucratic and administrative modes of functioning¹⁴. But most importantly, it came to share (albeit only peripherally¹⁵ and within the limits of its institutional mandate) in the state's power to impose large scale social and political change. This very location also placed state feminism in a position to shape the discourses and practices of other feminist actors. The historicity and the diversity of "feminisms" makes it important to inquire, as Eisenstein aptly suggests, into "what strands of feminist theory and practice are picked up and articulated in the structures of power, and what are the implications of this for the outcomes" (1990:89). Understanding state feminism as a version of feminism that occupies a position of power is important to comprehend the complicated relationship that obtained, through funding, between local women's service groups and the Women's Programme.

¹⁴ Such a transformation of feminism does not necessarily goes smoothly. Schraeder (1990) gives an account of this process in the history of the Secretary of State's Women's Program, and of the feminist struggles that accompanied it. Findlay recounts mounting a feminist challenge, from inside the Women's Program, against bureaucratic and administrative modes of functioning. This battle was lost (Findlay 1995).

¹⁵ As Franzway, Court and Connell, among others, have noted, the "organizational units where women's interests are articulated," such as women's bureaus and councils, etc., "are peripheral in the organization of the state" (1989:31).

The Women's Programme promoted a particular vision of feminism¹⁶. Its funding was framed in terms of supporting the "advancement of women's equality". Among the diversity of women's issues that could potentially be addressed for such purpose it selected and defined its own, particular set of priority areas: "economic equality", "social justice" and "access/participation" (Secrétariat d'Etat 1987, 1989). Economic equality included "employment equity, education and training, child care, pensions, women in business". Social justice featured "the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, legal equality, family violence, pornography, sexual assault, portrayal of women in the media." Under "access/participation" were listed "equitable access to services, participation in the decision-making process, elimination of discriminatory attitudes." (1989:2) Projects that "promote[d] a view on abortion" were specifically prohibited (4). The programme selected "visible minority women, disabled women, rural and isolated women" (1) as those among the marginalized and otherized groups of women whose concerns and needs would also receive priority, but banned projects that "promote[d] a view on sexual orientation" (4).

This particular vision of feminism was accompanied by its own action repertoire. The programme favoured activities and projects that aimed at "concrete changes", that is, projects that had "public" clout, interpellated decision-makers or involved the participation of women and women's groups as actors in formal politics. Submitting briefs and recommendations, evaluating legal-institutional reforms and needs for services, researching and diffusing information on the programme's

¹⁶ The following corresponds to the 1987 revised mandate of the programme.

priority issues among target-publics - the media, public authorities, the police, or marginalized groups of women (from "immigrant groups and ethnic minorities") - occupied a place of choice in the action repertoire "suggested" by the Women's Programme (Secrétariat d'Etat 1987). Service provision was not receivable (admittedly on the basis of the existing Federal-Provincial divisions of powers - Lamartine 1994), nor were activities directed towards "emotional or spiritual growth, personal or professional development" (Secrétariat d'Etat 1989:4).

Les activités doivent viser des changements sociaux concrets en faveur de l'égalité des femmes, à l'exclusion de toute forme d'aide pouvant être considérée comme du développement personnel. Autrement dit, les activités doivent dépasser l'information ou la sensibilisation d'un petit groupe de femmes et rayonner davantage dans le milieu, soit en intervenant auprès des principaux interlocuteurs d'un dossier ou auprès du public en général. (Secrétariat d'Etat [1989-90]:2)

The vision of feminism of the Women's Programme overlapped with, but did not fully correspond to the local versions developed in SLSJ women's service groups. Among the priorities of the programme, for example, were "sexual assault" and "family violence" (i.e., "battered women" and "incest"), issues that SLSJ shelters and the CALACS had defined as their main concerns. The programme did not fund services, which were at the center of the projects of the shelters and the CALACS. Yet, these groups could still, potentially, find funding at the Women's Programme for outreach and advocacy. Maison ISA did seek and obtain such support twice, in 85-86 and 87-88. Projects, however, had to be designed to be limited in time and had to produce tangible and public outcomes. These conditions

excluded support for more regular forms of outreach and advocacy, as well as means of action that may have been considered less "effective" by the programme. These requirements operated as a deterrent for Maison ISA, who chose not to apply to the programme in subsequent years (see preceding section). SLSJ shelters, for their part, made little or no use of the Women's Programme. Shelters were generally less inclined towards outreach and advocacy work (see chapter 6); broader political and organizational reasons also generally turned them away from project funding (see previous section).

SLSJ women's centers were in a different situation vis-à-vis the Secretary of State. Core funding by the Women's Programme pre-dated that offered by MSSS. All SLSJ women's centers had been receiving yearly core funding from the programme since the first half of the 1980s. They also regularly applied for project funding. To mobilize the financial resources made available by the Secretary, however, SLSJ women's centers historically had to define themselves on the particular feminist terrain constituted by the programme. An intricate relationship was established between the projects of local women's centers and the feminist project promoted by the programme. This relationship, however, was not exempt from tensions.

Part of the efforts undertaken by *L'R des centres de femmes* to stabilize the funding of women's centers involved an attempt at fixating the project of women's centers (L'R 1986). L'R defined this project not only by locating it at the intersection of a socio-sanitary discourse and a feminist discourse (a political manoeuvre I have detailed in Chapter 5), but also by strategically incorporating elements of the feminism promoted

by the Women's Programme. At the same time, however, the feminism of L'R expressed and mediated the local feminism(s) of its member centers in a way that distanced it from the programme's project. Here too the political metaphor of "developing women's autonomy" functioned as the discursive device to locate the project of women's centers on the terrain of the Women's Programme, while preserving its specificity (L'R 1986, 1989).

From the feminism of the programme, L'R retained an orientation towards institutional-legal change and public awareness-raising it termed "*changement des lois et des mentalités*". L'R also retained the notion of "women's participation", but reframed it under a label stressing women's collective organizing for change ("*actions collectives*"). At the same time, L'R maintained its claim to a "global approach" that included direct services, and to a "local perspective" that importantly shifted the main focus of social change efforts towards "*le milieu*" (the community), "*le quotidien*" (everyday life), and, most importantly, towards women themselves. The Women's Programme, in this perspective, was lacking and was criticized by L'R. The Secretary of State, L'R argued, slighted the long and difficult process through which most of the participants in women's centers, women who so far had had no voice, no experience of power or organizing, and who were often poor and isolated, could be made to participate in the more public, collective, and institutional forms of socio-political change advocated by the Secretary. Actively supporting this process was the distinct role to be played by women's centers, and a core element of their larger project aimed at developing women's autonomy. (L'R 1989:31)

Tensions were also felt by local women's centers. The Women's Programme was, on the whole, supportive of feminist organizing at the local level. Yet, for SLSJ women's centers this alliance with feminism within the state was an uneasy one: they had to talk a particular talk, and walk a particular walk. To help local strategizing, L'R fashioned guidelines for women's centers to fill their grant application forms in a way that was consistent with the programme's discourse (L'R 1988).

C'est comme pour aider tous les centres de femmes à avoir une vision quand même assez égale au niveau de leurs demandes de subventions. Quand vous parlez au Secrétariat, faut que vous parliez en ces termes-là, avec ces mots-là... Et au MSSS aussi.

(...) parce que tu sais, le Secrétariat d'Etat, faut que tu dises les bons mots. Si tu ne dis pas les bons mots, elle ne te croira pas que tu fais de l'action collective. Pourtant, si il y a des places où il s'en fait de l'action collective, c'est bien dans les centres de femmes! (La Source, Interview 11:123, 122)

One had to use not only the right words, but to propose the right themes, and the right means of action.

Ce qui est bon quand on parle du Secrétariat d'Etat, c'est la politique, le travail, un peu moins la santé. La violence, ils avaient un peu d'argent. Le Secrétariat d'Etat, ils veulent des choses qui se voient. Si on travaille sur la pornographie et [qu'on obtient] que l'étalage soit placé plus haut. Faut que ça soit concret, visible, quantifiable, qu'on voie les retombées: "Ah! Ça a donné ça!" (La Source, Interview 17:132)

Yet, relations with the programme's agent were generally cordial, as funding could be obtained for explicitly feminist projects that either corresponded with the established priorities of women's centers (for

example: the project on pornography at women's center La Source) or could be made to fall within their broad agenda.

Le dossier [femmes en emploi non-traditionnel] nous intéressait, il y avait du financement disponible au Secrétariat d'Etat pour ce genre de projet. Alors on a fait un colloque. C'est quelque chose qu'on n'aurait pas nécessairement fait tout de suite si il n'y avait pas eu le Secrétariat d'Etat: on aurait commencé par quelque chose de plus petit. (La Source, FDR:10.3)

Schraeder (1990) analysed the effects of the Women's Programme on Canadian feminist organizations in terms of the co-option of women's groups into an essentially liberal and pluralist agenda of "citizenship" (Schraeder 1990). Although the programme was indeed framed in terms of equality, the defense of rights, legal-institutional change, and political participation, Schraeder's argument fails to consider that the socio-political meaning of citizenship and of its dimensions is not definitively fixed. As such, citizenship is not only a potential, but also a legitimate terrain of feminist struggles, and as such can be re-signified in a variety of ways¹⁷. Discourses of equality and rights, Pal and others have remarked, can lend themselves to more radical interpretations (1993:263). Moreover, Schraeder's argument leaves aside the other course of action equally favoured by the programme and feminists of various stripes: the involvement of women's groups in public forms of awareness-raising. Finally, it must be noted, struggles over political inclusion and public

¹⁷ See Turner (1986) and Jelin (1990) on the implications of the redefinition of citizenship resulting of the struggles of women's movements. See also the propositions of Jones (1990), O'Connor (1993) and Orloff (1993) on the notion of embodied citizenship rights.

meanings are part of the "politicization" of actors and issues argued by Sandilands (1997).

In this sense, I contend, one of the historical effects of the Women's Programme has been to contribute to the politicization of the initial projects of SLSJ women's service organizations. The programme was firmly pro-active: it intended to change attitudes in ways that were not only, as Pal notes, "well in advance of the views of the majority of Canadian women" (1993:263) but also, I propose, well in advance of what "taking women from a position from which to act" originally meant and entailed in most SLSJ women's service groups.

Because of its location "in the state", the programme helped legitimize feminism and offered both support and incentives for local women's organizations to define themselves as such. The very institutional location of the programme, it can be argued, shaped a strategy favouring large-scale, collective interventions in the public sphere - that is, in formal politics and public opinion. As the Women's Programme provided discursive resources and monetary incentives for funded groups to pursue such activities, one of its "effects of power" was to pressure SLSJ service groups to move beyond "helping and informing women" and to steer them towards a stronger presence in public democratic spaces. Another was to open up, at least potentially, the possibility for SLSJ groups to take steps towards the recognition of differences that had had very little echo for them to that point, in particular race and disability, and thus to move them towards more inclusive forms of local feminism. In counterpart, though, the Women's Programme did channel topics and themes towards a particular set of issues, banned projects on abortion and sexual

orientation, and impatiently dismissed the individual and small-scale forms of action that took a large place in the day-to-day activities of women's centers. It also made its own administrative and accountability demands on funded groups¹⁸.

The projects of SLSJ women's centers, however, remained positioned across audiences among which were not only MSSS and the Secretary of State, but also their own *Regroupement* and a diversity of women from their community. Firmly anchored into "the local" and the needs of living and talking women that they saw on an everyday basis, SLSJ women's centers continued to undertake, under the labels of "help" and "personal growth", an array of small-scale activities geared towards changing their participants' subjectivities. They also continued to hold workshops and sessions on a variety of feminist topics that negotiated a complicated path between their own reading of "what counted as a feminist issue", the priorities of their main funders (MSSS and the Secretary), and the desires of their participants - which were potentially at odds with one another. For example, the survey of "women's needs" realized by women's center Maria Chapdelaine (1989) revealed that, in sharp contrast to the priorities promoted by the Secretary of State, a large majority of its present and potential participants were interested in workshops on "personal autonomy" and on "women's health", and not at all in "politics"¹⁹. Interest was high for "work", "the family" and "*conditions*

¹⁸ Administrative and documentary requirements were for a long time *ad hoc* (Pal 1993). At the end of the 1980s, they were most often limited in practice to the production of activity and financial reports.

¹⁹ These and the following were pre-set categories proposed by the survey.

de vie des femmes" but only marginal for "the economy" and "sexism".

The Women's Programme provided a space for "doing movement politics" that increasingly functioned, towards the end of the 1980s, as a margin of manoeuvre for SLSJ women's centers vis-à-vis MSSS funding. Yet this space was also shaped by a "contest over feminism" in which the Secretary of State was in a position to set the terms of what constituted "more central and effective" versions of feminism. In trying to occupy this space, women's centers were subject to a complex "push and pull," not only between different versions of feminism, but also between their own interpretation of women's situations and the needs and desires expressed by women of their community - that is, I would say, between representing "women" (as a socio-political, feminist construct) and representing women (as gendered individuals).

The Women's Programme was threatened many times: in 1985 (McLean 1986), in 1987 when it underwent re-evaluation, and in 1990 when it was terminated - only to be reinstated under public pressure. Its budgets were cut by 5% in 1986 (L'R 1986:8), by 15% in 1988-89 and again by 15% in 1989-90 (Dinel and Bellavance 1990:47). Core funding to women's centers was "re-examined" in 1989-90, but maintained (L'R 1989:5, also Secrétariat d'Etat [1989-90]:2).

c) Using OVEP and more short-term programmes

Support for voluntary initiatives by Québec's *Ministère de l'éducation* started in 1967, and was extended to "popular" organizations in 1973 (Hamel 1991:132). Like MSSS's SOC and early Secretary of State programmes (Pal 1993), this funding was rooted in the "citizen

participation paradigm" that organized the relations of the state to civil society in the late sixties and early seventies. MEQ's OVEP programme (*Organismes volontaires d'éducation populaire*) was indebted for a large part, Hamel states, to struggles of Québec popular organizations for the recognition of "autonomous popular education" (1991:132). These struggles succeeded in opening up the programme to an increasing number of groups, and its budgets grew steadily throughout the 1970s (138, 132). By the end of the 1980s, the programme funded "popular education projects" that were geared towards socio-economically or otherwise deprived populations, that facilitated the acquisition of skills and actions of "*prise en charge collective*" and that aimed at the amelioration of the life and work conditions of these populations (MEQ [s.d.]).

Québec women's organizations used the OVEP programme since the 1970s, and "women" were an established, legitimate target of "autonomous popular education". By 1989-90, all SLSJ women's centers and one shelter were accredited to the programme and applied yearly for funds. Shelter La Chambrée and CALACS Maison ISA had applied for accreditation. Many existing activities of SLSJ women's service groups, especially information and awareness-raising could be readily funded under this programme. For example, women's center Maison au Quatre-Temps applied for the OVEP grant for training volunteers, International Women's Day organizing, its "*Mardi-choc*" series (whose topics ranged from "communication" to legal changes affecting women, and from "stress and burn-out" to "women and Aids"), as well as for specific workshops on "financial autonomy, the role of boards, sexist education, violence and oppression, and women's autonomy." (Maison au Quatre-Temps, OVEP grant application 1989-90) Women's center CCFC

funded its workshop series on "pre-menopause" with an OVEP grant, while shelter Halte-Secours used it to finance "follow-up" information and exchange sessions with ex-residents.

The margin of manoeuvre gained by using the OVEP programme was, unfortunately, financially slim and politically endangered. Grants were small. In SLSJ groups, they ranged from \$1,800 to \$6,900 in 1989-90. The OVEP grant nevertheless equated half of the MSSS grant to women's center 4, and counted for 18% of its budget. OVEP funds also made up 10% of the revenues of women's center 3. Yet, if L'R could in 1986 think about the OVEP programme as part of its three-pronged funding strategy (L'R 1986), the situation had changed at the end of the 1980s. The programme's budgets were frozen in 1985, and moratoriums were repeatedly placed and lifted on new accreditations (L'R 1986:9, 29; Favreau 1988:186, Bélanger and Lévesque 1992:726-727). All of this suggested political attempts to get rid of the programme²⁰. Finally, OVEP funding was costly in administrative work: applications and reporting forms required detailed information that bore no relation with the meagre grants (La Source, Maison au Quatre-Temps, OVEP forms).

The literature on state funding suggests that women's organizations had to accommodate themselves to the changing political whims of an array of episodic, short-lived programmes. There were a limited number of these on the "project market" at the end of the 1980s (see Diné and Bellavance 1990 for an overview).

Occasional programmes used by SLSJ shelters were the ones made

²⁰ In 1994, MEQ finally announced its intention to terminate the programme (re-named PSEPA) in April 1995 (Joannette and Bellavance 1994:19, 30).

available by political authorities in the wake of the UN "Year of the Homeless" in 1988. Two programmes offered infrastructure funds for shelters for building acquisition, renovation, or construction. Established within a Canada-Québec accord on social housing, a "*Programme de logement sans but lucratif privé*" administered by the *Société d'habitation du Québec* provided a start-up grant and assumed the responsibility for mortgage costs (Le Centre féminin, Press release). Le Centre féminin, La Chambrée, L'Aquarelle and Halte-Secours benefited from this programme. L'Auberge de l'amitié was funded through the "*Opération Refuge*" programme from Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Although two of these shelters already owned their space, state-funded home ownership for shelters helped institutionalize their presence in local communities, giving a much stronger sense of permanence and stability to these organizations and their services. Accessing these programmes also meant that funds previously allocated to rent could be diverted to other purposes.

SLSJ women's service groups, specifically La Source and Maison au Quatre-Temps, used only two other occasional programmes in the last years of the 1980s: Health Canada's Health Promotion Programme, and the programme "*Étalez votre science*" from Québec's *Ministère de l'enseignement supérieur, des sciences et de la technologie*. Both programmes required extensive strategizing on the groups' part, involving programmatic compromises in the case of the first, and a fair amount of creative work in the second.

In 1987-88 La Source received \$39,000 from Health Canada for a project on the issue of mastectomy. Before obtaining the grant, the

initial idea for the project expressed by local women who had had mastectomy and the goals of the programme had to be brought together. *"C'est un projet qui existait, quoiqu'il a fallu... s'ajuster à leurs exigences."* (La Source, Interview 6:37) "Health" issues were part of the themes traditionally prioritized by SLSJ women's centers²¹. The Health Promotion programme promised substantial grants for education and "sensibilisation", and "women" were part of the programme's "target-groups". More narrowly, Health Canada favoured health promotion projects that were clearly oriented towards actions favouring a *"prise en charge par le milieu"*. For the programme's agent, this meant that La Source's project should aim at the creation of a permanent self-help group. Local women's demands, on the other hand, were different.

La direction de la promotion de la santé ne voulait pas qu'on offre des services, alors que c'était ce que les femmes voulaient: des informations, des personnes-ressources, une place pour parler, échanger. Dans l'ensemble, je pouvais l'arranger pour que ça corresponde. (Interview 6:39)

A discursive work was required. *"Il a fallu 'broder' beaucoup. L'agent m'a dit comment couper, orienter. Ca me forçait à en parler en d'autres termes."* (37). *"J'ai changé les phrases..."* (39) Inventing (e.g., "broder"), cutting and orienting, changing terms and sentences was not in this case an innocent exercise. It meant transforming programming: modifying what was to be done in the project. La Source's solution was a compromise that proposed the creation of a self-help group, but included

²¹ Violence as a "public health issue" was also a politico-discursive frame that could potentially be mobilized by shelters and CALACS.

information sessions and exchanges as means for local women to acquire the capacities and skills necessary to run the group by themselves at the end of the eight months period. In its final form, the project turned out to be closer to the initial need identified by La Source. "*Il y avait encore beaucoup de préjugés: on se cache, on ne le dit pas. C'était partir de zéro.*" (41) Participants, Health Canada was warned in the project's preliminary report, were not ready to launch a permanent structure. La Source would gladly offer its support, but women with a mastectomy would mobilize only if and when they judged it right (La Source, Rapport d'étape du projet S.E.F.A.M.).

Accessing the programme "*Étalez votre science*" from Québec's *Ministère de l'enseignement supérieur, des sciences et de la technologie*, on the other hand, required inscribing "women" into a domain that initially seemed quite removed from the purview of local feminism. The programme was designed to support activities aimed at "diffusing information on technological and scientific culture". Community organizations were eligible. Maison au Quatre-Temps was first to spot its possibilities.

L'idée est partie du colloque mondial sur les NTR [Nouvelles technologies de reproduction] à Montréal. Deux femmes du conseil d'administration de Quatre-temps sont arrivées très emballées de là. Elles voulaient absolument monter un projet sur ça. C'était très nouveau comme sujet, pour comprendre il fallait vulgariser (...). (Maison au Quatre-Temps, FDR:10.2)

Returning with much excitement and a sense of urgency from the Montreal International Forum on the New Technologies of Human Reproduction (NTHR) organized by the *Conseil du statut de la femme* in October of 1987 (see CSF

1988), activists immediately seized the opportunity offered by the programme, and scrambled to present an application (Quatre-Temps, Interview 9:140-142).

Maison au Quatre-Temps strategically articulated the Ministry's orientations (popularizing science and technology) to the public issue that NTHR represented for women and for feminists. The objectives it formulated were the following:

*Accroître la diffusion des connaissances scientifiques et techniques auprès des femmes sur les nouvelles technologies de reproduction.
Outiller les femmes et les groupes à participer aux débats sociaux sur les questions touchant les nouvelles techniques de reproduction.* (Grant application, 1987-88)

As can be appreciated, the project was clearly geared to fit into the Ministry's agenda. At the same time, it was designed to create the conditions for local women and women's groups to engage, on a feminist basis, in the debate on NTHR. The Ministry's orientations were re-directed by Quatre-Temps towards a feminist intervention on a topical issue to the satisfaction of both parties. The grant was obtained. It was used to popularize scientific literature on NTHR as a basis for articles for local newspapers, and to organize a regional colloquium on the issue in the spring of 1989.

The success of Quatre-Temps with the programme stimulated women's center La Source. "*Quand on a su que Quatre-Temps l'avait eue [la subvention], on s'est creusées la tête ici pour essayer de trouver quelque chose.*" (La Source, Interview 1:6) The center eventually established a correspondence between feminist goals and the Ministry's aims in a project

that linked the diffusion of knowledge about new technologies to employment perspectives for women (i.e., in local industries and in computer-related fields). The project was carried out in 1989-90. It brought \$25,000, but was considered to be more of a pot-boiler by the center's activists than as having permitted any important feminist intervention.

d) Playing with/on words at Revenue Canada

Attempting to rely more on local and charitable sources in any serious way meant another encounter with "the state", more precisely with Revenue Canada. Applications for a charitable tax status fostered cold-blooded discursive strategies involving the deliberate customizing of the groups' public discourses to suit Revenue Canada's eligibility criteria. Was everything suddenly negotiable? What were the consequences of such discursive manipulations on the actors and their action?

In 1987 and 1988, efforts at diversifying their sources of revenues led women's center La Source and CALACS La Maison ISA to apply for a charitable tax number. Securing the official status of "charitable organization" would have rendered both organizations eligible for funds from *Centraide* Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean²² (United Way). They would also have been able to issue tax-deductible receipts, an additional incentive when pressing individual donors and a quasi-necessity when seeking corporate donations. Revenue Canada granted the status of "charitable

²² *Centraide* demanded a charitable tax number from its applicants since 1979 (Hamel 1991:140). As only shelter l'Aquarelle received funding from *Centraide* in 1989-90, it is reasonable to think that it alone had a charitable tax number at that time.

organization" to non-profit organizations whose objectives were directed exclusively towards "charitable ends".

Advice from other women's centers and CALACS was sought²³. "Helping women" qualified as a charitable objective. Yet the goals pursued also had to benefit the larger collectivity and, most importantly, not be "political". For most applicants, La Source and ISA learned, this meant altering the objectives of their Charter and of their Rules and Regulations.

Oui, il y en a plusieurs qui ont dû modifier leur charte, modifier les objectifs de leur charte pour qu'elle soit écrite en des termes plus charitables. Tu ne vas pas mettre des changements politiques, de lutte des classes, ou de publicité. Eux autres, c'est tous des mots... il faut que ce soit: le mieux-être, le mieux-vivre, le bien-être, la collectivité. Il faut que ça interpelle la population en général aussi. Comme ça j'ai changé ça aussi parce que dans nos règlements généraux on parlait plus de population-cible: les femmes et les enfants victimes d'agression sexuelle. Mais là quand on parlait de la prévention...on a donné une ampleur plus large pour que ça porte. (Maison ISA, Interview 4:43-44)

Without qualms, both groups set to rewrite their objectives in "charitable terms." La Source, in particular, produced at least three versions of proposed changes to its official goals, each version being more "charitable" than the other. In the spring of 1989, these goals had become:

4.1 Opérer un Centre de jour pour femmes dans le but d'aider, accueillir et soutenir les femmes seules ou isolées

²³ La Source benefited from the experience and documents of two women's centers (Cowansville and Rivière-des-Prairies); Maison ISA solicited a CALACS from Montreal.

confrontées à un problème de santé mentale ou physique.
 4.2 Mettre sur pied des activités de formation ou
 d'information dans le but d'aider les femmes en difficulté
 accueillies par le Centre. (Règlements généraux)

Was political action forfeited in this operation? Were social change objectives betrayed? For ISA and La Source, I propose, the objectives inscribed in official documents were seen as "only texts" - that is, literally, as only "words on paper". These texts, it was also understood, had no bearing on the real world - except to qualify at Revenue Canada. As such, they were highly negotiable and "manipulable". In both groups it seemed equally clear that "saying the right words" to Revenue Canada was essentially a strategy of appearances that would not affect action.

How was such a view possible? First, there was a widespread perception that no checks or controls were exerted on charitable organizations by Revenue Canada after it had granted this status (contrary to the situation documented in the United States by McCarthy, Britt and Wolfson 1991). Second, Revenue Canada itself admitted some degree of "political" activity. In a letter to La Source in May 1987, Revenue Canada mentioned:

Depuis l'addition des paragraphes 149.1(6.1) et (6.2) à la Loi de l'impôt sur le revenu, l'exercice des activités politiques accessoires aux activités de bienfaisance et de nature non-partisane est maintenant permis sous certaines conditions. (La Source, Letter from Revenue Canada Impôt)

In addition, and although goals still had to be "charitable", vocabularies were permitted in practice that introduced a certain degree of elasticity in textual fields of significations. This had important

implications for accommodating the social change objectives and "politically-oriented" activities of women's organizations. In a piece of legal advice she gave to collectives about obtaining a charitable status, St-Martin asserted:

Par exemple, plutôt que de "revendiquer vos droits à l'égalité", vous pouvez "promouvoir l'égalité"; plutôt que de "dénoncer les abus du système judiciaire", vous pouvez éduquer et informer la population". Ceci n'affecte en rien les moyens que vous choisirez de privilégier pour atteindre vos buts.
(1991:17-18, my emphasis)

Means of action, as well as the political orientations and analyses of women's groups, St-Martin further suggested, should rather be the object of more "internal" documents in which they would find a separate and distinct organizational existence (8, 18).

Maison ISA obtained charitable status in 1991. Its Charter and Rules and Regulations show that a degree of oppositional language could be retained in this exercise. In the text that was approved by Revenue Canada, ISA identified itself as a "*Centre d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel*" (note the presence of the word "struggle"), and mentioned its "ultimate goal to eradicate this type of violence". Besides "helping women" and "educating the population", ISA's objectives also included "*sensibilisation*" and "promoting legal and social changes." Still, it is the group's *Base d'unité*, referred to briefly in the Rules and Regulations, that ultimately provided the "real" basis on which orientations and means of actions were determined at ISA.

As for La Source, its efforts were unsuccessful. Each time, the goals it submitted were considered "too vague" or "not charitable enough"

by Revenue Canada. The latter even rejected goals that were *exactly similar* to those with which another women's center had previously obtained a charitable status. La Source's activists concluded that Revenue Canada was acting "in bad faith", and that "the whole thing was political" (Fieldwork diary, notes from Collective Meeting 29-06-89).

If obtaining a charitable tax number had been easier in the past, it was becoming more and more difficult for reasons that, indeed, had to do with politics. Revenue Canada had its own agenda, and had been restricting access to "charitable status" in the 1980s as part of a tighter politics of taxation that attempted to crack down on tax deductions. Based in existing jurisprudence rather than in the text of the Law (see letter to La Source, op-cit), the definition of "charitable ends" was opened to interpretations that permitted a large measure of arbitrariness on the part of the Department. Some organizations it seemed, the CALACS, the shelters, could pass the test more easily. Applications from women's centers, however, were increasingly met with obstruction.

e) Playing the state: difficulties and uncertainties

Money, however, remained a problem, even for those among SLSJ groups who "played the state" the most productively. Projects did not bring in much for operating costs. Permanent staff's salaries, in women's centers in particular, could not be fully covered.

C'est plus facile d'aller chercher de l'argent. On a développé une pratique d'aller chercher des subventions, nous autres, c'est effrayant. Sauf que, c'est pas plus facile d'avoir du salaire régulier qu'avant. On a eu à peu près 60,000\$ cette année en tout. Mais là-dessus, on n'a pas réussi à se payer plus que 20 semaines de

salaire chacune. C'est frustrant. On est là à l'année, on voudrait pouvoir avoir un salaire 11 mois par année. On est deux sur un poste et demi. (...) On n'a pas le droit de travailler sur les PDE. (...) Il faut aller chercher de l'argent ailleurs pour au moins avoir un salaire décent. 300\$ par semaine (...) c'est pas gros, tu vas pas loin avec ça. (La Source, Interview 5:81, 78, 73-74)

Applying and reporting to a variety of different institutional sources took time and energy from the staff (and from collective members in groups where these tasks were shared). Similarly, strategizing around funders' demands for tailoring projects that still accorded with the groups' feminist goals exacted a toll.

Le financement, ça prend 1/3 de ton temps: les projets, subventions, rapports... Pour moi les femmes c'est important, elles passent en premier. Quand elles viennent, elles ont des besoins, il faut répondre à leurs besoins. Quand tu dis que tu mets 1/3 de ton temps dans les subventions, c'est beaucoup. J'aimerais en faire moins, pas recommencer à chaque année: On vas-tu l'avoir, on l'auras-tu pas? C'est ça le stress que je vis. Pas avoir de politique de financement régulière. Si on en avait on pourrait avoir d'autres énergies que tu pourrais mettre ailleurs. (Maison au Quatre-Temps, Interview 6:151-152)

Les demandes de subventions, c'est un des problèmes majeurs du groupe (...). Parce que d'une année à l'autre, c'est jamais acquis. Ça freine beaucoup. Le temps, l'énergie qui est grugée à faire des demandes, à inventer des projets... Ça gruge beaucoup d'énergie, qui t'empêche souvent d'aller plus loin dans la démarche. Quand tu passes septembre, octobre, novembre à savoir qu'est-ce que le gouvernement veut comme type de projet, comment tu peux, toi, en tant que centre de femmes, demander un projet qui va te permettre de payer ton loyer et tes frais, mais en même temps avoir un impact [en accord avec] ton idéologie... Ben des fois c'est compliqué. (La Source, Interview 10:4)

Uncertainties plagued the process. Although some groups had developed an expertise and a relationship with project agents that ensured

more successful applications, project funding was never guaranteed. This uncertainty made long-term planning difficult to some degree, especially in women's centers. More importantly still, a general atmosphere of budget cuts and threats to existing programmes hovered ominously over the "grant economy" at the end of the 1980s, including over sources that had brought a much cherished core funding to SLSJ women's service groups: MSSS' SOC (see chapter 4) and the Secretary of State's Women's Programme.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued, first, that SLSJ shelters, women's centers and the CALACS all made their own decisions about whether and to what extent they would attempt to mobilize resources from state sources other than MSSS. There were, admittedly, pressures from MSSS to do so. The criteria of SOC funding included a clear injunction to diversify, while "partial" (i.e., insufficient) funds, delayed funding, and lower levels of subsidies in the case of women's centers and the CALACS in particular, created additional pressures. Yet, as I have shown, these characteristics of MSSS funding did not produce the same outcomes in the different types of groups. To say so is to point both to variations in MSSS' funding conditions and to the agency of women's service groups. Differences in funding levels and in the timing of MSSS funding intertwined with SLSJ groups' organizational requirements and prior histories regarding multi-source funding. Internal-organizational factors combined with provincial *Regroupements'* politics to give different socio-political meanings to MSSS' "injunction to diversify".

At least three different meanings were present that sometimes coexisted uneasily. Indeed, one of the goals of the fight for an adequate funding policy led by the provincial *Regroupements* at MSSS was to obtain recurring and high enough funding to allow member groups to get off the treadmill of fund-raising and short-term project funding. On the one hand, the lower levels of funding attained by women's centers and the CALACS and the organizational pressures they felt to diversify reflected the mixed success of this battle. On the other hand, both *Regroupements* of CALACS and women's centers limited their financial claims on MSSS to about two thirds of what they defined as "adequate funding". In doing so, they aligned themselves with a broader movement discourse that historically linked the preservation of "autonomy" with reliance on a diverse base of funding. MSSS took advantage of this discursive association to legitimate its "partial" funding, thus giving it a new meaning with which only the *Regroupement* of shelters took issue, breaking off with the traditional movement stance to claim, rather, "total funding and total autonomy". Diversifying, it follows, was understood by the CALACS and the women's centers both as an unavoidable necessity and as a correct strategy to gain additional resources and margin of manoeuvre. In the meantime, multi-source funding was organizationally resisted by the more affluent shelters, while MSSS' injunction to diversify was politically opposed by their *Regroupement*.

In a conjuncture where the option of relying on local and charitable sources offered only thin assurances, and where MSSS subsidies were insufficient, "playing the grant economy" was the resource mobilization strategy favoured by SLSJ women's centers throughout the 1980s, and

increasingly by the CALACS at the end of that period.

Second, I have contended that groups that deployed a strategy of diversification were able to tap successfully into the financial resources of the state to carry out a feminist agenda at the local level. "Playing the state", in this particular case, meant playing on the sectorialization and fragmentation of the Québec and Canadian states. One interpretation is to see women's service groups soliciting different "parts" of the state to support different aspects of their work. Witness the strategy of L'R, which projected subsidizing services through MSSS, collective actions through the Secretary of State, and public education through OVEP (L'R 1986). Yet, this analysis applies neither to shelters nor to the CALACS whose activities were almost fully covered by the SOC grant, and it only partly accounts for the case of women's centers. The point is: the "sectorialization" of the state was only partial. Although sectorial mandates differed, fundable activities of programmes such as the SOC, OVEP and the Women's programme considerably overlapped in practice, and employment-oriented programmes could be easily redirected towards organizational goals. The "fragmentation effect" produced by the sectorialized state was, in this sense and in this context, incomplete. What fragmentation did exist was also resisted by women's groups. At the end of the 1980s shelters and women's centers were both fighting at MSSS for the recognition of their "global approach". L'R was opposing the Secretary of State's diminutive conception of "appropriate feminist action" in women's centers.

A more adequate understanding would be to contend that women's service groups capitalized on the existence of these overlaps, appealing

to the different parts of the state whose programmes could be re-signified in feminist terms and drawn on to fuel their projects. Ventures by shelters and the CALACS into the grant economy show they were able to pursue their own agendas. They "played the state" to reinforce their intervention on what they had defined as their core issues (conjugal violence and sexual assault). They mostly sought outside funding for objects that were covered, although insufficiently, by the terms of the SOC. For example, personnel for regular operations (La Chambrée: PDE, Travaux communautaires), training of activists (ISA: Secretary of State) service development (ISA: PDE for group intervention), and outreach development (ISA: Secretary of State and DEFIs) were all subsidized in this manner. They also seized opportunities to support operational costs that were not admissible at MSSS (shelters: infrastructure grants for building and acquisition), and appealed to other sources to finance specific activities that MSSS refused to fund. For instance, shelter Halte-Secours sought contributions from religious communities and its local MP to finance its "intervention with children". They also reneged on programmes that would lead them astray of the type of action they were willing and ready to undertake (see ISA and the Women's Programme).

Women's centers played the state in more complex ways, partly because they were polyvalent and multi-issue groups, which gave to their project a much broader scope, and because multi-source funding was structurally entrenched as their survival strategy. High on the agenda of women's centers was the funding of their day-to-day operations. MSSS funded direct services (helping women). Everyday outreach and awareness-raising activities were funded through combining the SOC grant (for issues

that could be claimed within the "health and social service" field), core funding from the Women's Programme (for the issues prioritized by state feminism), and OVEP grants. Representation and advocacy were covered in an overlapping manner by core funding from the SOC and the Women's Programme. Additional personnel for office and organizing work was obtained from the *Travaux communautaires* and PDE programmes. Funds for special projects were requested from the PDE programme, the Women's Programme and more occasional programmes, these projects being pursued as much for their intrinsic value as feminist interventions than for their contribution to the very existence of the centers.

From the evidence presented in this chapter, it can be concluded that playing the grant economy allowed SLSJ women's service groups to mobilize state resources for the pursuit of feminist politics. The thesis of the "enabling state" is supported. A different question is that of the "channelling" of these politics into particular programmatic directions. I will discuss this issue in the conclusion of this dissertation.

Playing the grant economy, still, had costs in terms of time, administrative work, uncertainty and competition. It is these costs that the three *Regroupements* worked to lessen through their battle for funding policies for shelters, CALACS and the women's centers, this with varying degrees of success as the different funding levels that were secured at MSSS illustrate. In the context in which local women's movement service groups operated in the 1980s, there were no practicable choices to realize a feminist agenda other than struggling for inclusion and for adequate funding policies, or strategize to "play the state" and bear with the associated costs.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

This study has focused on the fate of feminist politics in ten state-funded local women's service groups in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean (Québec) in the 1980s as a means to understanding one of the main forms taken by the Québec women's movement in that period. For the dominant strand in the literature on state-funded women's movement organizations in Québec, Canada, and in the United States, the story of women's services is one of the demise of an initially radical, politicized feminist project under the corrosive influence of state funding. Feminist/women's movement politics have been conservatized, compromised, and thwarted, ending (or very nearly) transformative or emancipatory collective action.

No doubt this story can be verified in many empirical cases. Yet, in the case of Québec services, I propose a very different, alternative reading. This reading rests on conceptualizations of "feminism", of "the state" and of "movement politics" informed by current debates in feminist theory, in feminist and non-feminist theories of the state, and in social movement studies. It is thus "differently located" in theoretical terms. Transformations in current social theory, as well as my own experience as an activist and as a researcher whose fieldwork suggested different conclusions, have to be credited for such a differently positioned theorizing.

From this position and on the basis of the empirical evidence presented above (that is: interviews and documents from the ten MSSS-funded local women's service groups of Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean and their three provincial *Regroupements*), I propose the following re-visionings of

the story of Québec women's service groups, and of their politics.

First, accounts that see the initial project of Québec women's services as stemming solely from "radical" and "politicized" feminist orientations are inaccurate. Rather, initial representations of the project in SLSJ local women's service groups drew on the wide field of grievances and discourses associated with *la condition féminine* to produce local versions of feminism that, if not already "politicized", nevertheless provided political foundations for action. Doing direct services by "providing help to women in difficulty" was the *raison d'être* of shelters and of the rape unit, while the nascent feminism of women's centers was expressed in a multi-issue, polyvalent repertoire. Organizing did not encapsulate the critique of hierarchy, professionalism or bureaucracy associated with radical feminism. While the historical presence of "radical" and more politicized groups in the early days of women's services cannot be denied (see Brodeur et al. 1982, Beaudry 1984, D. Lamoureux 1988, 1990, Michaud 1995), this case shows that they were not alone in undertaking a project of services articulated to feminism. Such a view is corroborated by documents from the *Regroupements* as well as by secondary sources (in particular but not exclusively by the work of Beaudry 1984). The early history of women's service organizations in Québec should rather be analysed as the history of the constitution of a diversity of feminist projects, constructed in various ways by women from different origins and perspectives within imaginaries of emancipation that were expressed with more or less political sophistication or force.

Second, the ways and the directions in which the politics and practices of women's services have been transformed through the 1980s have

not been those generally claimed by the literature. True, by the end of the 1980s, shelters, CALACS and women's centers had become increasingly state funded. In SLSJ, 90% to 99% of the financial resources of women's services came from the state. MSSS provided between 73% and 91% of the funding of the shelters, 76% of the funding of the CALACS, and between 31% and 57% of the funding of women's centers (see Chapter 8, Table 2). Renewable "three-year", standardized funding from MSSS was won by shelters in 1987, women's centers in 1989, CALACS in 1990. Yet, although increasingly state funded, women's services had also become in many ways increasingly, rather than less "politicized", and more clearly identified with "feminism".

In the state-funded women's services of Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean at the end of the 1980s, public identification and commitment to "feminism" was the norm. "Feminist" was the label women's service groups used to describe their projects, their action and their intervention. Although diverse and composite, especially in women's centers, the local versions of feminism that were produced were less articulated to the practicality of "women's needs" and more to analyses of "the position of women" that focused on gender relations of power. The substance of goals was in many ways broader and more politicized.

Under the label of *intervention féministe*, an approach to service work was adopted that aimed at transforming individual women's subjectivities (their lived sense of self and conducts) by putting the blame on systemic factors and by making women, individually and as part of a collectivity, into active agents of their own circumstances. Although engagement in outreach remained variable, especially on the part of

shelters, "information", "prevention", "sensitization" and "awareness-raising" were perceived as intrinsic to a feminist struggle for change, and regular forms of outreach were structured in the action of SLSJ groups. Advocacy was newly invested, notably through participation in provincial *Regroupements*, in regional coalitions, and in "concerted action" with representatives of local and regional public agencies. In women's centers and in the CALACS, in particular, advocacy work had become officially part of the project. More generally, goals, preferred means of action and practices of intervention were increasingly aligned on definitions collectively agreed on at the level of the provincial *Regroupements*.

Organizationally, four of the ten women's service groups were structured according to modified versions of the collective model. This transformation was part of their stronger identification with feminism. All women's services, including collective-led ones, displayed minimal bureaucratic features. Some formalization of administrative and organizational procedures existed, along with a specialization and division of labour that was weaker in collectives and stronger in board-led organizations. A combination of paid and unpaid labour from a small pool of relatively educated staff, formal leadership and other activists ensured their operation. Finally, a number of women's service groups, notably women's centers and the CALACS engaged in "playing the state", successfully mobilizing financial resources from different funding agencies in support of a feminist-oriented agenda.

"Doing services" in MSSS-funded service groups was, thus, and in the many senses of the term, "doing politics". Rather than conforming to a

storyline of de-politicization and demise of radicality, the transformations of women's services in the 1980s are better described, I argue, as a story of the coming together of groups from different origins and perspectives around increasingly shared and politicized projects identified with feminism. These transformations are better pictured as a convergence of organizations around shared projects based on a socio-political analysis of "the position of women", and on interventions located on the terrains of individual women's subjectivities, public representations and conducts, movement organizing and public decision-making.

What are the internal and external conditions that explain the direction of these changes in the politics of women's services, and the specific trajectories of individual local women's groups in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean? What, in particular, of the issue of "state funding"?

The central thesis defended in this dissertation is that the politics of local women's services in the 1980s were shaped by a combination of internal factors - i.e., factors related to organizational and movement histories and choices through which women's collective agency is expressed - and by external factors related to the context, conditions and requirements of state funding. In the case of Québec women's services, this combination of factors intertwined historically. Internal and external factors were partially mutually constitutive, movement action contributing to shape state funding, and this funding contributing to shape movement activity. In the story of the genesis, constitution, and transformations of the politics and practices of women's service groups in the 1980s, I have also argued, internal factors were central: the effects

of women's agency predominated. Women's service groups were on the whole, individually and collectively, more creative of their own organizational histories than constrained, "even if real effects of institutionalized practices and structural constraints exist[ed]" (Jenson 1991:50). Because of the complexity in which state funding and women's agency entwined, it is useful to review some of the nuances of this argument.

The "projects of women's services" emerged from modernized representations of "the feminine" (i.e., women-as-women). The effervescence surrounding the emergence of the contemporary women's movement created the impetus for a dynamic expansion of women's organizing in Québec's regions. In Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, women from different socio-economic backgrounds and organizational experiences drew on a series of themes ("equality", "autonomy" and "*épanouissement*") and issues (battery, rape, divorce, women's rights, women's work) that were popularized in everyday discourse as one of the outcomes of broader movement activity. The constitution of initial representations of the project and action repertoires in SLSJ groups, I argue, was a "movement affair" that took the form of a selective appropriation by local women of diverse elements of discourses about "women" and "emancipation" associated with the newly popularized field of "*la condition féminine*". Creating self-managed services for women was part of identifying with this larger movement. Decisions to demand state funding were anchored in very real difficulties to staff, on a volunteer basis, projects that relied only on small numbers of dedicated local women.

State funding did play a part in the genesis of these projects. At the organizational level, it shaped organizational forms by requiring

legal incorporation, the formation of boards, and the development of bookkeeping, data-generating, and reporting work processes. At the programmatic level, it provided a series of financially-supported terrains for collective action. In particular, the development of local services (Employment and Immigration Canada's PDCC and PSCC programmes, MSSS' SOC), of popular education (MEQ's OVEP programme), and the promotion of the status of women (early Secretary of State's Women's Programme) were facilitated.

These particular "funded terrains" are part of state projects that owe, at least in part, to movement activity¹. Pal (1993), in particular, argues that the Women's Programme was a response to women's movement claims; Hamel (1991) makes similar suggestions about the role of the popular movement in shaping the OVEP programme. The action of Québec popular and community movements helped create an early tradition of "state funding", and the development of a strategy of state-funded "communautarization" at MSSS. Directly involved in the unfolding of MSSS' project of restructuring, the political struggles of women's services and their allies also had a constitutive effect on the politics and protocols in which their funding was embedded.

The battles for funding, for recognition and for autonomy fought at MSSS by the provincial *Regroupements* of women's service groups had the effect of shaping the institutional terrain (the SOC programme, the 1985

¹ These state projects had their own political histories and expressed the outcomes of political representations and struggles by various actors. My claim is that movement activity played a role in their constitution, although movements' part in these politics, their contribution to shaping these particular projects, and the consequences of the latter for movements themselves varied.

Politique d'aide aux femmes violentées, and later terms of funding) in the direction of their claims. These struggles led to a number of significant inclusions regarding possibilities to pursue and to further develop feminist politics in MSSS-funded service groups. Standardized funding, although insufficient, was granted and progressively entrenched. Survival was ensured, competition for funds between groups of the same type was alleviated, and women's services gained, if not complete assurances regarding their future, at least an organizational stability that carried them through the following years (and to this very day).

The 1985 *Politique d'aide* incorporated a feminist analysis that identified gender relations of power as the source of conjugal violence and rape, and demanded action on both "women's practical needs" and collective representations and behaviours. The approaches to services developed in women's organizations were legitimized, and women's services were recognized as "autonomous partners". The inclusive and non-prescriptive stance of the *Politique d'aide*, the operational character of SOC funding, and the inclusion of the "global approach" of women's centers meant that space did exist, within the terms of MSSS funding, for shelters, CALACS and women's centers to develop their own balance of services, outreach, and advocacy work. Finally, SOC's few and loose administrative requirements were also consistent with MSSS' traditions of "respecting the autonomy" of *le communautaire*.

The stories of SLSJ local women's service groups highlight the main influences responsible for the transformations of the project of women's services. The politicization, broadening, and explicit identification with "feminism" of local service groups' discursive constructions, action

repertoires, and organizational forms occurred mostly under a conjunction of "internal" factors. Activities and day-to-day work with women, changes in "the demand", reactions from the community, and internal discussions fostered a reflexive process of organizational learning and change in local groups. The arrival of new activists with an overt sympathy for feminism and previous experience with feminist organizing also played an important role in these transformations. Contacts with other women's organizations, in particular within the provincial *Regroupements*, created a movement milieu in which new experiments in feminism, such as "feminist intervention" or "the collective model", circulated and could be more easily appropriated. In this process of redefinition, local activists made their own decisions and showed different "political sensibilities" in the ways in which they transformed (or not) their representations, action repertoire, organizational forms, and funding strategies.

The example of SLSJ service groups also shows that despite the diversity in the ways and intensity in which initial projects were transformed locally, a process of uniformization was at work. The provincial *Regroupements* of shelters, CALACS and women's centers were important sites of unification around political strategies, targets, and provincially defined projects which included politicized goals, a clear identification with feminism, and a stronger investment in activities of outreach and advocacy. Expressed in the CALACS' *Base d'unité*, in the *Cadres de référence* produced by L'R and in the *Charte d'intervention des maisons*, these projects created new, intermediate "structures of accountability" to which different degrees of compliance were required. Adhesion to the *Base d'unité* was a condition for membership in the

Regroupement provincial des CALACS. Less conditional, the projects defined at L'R and the *Regroupement* of shelters fostered "trajectories of alignment" in local member groups, on which the latter progressed at their own, chosen rate.

State funding, I have argued throughout this dissertation, facilitated the deployment of such politicized, overtly feminist projects in women's service groups. Funds from a variety of state agencies financially supported the emergence of women's services, and ensured their survival, maintenance, and development. The feminist orientations of the *Politique d'aide* and of the Secretary of State's Women's Programme legitimated and facilitated the adoption in local service groups of socio-political analyses of violence, of feminist approaches to services, and of actions aimed at improving the situation of women.

On the other hand state funding affected the ways in which organizational forms and processes were transformed in funded groups over the 1980s. Legal conditions associated with the incorporation Law shaped the collectives developed in women's services by requiring a formalization of decision-making procedures and the presence of officers. Administrative requirements for data collection, bookkeeping, reporting and authorizing procedures, although relatively lax on the whole, progressively increased, and were multiplied by the adoption of strategies of multi-source funding. While movement traditions and choices, as well as internal imperatives can also explain the development of "modified collectives", the maintenance of boards, and the expansion of procedures in local women's service groups, state funding played a non-negligible role. Yet, the administrative and organizational autonomy defended by the *Regroupements* remained untouched.

The direction of women's services remained in the hand of women from local communities; no-charge services and the confidentiality of files were upheld; staff credentials were not imposed, and the practice of services (client base, admissions, discharges, service standards) was not regulated.

What of the question of the "channelling" of the programming of funded groups? The notion that funding channels the programming of funded groups in particular directions is shared outside the literature on Canadian and American women's movement organizations. McCarthy, Britt and Wolfson (1991) come to similar conclusions in a study of the effects on U.S. social movement organizations of IRS regulations on tax-exempt status. Revenue Canada, I have argued in Chapter 8, operated differently and did not have this effect. Nevertheless, popular and community organizations in Québec, Favreau (1988) and Shragge and Létourneau (1987) argue in turn, often find themselves forced to transform their objectives and shift their orientations to fit the changing and increasingly precise priorities of funders. However, Hamel aptly points out, to the diversity of the community sector corresponds a diversity in their more "sectorial" funding contexts, which calls for closer inquiries (1991:135).

The sectorial context in which women's service groups found their funding was, for one, more stable. They benefited from two main sources of core funding, MSSS and the Women's programme. Although programmes were sometimes revised, as was the Women's Programme in 1987, the main funding sources used by women's service groups did not change priorities yearly. Employment-oriented programmes had no programmatic priorities to conform to. OVEP's understanding of "popular education" was extremely broad. While

it can be argued that MSSS' discourse of "services" reinforced the service orientations of local funded groups, doing so misses three important points. First, it skirts the fact that "direct help" (i.e., services) was central in the initial projects of shelters and of rape crisis center in SLSJ as well as in Québec. Second, it ignores the largely inclusive, and operational nature of MSSS funding. Third, it fails to consider that this discourse did not prevent individual shelters and CALACS from developing a stronger engagement in outreach and advocacy, nor did it preclude individual women's centers from concentrating less on direct services, and more on other dimensions of their action repertoire in the name of their "global approach". Women's collective agency and feminist discourses were also at work.

The little interest shown by shelters for multi-source funding and the fact that shelters and CALACS that played the grant economy used their margin of manoeuvre mostly to supplement a programming that what was, save rare exceptions, already funded at the SOC also demonstrates that the agenda of shelters and CALACS could be met at MSSS. There were monetary constraints to be sure, but no need for programmatic compromises. Speaking of "channelling through funders' priorities", I would argue, is inappropriate in this case².

Women's centers present a different case. Their project was much broader in scope, and encapsulated the potential to articulate "the position of women" to a wide variety of actions. This meant that beyond

² This is not to say that any kind of feminist politics could be enabled, or to deny the effect of a hegemonic political culture or of movement traditions on the styles and types of action that could be undertaken, but rather to make the different, and more limited claim that funding protocols did not channel the programming of shelters and CALACS.

ensuring continuity and supporting operations, the feminist agenda of women's centers was more fluid and flexible than that of the CALACS and shelters - and also in a sense more permeable. Diverse factors and influences operated to shape this agenda in practice. Organizational pressure to secure outside funding led women's centers, first towards employment development grants, and then towards a multi-source funding strategy in which MSSS was initially only one part. In this process, L'R and local women's centers entered into a dialogical process of definition of their mission, locating themselves at the same time on and outside MSSS's priorities and discursive terrain (Chapter 5), and on and outside the feminist terrain constituted by the Women's Programme (Chapter 8).

To some extent, the agenda of women's centers was channelled by MSSS' "health and social services" priorities. It was also channelled to some degree by the particular feminist issues and action repertoire favoured by the Women's Programme. Yet, as a whole women's centers' agenda also went beyond these, as the centers strove to open up both terrains to a larger ensemble of issues and activities in the name of "developing women's autonomy"; as they played the terms of their inclusion at MSSS against the Secretary's; and as they found additional support mostly in the non-programmatically restrictive employment-oriented and OVEP programmes, in local contributions and in the volunteer work of their core activists. Although there was indeed a measure of "channelling" by MSSS and the Women's Programme, the projects of local women's centers, I have argued, remained positioned across audiences in a way that ensured they would continue to outflank the priorities of their main funders.

Implications for theory (and practice)

I have presented an analysis of the feminist politics of state-funded local women's services grounded in a series of theoretical revisions of our conceptions of feminist politics, of the state, and of the political in movement activity. What, in turn, are the implications of this dissertation for a further understanding of "feminism", "the state", and social movement politics?

This analysis makes a number of contributions to the field of social movement theory. First, the study provides a better understanding of the neglected issue of state funding of movement organizations. In particular, it suggests that the extent to which institutional support is "fleeting", "politically conditioned", and "channels" movement activity varies. Among the factors that account for these variations are, on the one side, the degree to which movements succeed in "shaping the state" and in inscribing their claims in policy and, on the other side, the variety of institutional traditions and projects among sectorialized state agencies regarding their relationship to civil society organizations. An institutionalist analysis of funding protocols is required, as well as a socio-political analysis of their genesis. For "the state", it appears, does not occupy a clear-cut and fixed place in its relationship to movements. Finally, how movement actors strategize around different funders' agendas, localize and re-signify their priorities, and juggle "the sectorialized state" to serve movement projects has to be part of such an inquiry.

Second, this dissertation brings a theoretical contribution to our understanding of the processes through which the alternative

representations of movements are "fed into the politics of everyday life" and potentially achieve their goals of change. Drawing on the Foucault influenced theorizing of Schild, Rose, and Fairclough, I propose that part of movements' "politics of influence in civil society" consists in attempts at transforming people's subjectivities. This work, which operates on "the self" at both the levels of representations and conducts, derives its maximum efficacy from the extent to which it succeeds in "in-folding" changes through very technical and practical routines. This avenue is promising for a further understanding, for example, of the work of "consciousness-raising" in C-R groups of the women's movement, as well as for a further analysis of the accounts of "conversions" in religious movements (for example, Gerlach and Hine 1970) and other forms of "personal transformations" noted in social movement studies.

Third, my work contributes to social movement inquiry on the role of coalitions, an area in which research has been surprisingly scarce to date (see Hathaway and Meyer 1993-94, Meyer and Whittier 1994, Weir 1995). The constitution of women's service groups as unified collective actors at the provincial level, and the struggles and negotiations led by these provincial *Regroupements* were decisive in obtaining standardized (if insufficient), funding under conditions that "respected local groups' autonomy". The story of SLSJ service groups also shows the part played by these *Regroupements* in the "social construction of protest". The *Regroupements* were an important site of the definition of shared projects, modes of intervention (re.: *l'intervention féministe*), and organizational feminisms. *Regroupement*-sponsored training and the creation of "intermediate structures of accountability" played an active role in the

dissemination of these forms of collective action, and in their adoption by local member groups.

Finally, this study raises the question of the "institutionalization" of movement politics. Like many "new movements" of the 1970s, the women's movement in Québec has endured, and matured. State-funded women's services have become the institutionalized "associates" of the state in providing for women's welfare. They have formalized their modes of decision-making, their procedures, and intervention techniques. Their projects and analyses have also become more and more closely aligned on visions of feminism defined at the level of the *Regroupements*, producing a relative standardization of "women's movement politics" in women's services. They have also increasingly engaged, individually and as coalition members, in the field of formal politics.

Yet, their "partnership" with the state, the formalization of their functioning, the relative fixation of their discourses and practices, and the normalization of their political participation have not been accompanied by greater conservatization, and de-politicization. While the view of institutionalization as leading to the eventual demise of protest is still widespread, current expressions of institutionalization in movements challenge our understandings of the relationships between movements, institutions and change (Maheu 1995). As a major transformation of the object of social movement studies, the institutionalization that accompanies, in various ways, the maturing of the so-called "new movements" is one that urgently begs for more scholarly attention (Ferree and Martin 1995, Freeman 1995, Maheu 1995, Jenkins 1997, Zald 1997).

What are the implications of this dissertation for our understanding

of the state? First, this study presents a strong case for the idea that movements can shape the state. MSSS' project of restructuring, the *Politique d'aide aux femmes violentées*, and the SOC programme all showed marks of the activity and politics of representation of Québec's popular, community, and women's movements. The incorporation of women's services as state-funded, but autonomous community organizations at MSSS, as well as the inclusions, mediated or not, of feminist analyses, approaches, and *Regroupements'* claims support the thesis that movement actors may "make a difference" in the institutional definition of the proximate terms and general conditions of their funding.

Making a difference, indeed, is contingent on the historical establishment of balances of forces in particular political and administrative conjunctures. Yet, the productive role played by movement actors in the constitution of state projects, policies and funding programmes shows that the latter should be envisioned as having not only a regulatory, but also an emancipatory potential³. A definite "space for doing women's movement politics" was inscribed in the institutional forms that framed the funding of women's service groups at MSSS. Such a space also existed - albeit under different terms and as a result of different socio-political processes - at the Secretary of State's Women's Programme, and in the programmes of other funding agencies. In state-funded local service groups of the SLSJ, feminist politics were pursued "with" the state and "despite" its sectorial orientations and administrative requirements. Even more interestingly, feminist politics were sometimes

³ I owe this formulation to Orloff (1993:305), who uses it in a more general way for social policy.

pursued "with" and "despite" a state whose agencies increasingly took the colour of feminism.

Another consequence of treating movement struggles as constitutive of the institutional reality of the state is to stress the recent permeability of "the state" to feminist claims. Boundaries blur between "movement" and "state" as feminist agencies and feminist professionals act in official capacity, from their location in the state, to promote feminist politics. As this study shows, the conditions in which civil society-based women's movement actors pursued their projects were affected in various ways by this turn of events. Support from the *Conseil du statut de la femme* was instrumental in the gains made by the *Regroupements* at MSSS. Yet, the Council's recommendations favoured a MSSS co-ordinated, rather than a women's movement-based network of services, with implications for the type of pressure that was put on MSSS, and that resulted in the *Politique d'aide aux femmes violentées*. Feminist social work professionals at MSSS played an important role in the articulation, acceptance and promotion by the Ministry of *l'intervention féministe*. The development and diffusion of "feminist approaches" in women's groups was thereby facilitated. Finally, financial support for feminist activity in the Secretary of State's Women's Programme enabled the politics of local women's service organizations. At the same time, however, it did channel their action towards a particular understanding of "feminist politics".

This dissertation raises the issue of the place and role of "feminism in the state" in the "movement/state" relationship. State feminist agencies and femocrats are positioned in a way in which they can push for changes on behalf of women and women's organizations. Yet,

"feminism in the state" is imprinted not only by feminism, but by the particular bureaucratic-administrative modes of operation favoured by states and their sectorial agencies. Finally, the institutionalization of feminism in the state is always the institutionalization of particular brands of feminism, placed in position of power vis-a-vis other versions. Both feminist theorizing and feminist political practice need a better understanding of the ways in which this double allegiance of state feminism, and its position of power in "conflicts over feminisms" can play out in the engagements between "state-based" and "civil-society based" feminist actors.

Finally, how does this dissertation inform our understanding of "feminism"? I have argued in Chapter 2 that what counts as "feminism" and "feminist politics" cannot be ascribed from ideal-typical or ever-already constituted positions. Drawing on recent post-structuralist feminist propositions, I rather proposed to see feminism as a "contested terrain". Such a terrain can in my view only support a theoretically "minimalist" conception of feminism (i.e., taking "women" as a position from which to act within political imaginaries of emancipation). Understanding "feminism" and "feminist politics", it follows, means taking into account the diversity of ways in which "what it means to be a woman" and associated "imaginaries of emancipation" have been defined in different places and times. In this sense, the work of this dissertation shows how "feminism", as developed and practised in local women's service groups in Québec in the 1980s, was rooted in a diversity of local appropriations of feminism rather than in some pre-set canon.

Of this diversity, traditional categories of hyphenated feminisms

(i.e., liberal-, socialist-, radical-, cultural-, etc.) give only a sketchy, if not unduly crude account. As scholars familiar with field situations have noted (e.g., Buechler 1990:119), the feminism of movement organizations does not let itself be categorized as easily as the (necessarily) more internally consistent products of formalized feminist theory. Rather, such categories often blur as organizations concurrently appropriate disparate elements from different available gender-based and feminist discourses. Can we label the feminism of Le Centre Féminin, where technocratic practices of service intervention were coupled with a socio-political analysis focusing on "the relations of domination of men over women"? Can we label the feminism of Maison ISA, with its collective and its denunciation of patriarchy (both conventionally indexed to "radical feminism"), and a commitment to changing institutions from within (traditionally associated to "liberal" forms of feminism)? Can we label the feminism of the CCFC, where goals of "struggling against domination and exploitation" co-existed with "reflecting the needs of local women" and with an agenda of workshops featuring sessions on "affective autonomy," "discrimination at work," and "stress management"? (CCFC, "Calendrier des activités 1990-91") Should we even try to categorize? And what purpose would such a labelling serve?

McBride Stetson and Mazur (1995) criticize the use of hyphenated feminisms in these contexts. Such a practice, they argue, "overlooks gender-based ideologies that are politically important but do not fit on the list" (as for example, the historically powerful notion of *épanouissement de la femme* in Québec feminism). It also "denies the right of women in various [locales] to set forth their own versions of feminist

agendas." (1995:15) Indeed, one of the most striking contributions of this dissertation is to reveal the composite character of the local versions of feminism developed in SLSJ women's service groups. At first dizzying, perceptions of imports and inconsistencies have to be forgotten in favour of an appreciation of the way elements thought as disparate become re-articulated, and become part of local versions that open up as well as they hinder avenues for present and future movement politics.

Accepting this diversity in the meaning of "feminism" means that there is little firm theoretical ground for adjudicating between what is a "truly feminist practice" and what is not. It is important to recognize that part of the discursive histories of such "labelling practices" have been contests over the power to define "good" and "bad" feminist strategies. Diversity means that debates over what constitutes "correct" or "desirable" feminist strategies and politics are largely unavoidable. It also means that these debates cannot be solved by doctrinal or fundamentalist arguments. Moreover, current literature on women's organizations, as well as the work of this dissertation suggests that we should reopen the issue of "essentially feminist" forms of collective action. Anti-statism, anti-professionalism, informality and collectivists models should be treated as they are: as historically specific feminist constructions that did certain things (but not others) for the goals of the organizations that adopted them. Re-opening these debates involves re-examining both the limits and possibilities entailed in these strategies for the attainment of movement goals, keeping in mind the diversity and changing character of the latter within concrete "feminist/women's movements".

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Auberge: L'Auberge de l'amitié de Roberval (shelter)

Statistics 1989-90

Responses to FDR survey, December 1990

Pamphlet in use in 1990

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CCFC: Centre communautaire féminin de Chibougamau (women's center)

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Calendrier des activités 1990-91

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Rapport d'activités et statistiques (1990) (Annual Report 1989-90)

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 Interview 2 (1989)
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 Fieldwork diary (Joan Simard), May-June 1989
Feuille de route pour les militantes et collaboratrices de la Maison
ISA (volunteer hours worksheet, in use in 1989)
 Responses to *Femmes en tête* survey, march 1989
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Letter of invitation to official opening (1981)
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 Pamphlet (1982)
 Letter to women's center La Source from Revenue Canada Impôt,
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Règlements généraux (in use in 1989)
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 Grant applications to MSSS
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Minutes, November 15-16, 1982
 Interview 1988
 Interview 6 (1989)
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IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)

APPLIED IMAGE, Inc
1653 East Main Street
Rochester, NY 14609 USA
Phone: 716/482-0300
Fax: 716/288-5989

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