Women's Community Organizing Experiences in Sudbury, Ontario: An Exploratory Look

by

Ginette Lafrenière

School of Social Work
McGill University, Montreal

March, 2005

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-21665-1
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-21665-1

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examines sixteen women's understanding of their experiences in community organizing in a northern urban context. While most front-line community organizing is done by women, there is a paucity of research giving voice to their particular realities. Similarly, there is little information describing community organizing in a northern urban context. The study's conceptual frameworks draw on theory and research from rural and northern social work, activist mothering, feminist social policy, diversity and exclusion, and the social construction of identities. It follows a feminist research paradigm. The study illustrates women community organizers' sense of place and their perceptions of the politics of language, cultural and linguistic tensions, and the influences of northern economic and geographic realities. The research findings demonstrate the processes of community organizing in a northern setting, community organizers' demoralization because of increasingly less generous social policy environments, and the challenges of racial and linguistic divisions in community organizing. The study challenges the urban lens dominating social work education and highlights the legitimacy of community organizing within social work education. It discusses future research possibilities for cross-cultural community organizing involving minority francophone and ethnocultural populations as well as the relativity of notions of oppression within francophone spheres.

Résumé

Cette étude qualitative examine la perception de l'intervention communautaire à travers l'expérience de seize femmes vivant au Nord-est de la province de l'Ontario. Bien qu'une grande part de l'intervention communautaire soit exécutée par les femmes, il y a une pénurie de recherche sur les réalités de celles-ci et plus particulièrement dans un contexte urbain et nordique. Le cadre conceptuel de cette étude s'appuie sur les théories de recherche en travail social dans un contexte rural et nordique, sur l'intervention communautaire des mères de familles, sur les politiques sociales féministes, l'exclusion et la diversité culturelle ainsi que la construction sociale d'identités multiples. Elle suit un paradigme de recherche féministe. De façon spécifique, cette étude s'intéresse à l'espace qu'occupent les intervenantes communautaires, ainsi que leurs perceptions des tensions politiques relatives à la langue, la culture, et les influences exercées par le contexte géographique et économique du Nord-est de l'Ontario. Les résultats de la recherche illustrent les processus d'intervention collective dans un contexte urbain/nordique, le sentiment démoralisant des intervenantes communautaires face à un environnement politique et social de moins en moins généreux, ainsi que les défis liés aux divisions raciales et linguistiques en intervention communautaire. Cette étude met en question l'approche urbaine qui domine l'enseignement du travail social et tente d'illustrer l'importance de l'intervention communautaire au sein des programmes des écoles de travail social. Aussi, ce projet discute des possibilités de recherches futures sur l'intervention communautaire inter et intra culturelle entre les minorités francophones dites de 'souche' et les Nouveaux arrivants francophones, de même qu'elle explore la notion d'oppression au sein des espaces minoritaires francophones.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The production of this thesis has been a journey which has been achieved through the generosity of many people. I would first and foremost like to thank the strong women who informed this research and comforted me in my belief that there is value in the way that I was shaped as a community organizer.

Heartfelt thanks are given to my director, Professor Eric Shragge for his gentle encouragement and belief in my work. I will always be grateful to him for encouraging me to leave my hometown and give Montreal a try. To Professor Linda Davies I owe a debt of gratitude for teaching me the value of qualitative research as a means to lend a voice to those who deserve to be heard. I am also grateful for the encouragement of Professor Jean Panet-Raymond, who understands the nuances and challenges of minority Francophones and does so with compassion and sustained enthusiasm.

I wish to thank the Sudbury activists, community organizers and professors from Laurentian University who took the time to guide my reflections about my work. Their generosity is a testimony to the sense of community which is the foundation of this project. Special thanks are also attributed to my friends and colleagues at Wilfrid Laurier University and in Kitchener-Waterloo, who have been most gracious in creating a space for me in order that I may continue to do further research relative to community organizing.

I am deeply grateful for the Hazeldine Smith Bishop Scholarship and the Margaret Gillett Awards received from McGill University, and to the Canadian Co-operative Association, the Canadian Labor Congress and the Baxter Ricard Foundation for financial support. The peace of mind that one has when one can pay the bills while doing doctoral work is immeasurable. Special thanks are also warmly attributed to Sue, Chantal and Maxine for technical support.

Many thanks are also extended to my family who often supported this journey through much appreciated childcare. Finally, but most importantly, I wish to thank my partner Lamine Diallo, who, at the same time was grappling with his own doctoral work, supported me in ways which I cannot begin to describe. Life is too short for me to thank him for all of his love and support.

Ginette Lafrenière

To my beautiful son, Issa Djibril Diallo who has journeyed with me on this project since the beginning. Thank you so much for being such a good little boy and letting me get through this endeavor.

"Always, when I looked out, I stubbornly believed there was something in all that nothing" (Rossiter, 1988).

INTRODUCTION

During the course of my doctoral studies in Social Work at McGill University, I often reflected on my experiences as a community organizer living and working in Sudbury, Ontario. I felt that there was merit in the way in which I was shaped as an organizer. I came to this conclusion when I compared my experiences with those of my colleagues who were, in my eyes, seasoned and professional community organizers. While discussing community issues, I could identify with many of the challenges which they had experienced within their various geographic and social locations.

In my awestruck respect for my organizing colleagues, many of whom were women, I began to reflect on what my practice meant for me and how I had experienced my work as an organizer. As a student enrolled within a school of social work, questions regarding the legitimacy of community organizing as an area of study invaded my thoughts every single time I attended class. I questioned the following: Why does community organizing appear to be undervalued within the context of social work practice? Why is organizing work undervalued in our society? My questions inevitably brought me back to Sudbury. What was my experience as an organizer like in Sudbury and how did this experience differ with those of my colleagues in Montreal? How did my family life influence my organizing practice? Did the presence of a strong union movement in Sudbury influence the ways in which my colleagues and I engaged in community

organizing practice? Who were the women whom I knew who engaged in community organizing? Why did they organize and how? Why was feminism such a strong driving force for me in my organizing practice but not so much for most of my colleagues back home in Sudbury? How much influence did the Mike Harris government exercise on our experiences as northern community organizers? How did the bilingual nature of Sudbury shape the way I worked in community organizing? Did Sudbury, by virtue of being geographically and politically isolated, contribute to the way I perceived and engaged in community organizing? Despite enormous challenges relative to my practice as an organizer, was there value in some of these challenges? Were, in fact, some of the perceived challenges to community organizing positive factors, which influenced me as an organizer? And, finally, for whom was community organizing work important?

After studying in Montreal for a year, I felt the need to go back to Sudbury and try to understand organizing in a Northern context. I felt the need to try to verify the physical, social and emotional landscape that had shaped my experiences.

In February of 2000 I returned to Sudbury and interviewed five colleagues with whom I had worked at a local Community Health Centre (CHC). I spent two days interviewing five women on an individual basis and then organized a focus group with them. At the time, I was toying with the idea that perhaps 'northern feminism' was a strong element, which shaped my colleagues' activism as community and union organizers. Certainly feminism had informed my practice as an organizer since I was a teenager; given the fact that the previous year we had introduced a union at the CHC, I thought perhaps that what

had fuelled our desires to unionize our workplace was our commitment to feminism.

Not one of the women I interviewed even admitted to being a feminist, let alone accepted the notion that they had been guided by feminist principles in their organizing practices. In fact in very clear terms, they all professed a disdain for feminism and actually did everything to disassociate themselves from that term. The words of my colleagues challenged me immeasurably and fuelled my interest in trying to illustrate what it meant to be a female community organizer in Sudbury.

My questions regarding community organizing led me to other women's narratives, thanks to the generosity of a social work professor at Laurentian University. Through several of her connections, I was able to connect with women whom I did not know but who were strong community organizers working in various spheres; what unfolded was a fascinating reflective journey, whereby my own story merged and intertwined with the stories of the women whom I met. Their experiences of single parenthood, children, union organizing, families, culture and tensions within the community and the province provided me with deep insights on the experiences of women as community organizers in Sudbury. One woman told me that if I wanted to understand community organizing in Sudbury, I would have to start with my own story. And so began a reflective journey which would eventually connect to the narratives of the women who so graciously gave of their time and expertise when I would return a year later to interview them.

1.0) On Reflexive Ethnography

After my initial interviews, I realized that trying to understand women's community organizing experiences in Sudbury would be much more difficult than I anticipated. I therefore decided to commit to a reflexive journey (as suggested by one of the women whom I had interviewed back in February of 2000) in an attempt to illustrate what was specific to my experiences as a female community organizer. I thought that, perhaps by doing so, I could weave certain common denominators between my narrative and those of the women with whom I would spend dozens of hours exploring how we perceived our lived experience as northern organizers. Even though I had attempted the idea of bringing the self back into social science (Krieger, 1991) and endorsed the idea of treating myself and my experiences as primary data (Jackson, 1989), I was unprepared for the harsh reality that reflexive ethnography would be much more challenging than I had anticipated. The following research question is one which has guided this particular research path:

"What is the experience of being a female community organizer in Sudbury, Ontario"?

What has been most interesting within this journey is that, in almost all of my interviews, several of the women with whom I met had never really stopped to think about the ways in which they organized. In depth interviews provided important insights and reflections on the way women perceived community organizing. The interview process itself became a space in which women could take a few hours out of their very busy lives, sit

back and actually think about what it was that they were doing and share their lived experiences as women and community organizers in a Northern context. At first, some of the interviews were a bit awkward; it took some time for the women to open up and think about their organizing experiences. The very fact that I wanted to write about women organizers in Sudbury was met with an element of surprise and an enormous question mark.

Why? Why us? Why Sudbury? As Ruth Behar claims, "this anthropology isn't for the softhearted" (Behar, 1996, p. 24). When I would explain that I thought there was value in our experiences as organizers and would often give examples of the differences which I observed as a northern organizer now living in Montreal, the women seemed to relax and identify with what I was saying. The ensuing conversations became easier and the women who I interviewed seemed to relish in their storytelling and sharing of insights. During the course of my research through reflexive ethnography, I have learned much about the way I was shaped in my community organizing practice, as well as those of my colleagues. Through my personal narrative, as well as through the voices of my research participants, I have come to partially understand the multiplicity of our realities, which at times are shared and at other times are polarized along cultural lines.

Being able to draw upon my own experience as a community organizer in Sudbury and therefore attempt to illustrate certain influences exercised upon community organizing practices in an urban/northern context has been extremely useful in the construction of this research project. The process of exploring the relationship between researcher and

subject (Fine et al., 2000) has permitted me to push the limits of my understanding of community organizing theory and practice and, in the process, develop a critical understanding towards certain challenges which I perceive in the literature related to community organizing practice (Fellin, 2001; Homan, 1999; Lee, 1992; McKnight, 1995; Panet-Raymond, 1987; Rothman et al., 1995; Shragge, 1993; Wharf, 1992).

The researcher as subject role (Ellis & Bochner, 2000) has also permitted me to reflect on a wide and highly interesting range of elements of community organizing practice; through the connections that I draw between myself as the researcher and the subject of Northern women's community organizing emerge several fascinating elements of community organizing practice, such as intergenerational activism and mothering. Even though these themes are not the central focus of my thesis, they are nonetheless components of community organizing practice which have emerged as a result of my personal narrative and those of the women whom I have interviewed. What this exercise has permitted me to do is to qualify and create certain bridges, although admittedly precarious, between my lived experience as a community organizer and certain theoretical constructs relative to community organizing as an essential component of social work practice (Barter, 1999; Nozick, 1992; Peters, 1993; Reitma-Street & Arnold, 1994; Ng, Walker & Muller, 1990).

Through qualitative data collection, I have attempted to draw out from obscurity the everyday work of 16 female community organizers in Sudbury. I will respectfully share

their thoughts and reflections on the nature of their work and how this work has been experienced.

On many levels, this thesis is an attempt to celebrate women's community organizing in Sudbury and, as such, serve as a positive illustration of our work to colleagues in Northern Ontario who are not often the objects of study (Garceau, 1998; Rabier, 1999). It is also an attempt to engage in dialogue with community organizing researchers to whom we owe a debt of gratitude for their invaluable experiences and insights relative to a most important aspect of social work practice. My attempt to shed light on the experiences of women's community organizing in Sudbury is to add in a small, albeit important way to the literature on community organizing.

In this dissertation, I have drawn upon the literature relative to women, mothering and community organizing as well as scholarship on women and social policy. I am also informed by a small body of literature on issues about smaller communities. The dissertation follows a structured path. First, I engage in a discussion on reflexive auto-ethnography and illustrate through my voice, my own personal journey as a Sudbury community organizer (Chapter 1). This provides the template upon which I will draw out discussions and reflections with the research participants that I have interviewed for this project. The following chapter (Chapter 2) will discuss the social policies in Ontario (Ralph, Régimbald & St-Amand, 1997) which shaped the way social workers, activists and community organizers engaged in their work in 1995 with the election of the Harris government and his Common Sense Revolution. A focus on how women have been

particularly targeted by these social policies is the object of this discussion. In Chapter 3, I attempt to illustrate multiple perspectives in community organizing research in a rural/urban/northern setting, as well as various forms of women's organizing, with a particular focus on mothering and caring. The following chapter (Chapter 4) outlines the methodology for the research which was adopted to complete this dissertation. Chapter 5 is an introduction to the research participants who have informed this thesis and serves to illustrate their practices as community organizers through their narratives. In Chapter 6, I present the data which was analyzed for the purposes of this research project and attempt to interpret the data by examining the intersecting experiences revealed in my personal narrative, the literature and the research participants. I then conclude in Chapter 7 with a final look at the research journey in which I offer certain applications which I believe have emerged from this research project and which are worth considering for the study of community organizing and social work education.

CHAPTER 1

> The difference with being an organizer in Sudbury as opposed to a big city like Toronto is that when you're participating at an action in front of a hotel where Mike Harris is having a fundraiser, chances are if you get arrested you'll know the arresting officer by his first name. Either that or you'll know who he is because your daughters play on the same ringuette team (Carol).

1.1.0) A Brief Look at Sudbury, Ontario

Throughout this research project, I will try to illustrate as best as I can through my own voice, as well as those of the women whom I interviewed, our experiences as community organizers in Sudbury. Sudbury can be regarded as a distinct space defined by a variety of factors such as geography, political isolation and culture. According to Carl Wallace (1993), history professor at Laurentian University, "a muddy construction camp for the surveyors and labourers building the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1883 marked the beginning of Sudbury" (p. 11). Since before the 1950's Sudbury has been considered to be a central urban hub of activity throughout Northeastern Ontario. It now boasts of being "Northern Toronto," with post-secondary educational services in both French and English and cancer treatment facilities, as well as other specialized field of activities in health and sciences. The Greater Region of Sudbury is characterized by the presence of mining companies (INCO and Falconbridge), which have contributed heavily to Sudbury's economy. There has been a shift, however, within the regional economy of Sudbury from being a predominantly mining town to being one which has become more diversified. During the 1980's, certain decentralization policies of upper levels of

government "identified Sudbury as a target area for ministry relocation" (Wallace, 1993, p. 275). Because of its more diversified economy, Sudbury over time has relied less on the mining companies:

> The decline in population that had begun in the early 1970's was also reversed, and the dominance of the blue-collar work force was ended as professionals and clerical workers grew by the thousands in the service sector that replaced mining as Sudbury's staple industry (Wallace, 1993, p. 275-276).

This has also meant a shift relative to the social composition as illustrated by Wallace (1993):

> Though the flight from heavy industry to services was discernable in 1980, the effect of government intervention was to accelerate the economic diversification through job transfers. In the process, it caused a social transformation in the city that matched the greening of the terrain. The blue-collar component of the population, though still prominent, had been surpassed by the nurse, the teacher, the clerk, the doctor, the salesperson, the business person, and above all the civil servant (p. 279).

A strong labour movement in Sudbury still dominates the socio-political landscape, albeit less so than perhaps twenty years ago, through the International Union of Mine Mill and the Steelworkers Union. Their presence in Sudbury speaks to the left leaning politics which have dominated the political landscape of this community, as evidenced by the consistent election of New Democrats, not only in Sudbury but also throughout Northeastern Ontario.

Sudbury is a very diverse community with dozens of different ethno-cultural communities; Francophones alone comprise close to 30% of the population (Statistics Canada, 2001). Notably, there is a lack of diversity in job availability in Sudbury, which restricts the types of jobs that people can do. In the past five years, aggressive efforts have been made to attract primarily American-based companies working in the area of

call centres. Sudbury has attracted an emerging number of these centres, which are dominated by female workers. In a study conducted in 1996 of the census data and tax files information on poverty and work, Kauppi and Reitsma-Street (1996) reveal the following:

- northern women have far less income than men, and their level of economic dependency on men and government transfers is high;
- northern women are more disadvantaged than their sisters in Southern Ontario;
- women in smaller towns have less access to employment and lower income than those living in the larger northern cities;
- single mothers and unattached older women are especially vulnerable to low income and poverty;
- Canadian women have been making slow progress in achieving equity in the labour market, particularly in the last decade, but progress has been slower for women in Northern Ontario (p. 222).

This brief illustration of Sudbury is one which will be revisited several times in order to provide the context of women's experiences as community organizers in Northeastern Ontario.

1.1.1) Researcher as Subject: A Psychological Autopsy?

Although I do not want to engage in a heart-wrenching account of the events in my life that have shaped and defined me as a community organizer, this project is nonetheless consistent with a relatively recent trend in the social sciences of using autobiographical and biographical material to explore certain facets of social work practice (Gray, & Gray, 2000). I have chosen to write about women and community organizing in such a way because it is a format which makes sense to me as a feminist. Not unlike the work undertaken by Carolyn Ellis (1995) in her book entitled "Final Negotiations" where she states, "I have constructed this thesis, but in many ways my thesis (or research) has

constructed me" (p. 10), I also feel that somehow through this type of research, I have not only attempted to shed light upon women's community organizing experiences in Northern Ontario but also, in being able to do so, my thesis has helped me to develop or sharpen a more critical view of certain dominant discourses relative to community organizing practice.

My research has confirmed my belief that my practice as a community organizer has a solid foundation based in a small, northern-urban experience and that there is value in how I was shaped as a community organizer. My thesis has brought me to explore and thus illustrate what my experience, as well as that of my colleagues, has been as female community organizers in Sudbury. It is hoped that what is uncovered may contribute to the theoretical corpus of community organizing and social work practice in a northern-urban context (Sellick, Delaney & Brownlee, 1999; Wharf, 1993; Zapf, 1991).

The following personal narrative could be viewed as a case study that prepares the reader for explorative research on women's community organizing experiences in Sudbury. The result, "highlights private and social experience to sociological writing as evidenced in much of the literature in qualitative research particularly as it relates to personal narratives and auto-ethnography" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 733). Prior to engaging in my own personal account of my lived experience as a community organizer and then trying to connect to my research area and theoretical frameworks, it was important for me to understand the implications of embarking upon this particular type of research trajectory.

True to my desire to understand community organizing as I had experienced it, I decided after my initial interviews to focus my research on what our experiences are as women organizers in Sudbury, and how, as a result, our realities are shaped as community organizers. To do so would be to engage in an ongoing reflection on the lived experience of women's community organizing work in Sudbury.

1.1.2) Autoethnography: More Difficult Than It Sounds

According to Ellis and Bochner (2000) the term 'autoethnography' has been credited to David Hayano, when discussing the way cultural anthropologists study their own people in which the researcher is a full insider by virtue of being on the inside (Hayano, 1979). This particular genre of writing is somewhat problematic because of its subjective nature. Ellis and Bochner's own attempts at defining autoethnography speak to the challenges of such a genre in social science research:

> Autoethnography is an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural.... Like many terms used by social scientists, the meanings and applications of autoethnography have evolved in a manner that makes precise definition and application difficult (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 739).

Ellis and Bochner (2000) then go on to present a lengthy list of similarly situated terms in order to understand fully the enormous breadth and scope of autoethnographic research. Among others, they refer to narratives of the self (Richardson, 1994), personal experience narratives (Denzin, 1989), auto-observation (Adler & Adler, 1987), first-person accounts (Ellis, 1998), personal ethnography (Crawford, 1996) and critical autobiography (Church, 1995).

My research has been constructed within my experience as a feminist social work student; I therefore feel certain that my attempt at reflexive ethnography is acceptable within this particular academic arena, given the fact that my underlying propeller in writing in this fashion is my personal and social location as a feminist. Much of what has been written by female academics in schools of social work in North America is etched within a feminist framework (Davies & Krane, 1996; Reitsma-Street & Rogerson, 1999). Therefore, writing reflexive ethnography appears to me to be consistent with feminist writings within social work practice.

Ellis and Bochner (2000) confirm this notion when they state quite clearly that, "feminism has contributed significantly to legitimating the autobiographical voice associated with reflexive ethnography" (p. 740). In her book entitled "Feminism and Methodology", Sandra Harding (1987) supports reflexive ethnography by stating that the beliefs and behaviours of the researcher are part of the empirical evidence for (or against) the claims advanced in the results of the research. In her book "An Unquiet Mind", Kay Redfield (1995) acknowledges the angst which certain feminist researchers feel when writing reflexive ethnography when she states that:

> It is an awful prospect giving up one's cloak of academic objectivity. But, of course, my work has been tremendously colored by my emotions and experiences. They have deeply affected my teaching, my advocacy work, my clinical practice, and what I have chosen to study (p. 188).

Through this reflective chapter, I have attempted to describe an experience of community organizing practice in my hometown. I therefore have decided to lend my voice through the genre of reflexive ethnography, while paying close attention not to engage in an

exercise of psychological autopsy. I wanted my story to connect eventually with the stories of the women whom I've interviewed for this research project and be able to draw certain parallels within our collective experiences as female community organizers.

As Ruth Behar (1998) states in her book "The Vulnerable Observer", it is important for her to make her text interesting to the reader by drawing deeper connections between her personal experience and the subject under study. For Behar (1998), writing vulnerably requires great courage and also needs to be useful and pertinent, a legitimate vehicle to get at the essence of the object of the author's research:

> ... it does require a keen understanding of what aspects of the self are the most important filters through which one perceives the world and, more particularly, the topic being studied. Efforts at self-revelation flop not because the personal voice has been used, but because it has been poorly used, leaving unscrutinized the connection, intellectual and emotional, between the observer and the observed. Vulnerability doesn't mean that anything personal goes. The exposure of the self who is also a spectator has to take us somewhere we couldn't otherwise get to. It has to be essential to the argument, not a decorative flourish, not exposure for its' own sake (p. 14).

By 'taking the reader' to Sudbury via my own personal narrative, I have attempted to be succinct in the recounting of my lived experience as a community organizer. I call upon very specific examples which are intended to illustrate how I have experienced being an organizer in Sudbury. Ethnography done this way is therefore a "strange cross between auto-saturated and author-evacuated texts, neither romance nor lab report, but something in between" (Geertz, 1995, p. 7). Or as Devereux (1967), an ethnopsychiatrist claims, the "observer must be made known, if the nature of what has been observed, is to be understood" (p. 6).

As mentioned earlier, one of the reasons I decided to engage post-graduate studies in the field of social work is precisely because feminism has contributed significantly to social work writings on a wide variety of issues and, as such, my usage of reflexive ethnography within a social work framework parallels my preoccupation with trying to understand community organizing through a feminist lens. In other words, my interest in feminism and community organizing has found a very comfortable home in the area of social work practice. Reflexive ethnography is the most useful tool available to me in order to merge both interests in a thesis which may contribute a small piece of knowledge to the theoretical corpus of community organizing practice.

It is important for me to mention as well that I've chosen to define my narrative precisely as 'reflexive ethnography,' given that my personal experience as a researcher is helpful in shedding light upon the desired subject of research: in this case, the experiences of women as community organizers in Sudbury. As Ellis and Bochner (2000) describe in the Handbook of Qualitative Research:

> Reflexive ethnographies range along a continuum from starting research from one's own experience to ethnographies where the researcher's experience is actually studied along with other participants, to confessional tales where the researcher's experiences of doing the study become the focus of investigation (p. 741).

For this particular project, I have introduced my research area starting from my lived experience as a community organizer and then through the connections and common denominators that have emerged through interviews with other women organizers in Sudbury, Ontario. The outcome is an attempt at an integrated account of our lived experiences as organizers in an urban/northern context.

1.2.0) Growing Up Organizer

My earliest experience as an organizer is etched in a memory of myself as an eight-year-old in grade three, on the phone after school with the students in my class, soliciting money to buy a gift for our teacher who was preparing to go on maternity leave. Twenty-eight dollars and a car seat later, I remember feeling very proud and powerful that I was able to rally my classmates around a common goal. I believe that this was my first attempt at what would be a precursor to a lifetime of community organizing and activism.

Having grown up in Northern Ontario in a bi-cultural family, my father was very active as a volunteer in various Franco-Ontarian organizations such as the Centre des jeunes and the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario. He was also hugely involved as an organizer with the New Democratic Party and later on, in my pre-teen and teen years, he would become heavily involved in the co-operative movement, primarily with the Mouvement Desjardins (credit unions) and social housing. My mother, who was of Italian descent, was not involved in any type of volunteer work during my formative years. Growing up in such a household informed my view on what community organizing meant through the experiences of my father. Certainly, his commitment to community organizing within Franco-Ontarian organizations influenced my perception on how culture can influence one's commitment to community development.

1.2.1) Making Connections: Student Life and Community Organizing

In 1980, when I was sixteen, my parents decided to end their marriage; it is at this time

that I became interested in the nuclear disarmament movement, which was introduced to me by a progressive English teacher who had been an American draft dodger. To connect with other people within various spheres somehow eased the pain of my parents' separation and enabled me to feel connected to other people. Somehow, through community organizing, I had managed to re-create familial ties with very caring and loving people concerned with the environment and the peace movement. During my first undergraduate year at Laurentian University in 1983, I became active in student politics. As mentioned earlier, influenced by my father's commitment to Franco-Ontarian culture, I joined the Association des étudiants et étudiantes francophones de l'université Laurentienne (AEF). As the newly elected president of this student association, my introduction to student organizing was relatively harsh, given the fact that in the same academic year, administrative staff and Sudbury transit drivers all went on strike. After supporting the striking workers in their various demands, my activism shifted to what was then qualified as 'Third World Issues'.

As a student activist within the AEF, I became involved in the movement to boycott South African products and organized through a theatrical medium an awareness of the atrocities of the apartheid political regime in South Africa. Oddly enough, my activism was supported primarily by Anglophones at Laurentian; many of my Francophone colleagues did not value nor share my enthusiasm for this particular political endeavour. Only years later would I realize that Franco-Ontarians' own needs for political recognition and perhaps even their subconscious collective oppressed mentality would on some level interfere with their capacity to empathize with individuals who lived on

another continent (Dennie, 1999; Juteau-Lee, 1982).

1.2.2) Career as Organizer

Shortly after my graduation in 1990 from the Master's program in Co-operative Management from the Université de Sherbrooke, I returned to Sudbury to work at a co-operative housing resource group. Having lived in Sherbrooke and Montreal prior to my return to Sudbury, I couldn't help but compare the relative difficulties with which the project consultants dealt while working with founding board members. Distances and weather conditions were just some of the factors that often limited the consultants' abilities to meet deadlines, meet with committees, contractors and all other actors involved in building non-profit housing units. The constant tensions with Toronto and Ottawa with regards to funding and political issues often meant that our Executive Director would be travelling back and forth between both cities, explaining the specific needs of Northern housing developments. For example, the budget line for heating costs for all newly built co-op or non-profit housing projects was the same for Toronto as it was for Timmins. Given geographic and climactic discrepancies between Toronto and Northern Ontario, it was impossible to respect the allotted heating budget costs that were based on Southern Ontario's consumption rates. Evidently housing bureaucrats in Toronto had never been to Northern Ontario at –50 degrees Celsius in January.

My work in social housing taught me to appreciate the challenges in attempting to build social housing units in a geographic area characterized by its isolation. As with most Northerners who decide to 'come back' and work in the North after returning from their

'schooling,' I adapted, and gradually eased into a comfortable space in which I negotiated and integrated theory into practice.

1.2.3) Wax Museums and Ambiguities: It's Tough Being a Northern Organizer

Through a series of exceptional circumstances, in mid-October, I found myself teaching within the School of Commerce at Laurentian as a sessional lecturer within the "Programme en gestion et développement des coopératives." One memory which stands out amongst many is a meeting which the Director of non-credit programming within the Centre for Continuing Education at Laurentian and myself entertained with a so-called community economic development 'expert' in Toronto. It was 1993 and Bob Rae's New Democratic Party was in power. It was a good time to be a community organizer, given the left leaning policies of the NDP.

At the time, the School of Commerce, the Centre for Continuing Education and the Sudbury Vocational Resource Centre had developed a partnership to work with social assistance recipients within an entrepreneurship program entitled 'Jobs Ontario'. This was a relatively important economic envelope destined to stimulate entrepreneurship and training programs throughout the province. Our partnership succeeded in accessing over $600,000 in funding, although, given the relative obscurity which the co-operative alternative represented within the partnership, Laurentian received a mere $67,000 in order to develop a certain number of worker co-operatives. Very early on within the project entitled "A Womb with a View," my colleague from Continuing Education and myself realized that the measurable objectives determined by Jobs Ontario in Toronto were not adapted to a Northern setting. Again, issues such as travel and clothing

allowances, and childcare were not taken into account within the funders' guidelines.

My colleague and I decided to drive the five hours to Toronto in order to discuss certain elements of the project and also lobby for additional funding to expand the co-op project into a worker co-operative entrepreneurship incubator which would stimulate alternative economic development primarily among youth and women. Our five-hour drive to Toronto was filled with animated conversation about developing worker co-operatives, not only in Sudbury, but also throughout Northeastern Ontario. Once inside the C.E.D. Ministry, we openly discussed with our C.E.D. 'expert,' our concerns and dreams of effectively contributing to economic development in Northern Ontario.

The conversation which ensued was nothing less than a total exercise in futility, as well as a sad testimony to how misunderstood Northern Ontario as a region was by bureaucrats working in downtown Toronto. After we walked our contact-person through some of the challenges we were experiencing within our project, as well as the highlights of our more ambitious project of an economic incubator, he informed us that, not only was he not willing to be flexible to our needs within the actual project, but also that he totally disagreed with our pious efforts to address structural unemployment via a worker co-operative incubator. According to this gentleman, who had visited Sudbury only once, in his 'expert' opinion, what Sudbury needed to stimulate its economy were wax museums not unlike the ones which could be found in Niagara Falls. This, according to him, would be a sure-fire way not only to stimulate jobs but also to boost the tourism industry in Sudbury.

Needless to say, our enthusiasm to pursue our dreams with this gentleman was cut short and after a few tense moments and a curt goodbye, my colleague and I proceeded to the nearest pub in order to dilute our extreme anger. The "Womb With a View" went the way of hundreds of northern economic dreams.

1.2.4) Organizing for Health: Unhealthy Dynamics

After six years of trying to promote the co-operative model within the School of Commerce at Laurentian University, I decided to walk away. The initial feelings of loss, anger and enormous sense of failure were slowly replaced with feelings of energy, enthusiasm and hope, given my new job as a paid community organizer within a newly established francophone Community Health Centre. The starkest difference between both places of employment were the gendered roles of my colleagues. Whereas at the School of Commerce most of my colleagues were male, at the CHC my colleagues were almost exclusively female. And so began another important chapter in my community organizing trajectory. It was 1996 and the Harris government was in full swing, enforcing the basic tenets of his Common Sense Revolution.

As the first community organizer for the Centre de santé communautaire de Sudbury, my work was to assess minority Francophones needs regarding health care. My work was exciting and, given resources, flexible working hours and a supportive Executive Director, I worked on dossiers that were important to me as a woman and a Francophone. I lobbied for French language services and worked in the area of race relations between

Franco-Ontarians and Francophone Africans, who were increasing in numbers within our community.

During the five years which I worked at the CHC, I undertook a second Master's degree, this time in Social Work. Although the program in and of itself was acceptable, I found that, within the group of people with whom I studied, I was the only community organizer. Rather disappointed in my isolation, I nonetheless developed friendships with women who were engaged in social work practice in communities such as Hearst, Mattawa and Timmins. Again, through my discussions with my fellow classmates, I realized that being a Northerner and a social worker symbolized a stranger set of challenges which were reminiscent of my days in social housing.

One woman in our group worked in a Family Services agency in Mattawa, which dealt with women who were victims of violence. When describing the enormous challenges related to issues such as distance, confidentiality and lack of basic services for women wishing to flee abusive relationships, it occurred to me once again that somehow things are strangely difficult for us in Northern Ontario. The other realization which haunted me for a long time was that, despite the physical isolation that my colleagues faced in their daily lives as social workers, they still engaged in social work practice with few colleagues (one woman was the only social worker in her town), little infrastructure, few financial resources for program delivery and still managed to do an effective job in assisting their clients on a wide variety of issues. Again, I drew parallels between the

challenges of working in social housing and the very real difficulties of working as a social worker in isolated Northern communities.

I was also acutely aware that I was luckier than most of my colleagues because I lived in Sudbury, which was the most 'urban' city in Northern Ontario. At least we had a woman's centre, bus service, an after-hours clinic, a hospital, a university and two community colleges. We had dozens of social workers and people we could rely on and with whom we could develop alliances and projects. It took me only ten minutes to get to my classes at the university. My colleagues had to drive seven and eight hours to get to our intensive sessions every six weeks. I graduated from the program thinking how strong and wonderful my colleagues were. During my three years within my Master's program, I often reflected on what it meant to be an organizer and a social worker in Sudbury. This reflection would almost inevitably be disturbed, challenged and validated every time I would attend a conference which almost always took place in Toronto.

In the comfort of lavish hotel conference rooms, community organizers, health promoters and social workers would converge to discuss the challenges they faced in their daily lives as workers within the Community Health Centre system. Again, I could not help but notice that my colleagues from Northern Ontario would often feel short changed within these conferences because of the very nature of the work they performed. We could not identify with the community workers from Toronto who would dominate the workshops with their experiences in working with the homeless community.

Such was not our reality in Sudbury. We could not identify with the social workers who complained that the subway and bus ticket budget had been slashed, thus rendering contacts with groups of clients difficult. The Northern delegation would at often times feel annoyed with such complaints, although they were legitimate, given the fact that in towns adjacent to Sudbury, such as Chelmsford, Hanmer and Dowling, buses ran once a day. Our realities were so completely different that our participation to the Toronto conferences were interspersed with numerous shopping trips and long lunches.

1.2.5) Organizer as Mother

In December of 1996 something happened which changed the way I approached activism and community organizing. I had a baby. So completely unprepared was I for the impact that this little boy would have in my life that I could not integrate intellectually nor emotionally that my life had changed forever because of him. Needless to say, the first three months as a community organizer and activist were not easy. It was in the Spring of 1997 that I decided that my son would be, by extension, a community organizer (until he was old enough to decide for himself how he wanted to spend his free time) and that I was not going to end what I was doing but that I would simply do it differently. Armed with three months of experience as a new mother, I vowed to reclaim my life with my new assistant. In order to retain a modicum of sanity while staying at home with my newborn son, I decided to continue attending meetings of the Labour Training and Adjustment Board, of which I was the Women's Representative prior to my son's birth. In the spirit of mental sanity, I participated in Board meetings, baby safely tucked in a body pouch.

While Board members politely tolerated my son's presence, I could not help but feel that I had in some way surrendered my legitimacy as an active Board member by trying to integrate my organizing efforts with my mothering efforts. My first resistance effort as an activist mother materialized one afternoon after I had called a meeting with the Executive Committee of the Labour Training and Adjustment Board to share my views on the importance of childcare for Board members. I obviously had a vested interest in this issue, given the fact that I could not attend certain committee meetings because I could not access childcare. I sensitized my colleagues to the important issue of childcare and argued a strong case that if we, as Board members were serious in training and adjustment issues for workers in Ontario, we had better sensitize all Board members to the issue of women and childcare. At a subsequent Board meeting, the issue was raised and provisions were made to bring the issue of childcare to the forefront when discussing all matters related to female workers' issues. This felt like a small victory in light of the discussion which I had entertained with the executive committee.

In September 1997, I resumed work once again at the CHC and shortly afterwards became heavily involved in organizing a union within our workplace. This action was a culmination of approximately three years of dissatisfaction amongst employees because of tenuous relations between the new Executive Director of the CHC and members of the Board.

Developing an alliance with the Industrial Wood and Allied Workers of America was interesting. This particular union was chosen primarily for two reasons: the union representative was a francophone and the northern office of the IWA was in Espanola which was a mere 30 minutes away from Sudbury. The union did not, however, have any expertise in negotiating contracts within a CHC setting. As a group, we had made a conscious decision not to engage the services of a union based in Toronto; we wanted a northern union.

After a year of intensive hard work the union vote was allowed to take place on June 16, 1999. An overwhelming 90% of workers voted to introduce the IWA within the Centre de santé communautaire de Sudbury. Shortly after the introduction of the union in our workplace and discouraged by the political climate of the Harris government, my partner and I decided to leave Sudbury for our doctoral programs.

1.2.6) From Sudbury Organizer to Montreal Organizer: Negotiating Identity

In August of 1999, while unpacking boxes in our new apartment in Montreal, a news caption caught my attention. The journalist was announcing changes to the bus system on certain major arteries in Montreal, which, because of funding cuts would now be operating every five minutes as opposed to every three minutes. My instinct as a Northern organizer was one of surprise. I viewed Montrealers as being very lucky, given the absolute ease with which they could 'get around'. To someone from Sudbury, who is used to intervals of hours and not minutes regarding bus usage, the fact that people were complaining of the five minute intervals in Montreal seemed rather odd. This

introduction to my integration within the Montreal community would be the first in a series of comparative reflections in which I would engage during the first year of my stay.

I was very pleased with my colleagues within the Ph.D. program and was even more pleased to realize that all eight students enrolled within the program had worked as community organizers within different capacities. A core group of four students met several times our first year with our thesis director who had, in effect, been the magnet which had drawn us to Montreal in the first place.

My first year at McGill was very rich and intense. It is also at this time that I was introduced to qualitative research and mothering literature. My reflections as a Northern activist, community organizer and mother seemed to gel for three hours every week for four months within the qualitative research seminar we were required to take for our program. This academic experience became the catalyst from which was borne the idea to write about my experience as a community organizer from Sudbury.

The desire to value and research women's community organizing experiences is a direct result of my reactions to debates which we entertained within our Ph.D. seminars. On more than one occasion, I would challenge a few of my professors because the experience of women as organizers was significantly absent from our readings and yet, in my practice, community organizing was hugely dominated by women. I did not often see

myself as a woman and as an organizer reflected in the scholarship we were required to read.

Given my need to work and pay for my doctoral studies, three months after my arrival in Montreal, I co-founded with two other women from the Caribbean and African community a women's research collective; our first research project enabled me to work part-time and learn a great deal about community organizing amongst women of colour in the city of Montreal. This type of learning was invaluable to me as an organizer and doctoral student. What struck me the most about this endeavour was the ease with which we accessed the financing for our first project.

As an organizer from Sudbury, I was used to submitting research projects and proposals to funders in Toronto or Ottawa and having rather large long distance bills in order to defend the northern particularities of these projects. By comparison, in Montreal one could simply walk into the office of Heritage Canada or the Ministry responsible for Immigration (MRCI) and entertain discussions with government workers who seemed pleased with the alliances which our small research group formed. Not to undercut the enormous amount of work it took to conceptualize, develop and submit our projects to various funders, I nonetheless believed that living in a big city like Montreal certainly had its advantages. Having funders in the same city as your project made community organizing and outreach work very easy. The ease with which I engaged in community organizing in Montreal contrasted often with my experiences in Sudbury.

1.2.7) Urban Perceptions of a Northern Organizer

On more than one occasion, I had observed that the circles in which some of my colleagues exercised their degree of activism or community organizing were drawn pretty clearly amongst racialized lines (Collins, 1986). I questioned, for example, why a certain anti-globalization resource group did not reflect much in terms of ethnic diversity. Were Francophones and Anglophones the only groups of people interested in anti-globalization issues in Montreal? What made certain types of people gravitate towards certain types of causes? Why was it that the anarchist weekend in Montreal, which included a book fair, seem to be very 'White' in its' composition? Where were the Black anarchists in Montreal?

These questions incited much debate, sometimes heated with regards to the gendered, racialized experiences in which we all engaged as community organizers. This period of questioning was an intensely stimulating time in my life, when I was challenging every basic assumption I had ever held with regards to community organizing practices, both in Montreal and in Sudbury. It is through my discussions with my colleagues that I learned to value and appreciate their experiences as organizers in Montreal. I came to learn much about the challenges of working in a large urban city. Through their work in social housing and through a community health clinic, I began to appreciate the enormity of the difficulties which they faced as organizers, if only in dealing with the sheer number of people needing assistance on a wide variety of issues. I began to appreciate the fact that, in Montreal, things were not necessarily easier or better, just different. I also came to acknowledge the tensions with which some of my colleagues had to negotiate between

different groups of people such as Anglophone and Francophone Quebecers and people from various ethno-cultural communities. Whereas, in Sudbury, organizing was often done within relatively homogeneous circles, in Montreal, much attention had to be paid to the numerous stakeholders within any given project.

It is during these times, while debating with my colleagues or my professors on social work practice and community organizing issues that I felt the need to qualify, explain, clarify and defend the nature of community organizing as I had experienced it while living in Northern Ontario. While I myself assumed an organizer role in Montreal within the various projects in which I became involved, I nonetheless could not stop drawing comparisons with what I had known in Sudbury. During the course of one of the projects within our research collective, I noticed that my own approaches to community organizing were sometimes out of step with the urban reality of Montreal. On one occasion I had naïvely suggested to a group of Black feminists that it might be feasible to organize a series of focus groups with Black women from various communities in Côte-des-Neiges for a particular project. My suggestion was politely tolerated and then rejected. I was told that I was assuming that there were alliances that existed between the various Black women's groups and that there would be enough trust between women to make such an endeavour possible. I was surprised. I had automatically assumed that, with the significant number of Black women's formal and informal organizations which existed in Montreal, surely, it would be easy to organize a series of focus groups. According to the women with whom I worked, this would not be a simple task.

I had naïvely assumed that it would be easy and compared my organizing focus groups with different Black organizations in the Sudbury area. Given the restrained numbers of members of the various Black communities in Sudbury, it was relatively easy to pull together a group of people from Jamaica, Trinidad, Congo, Rwanda and Mauritius. Visible minorities in Sudbury collided socially with one another frequently and certain alliances between people were naturally engaged. I thought that the same occurred in Montreal.

In February, 2000 I decided that I needed to go back home and situate myself in relationship to Sudbury. To reflect upon women and their experiences as community organizers would be an important journey of self-discovery within the presence of women who appeared to me to be so strong, so powerful, so resilient, so caring and so compassionate in their work as community organizers. To them, they were just "Sudbury girls," sharing their precious time with a fellow organizer who, like so many people before, had left for other adventures. To me, the adventure was coming home and revelling in their stories and experiences as organizers in Northern Ontario.

CHAPTER 2

2.1.0) Change by Any Means Necessary: Social Policy in Ontario

When Mike Harris came to power as Premier of Ontario in 1995, promising and delivering a 24% reduction to welfare benefits, the task of working as a community organizer with women who already had very little became overwhelming. How could one possibly look at a mother on welfare with three children with a straight face and ask her to do more with less? It was a period of political and social nonsense. It still is. In 1998, I witnessed a single mother with three children lose her welfare benefits because social services questioned the legitimacy of the landlord's presence, who lived downstairs in the home she was renting from him. The sheer power that social services had exercised over this woman was to me and to my colleagues terrifying.

It was during this time and coupled with the turbulent actions of trying to organize a union that I decided to leave Sudbury and channel my anger towards the Harris government by engaging in a doctoral program. I reasoned that, with some distance, I could write about the damages which were being done to women in Ontario. My initial research area brought me to a space where I wanted to attempt to understand and perhaps analyze resistance work and community organizing efforts conducted by women in Northern Ontario in a climate of conservative reforms on the social welfare system in Ontario. My area of interest and research has evidently expanded to a much broader scope of study on highlighting women's experiences as community organizers within all types of spheres in Sudbury. Nonetheless, the following chapter is an attempt to

highlight some of the particular circumstances of women living in Ontario and how their experiences as women working and living in a northern/urban context are shaped. The reader will note that I have focused the discussion on social policy in Ontario primarily on women who are single parents. I have done so purposefully because the attacks to the social welfare system in Ontario have particularly impacted upon women on welfare. Since 1995 they have lived under a regime of workfare, welfare snitch lines and other punitive measures. Their crime? They are poor. Given the focus and context of this research project, it is my belief that these social policies have often impacted upon the lived experiences of women as organizers who work extensively with single mothers, who, thanks to the Conservative government, experience higher rates of poverty now than they did eight years ago.

While my research does not focus exclusively on the specific nature of the work that women as organizers do in Sudbury, it is important to state that much of what they do as organizers relates to challenges which single mothers experience relative to welfare, social housing, security issues and so on. Therefore the information contained herein serves a dual purpose: first, it is an attempt to illustrate the impact of social policy reforms in Ontario upon the lives of women who are most vulnerable in Ontario. Secondly, I hope it will illustrate how these reforms impact on the capacity of women as organizers to work skillfully and adequately with the very women who, up until a few months ago, were being socially brutalized by the Conservative government in Ontario. With the new Liberal provincial government in power, researchers must wait and see if

social policies affecting women's lives will be altered under the leadership of Premier Dalton McGuinty.

In addition, certain realities in Northern Ontario such as significant lack of services, infrastructures, daycare facilities, higher poverty rates, higher illiteracy rates and higher unemployment rates (Belanger, Kauppi, Moxam & Sanderson, 2000; Reitsma-Street, 1996) will be discussed. As mentioned earlier, I have decided to focus my research on women's experiences of community organizing in Sudbury, given the fact that my dissertation will be focusing exclusively on women in this geographic area. What this translates to is not only looking at social policies in Ontario but also taking into account the particularities of Sudbury, which, is in the northeastern part of the province and is considered to be northern and urban, as well as rural, given the newly defined "Greater Region of Sudbury", which now includes small towns such as Chelmsford, Hanmer and Azilda to name a few.

Looking at social policy in Ontario is important; I believe that such a research exercise is valuable, particularly when trying to assess a case example of welfare state retrenchment which clearly impacts disproportionately on specific groups, not only with regards to gender but also because of geographic location. Few academics are conducting research in this area of Ontario; my research is a process whereby I wish to give a voice to the women of Northern Ontario who have a long tradition of being ignored in matters of social policy and reform.

2.1.1) Women and the Welfare State

As evidenced in countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada, the welfare state has engaged in a process whereby the erosion of basic social policies has led to restructuring much to the disadvantage of women and children. The social political landscape of today looks very different than when I was growing up in the mid-1970's. There is much evidence that demonstrates that the decline of the welfare state is eroding the very political identities and public spaces that empowered the second wave of feminism (Brodie, 1996). Davis (1989) argues that it is crucial to understand the complexities of welfare in order to develop a strategy for changing current welfare relationships.

One of the central ways neo-conservatism has succeeded in modifying welfare reforms has been quite simply through budgetary reductions. During his campaign in 1995, Harris quite clearly articulated that the Ontario government simply could no longer afford to preserve the social safety net, hence the ideological shift from a 'hand up, not a hand out'. Globalization, restructuring and downsizing are redefining the relationship between Canadians and their governments, and these trends have particular impacts on women. Ideological challenges which shape economic, political and social dimensions of daily life also have profound implications for women (Evans & Wickerle, 1997). There would appear to be an ideological shift among Canadians with regards to what role the state should play towards the most disadvantaged people in our society. Many, including Mike Harris, former premier of Ontario and founder of the Common Sense Revolution

believed that social spending was the problem. Several theorists have argued that the 1990's were characterized by a fundamental challenge to the welfare state within the contexts of recessions, trade globalization, labour market restructuring and a focus on cuts to social spending as a dominant solution to the problem of deficit.

According to Cohen (1997), as long as social spending is targeted as the problem, and everyone believes taxes cannot be further raised, the argument of neo-conservative economics will appear to make sense. Unfortunately, such thinking adversely affects women's lives in several ways. Armstrong and Armstrong (1994) argue that social restructuring is etched within the field of gender. Poverty is intensified, especially among single mothers and women generally. Women have been directly affected by cuts in social welfare programs and spending, both as welfare clients and as state workers. Current ideology encompasses a return to the male breadwinner/female homemaker family ethics model of social policy (Abramovitz, 1996). Sainsbury (1996) provides an excellent analysis of the shortcomings of the breadwinner model by stating that the model fails to distinguish between women's entitlement as wives and mothers:

> There is a necessity to rethink the male breadwinner model and to consider a female caregiver model focusing on motherhood (p. 72).

Many feminist theorists adopt several ways in which to approach different perspectives on the politics of social welfare (Armstrong & Armstrong, 1990). According to Armstrong, the heart of many feminist theories is the examination of gender relations as socially constructed, unequal power relationships, giving rise to male domination and female subordination. A common objective is to increase public attention to, and regulation of, social relations and sites that affect women, in the hopes of eliminating

women's inequality. Interpretations, solutions and possible alternatives are the differing components of each theoretical perspective within the sphere of feminist analysis and critique.

An example of attracting public attention to women's needs under oppressive and invasive public policies occurred within the massive demonstrations orchestrated worldwide with regards to the "Worldwide March Against Poverty and Violence". This initiative was sparked by the Quebec Bread and Roses March of 1995. On October 14th, 2000, women in Ontario and across Canada asserted their political clout by bringing to the forefront their outrage with regards to reforms of public policies affecting housing, welfare, pay equity and childcare. When Françoise David, president of the Quebec Women's Federation (who organized the event) stated on national television that it is not impossible that women in Canada will form a political party based on the scope of the demands of the Marche mondiale (RDI., 2000), politicians in Canada paid attention; whether they were disturbed or felt threatened by the possibility of the creation of a women's political party is irrelevant. Once one understands the impact of the gendered nature of social policy upon the lives of women not only in Ontario but also across Canada, one can only hope that political action is not far away.

Unfortunately for women in Ontario, the neo-conservative stance on social policy is a daunting force with which to reckon and it continued to permeate all spheres of social services under the leadership of Premier Eves, who was Harris' right hand man as the Minister of Finance while Harris was in power. Eves was elected in April 2002; many

Ontarians perceived Eves and Harris as being "joined at the hip" (Stock, 2003, p. 10). Although Eves was perceived to be a bit more socially aware than Harris, several anti-poverty groups in Ontario have equated Eves with Harris, stating that Tory rule continued to devastate the most vulnerable in Ontario society (Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, 2003). Given the very recent election of a new liberal government, only time will tell if there will be shifts in social policy which are more nurturing towards women living in Ontario.

2.1.2) Harris, Eves and the Common Sense Revolution

If one talks about government policies in Ontario, inevitably one turns to the Common Sense Revolution, the blueprint of the reforms initiated by Mike Harris in 1995. This so-called revolution promised to modify radically the welfare state in Ontario. According to Leduc Browne (1997) the idea of a common sense revolution is one which upholds the values of the "good old days".

> The Conservative revolution in Ontario has presented itself in a paradoxical guise. It is the Common Sense Revolution. Common sense, as everyone knows, is as old as the hills, the compendium of experience, tradition and prejudice. It is inherently bound to the way things are or appear to be in the light of popular wisdom or everyday forms of reasoning (p. 37).

Browne (1997) then goes on to state that to understand what was going on in Ontario, it is useful to contextualize Ontario and compare its ideology and ways of governing to countries which most resemble Ontario on historical, trade and cultural levels. As mentioned earlier, the U.S.A. and Great Britain are cited as points of comparison to

demystify the Common Sense Revolution as a mere "copycat" version of conservative politics:

> In the light of this comparison (U.S. and Great Britain), it will be seen that the Common Sense Revolution is neither revolutionary, in the sense of involving radical innovation, nor commonsensical -rather, it echoes the ideas and policies of Anglo-American conservatives over the past twenty years (Browne, 1997, p. 37).

Many social workers in Ontario grappled with the effects of the Harris revolution (even though Premier McGuinty is in power, it will take some time to discover if there will be a dismantling of Harris' policies), which was believed to undermine the basic values of human rights and dignity of people who are poor. As Lightman and Baines (1997) concluded, the notion of equality is one which was completely absent in social policy design and practice in the province of Ontario.

> Equality is not in the discourse of the Conservative government, nor can it be found in its policy-making process or practice. In fact, this government is typified by its conscious and enthusiastic actions to dismantle all programs working towards equality.

During the 1995 electoral campaign, the provincial Conservative Party built an entire platform on debt and deficit reduction (Moscovitch, 1997). It would appear that one way of doing so would be to crack down on fraudulent abusers of the welfare system, as well as encourage a system whereby recipients would have to work for welfare. In the Common Sense Revolution document which Harris developed, he flatly stated that Ontario could no longer afford to take care of its poor.

> Ontario pays the highest welfare benefits not only in Canada but anywhere in North America. This is one of the reasons our welfare caseload has swollen to record levels. The simple fact of the matter is that we can't afford it (Ontario Progressive Conservative Party, 1994, p. 11).

According to Moscovitch (1997), the Conservative ideology which was being put forward was Ontario's perceived generosity towards welfare recipients as the major reason for the groundswell of its members and not the recession or high unemployment. As I have mentioned earlier, Harris cut welfare by more than 26% in 1995, thus leaving thousands of families scrambling even more for survival. Given the Harris government's lack of vision and simplistic views of the economy, one can surmise that what he was attempting to accomplish was to push people into working, even though work was scarce and poorly paid. Also, given structural reasons for people being on welfare in the first place (chronic unemployment as evidenced in Northern Ontario, for example) what he managed to do was create a perpetual state of crisis for welfare recipients. This reality has persisted under the direction of Premier Eves and it is too soon to tell if it will continue under McGuinty's leadership.

Under Harris's welfare reform, the waiting period to collect welfare benefits was three months as opposed to one. Eligibility restrictions were therefore tighter, disqualifying certain types of people from being able to access welfare; there were even restrictions with regards to appeal rights. According to Welfare Watch, the paper work had been increased, requiring all kinds of information with regards to car leases, separation documents and other such paperwork.

> Failure to provide information is fast becoming one of the easiest ways to cut people from assistance (Welfare Watch, 1999, April 30).

"Ontario Works" is by definition a phrase which presupposes two things: that people in Ontario work, and that the program itself is one which is viable. Neither supposition is true.

2.1.3) Ontario Works

In June 1996, the Ministry of Community and Social Services announced the Ontario Works program, which essentially forced welfare recipients to work for their welfare cheques. According to the Common Sense Revolution document, workfare would "break the cycle of dependency created by the previous administration" (Ontario Progressive Conservative Party, 1995).

It has been my experience that the majority of social workers in Ontario have denounced workfare as an assault on single mothers and their children.

> At the program level, there is a single operational agenda which is to cut government spending, and a primary means to this end, which is to punish vulnerable persons in Ontario (Lightman, 1997, p. 103).

The Ontario Works program provided three avenues for employability. Employment Supports help to upgrade education levels and assist in job search strategies. The Employment Placement brokers were primarily private sector agencies, which placed people into mainly low paying jobs. The Community Participation stream required welfare recipients to work as volunteers up to 70 hours a month in a non-profit or community agency (Lightman, 1997).

As mentioned before, changes in social assistance spending and eligibility had been the major target of the current Ontario government. According to Bezanson and McMurray, the Ontario Works Act and the Ontario Disability Support Program replaced the Family Benefits Act, the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Act and the General Welfare

Assistance Act (Bezanson & McMurray, 2000, p. 210). The most infamous feature of the Ontario Works program was workfare; despite much public attention, the program was not and has not been able to achieve the participation levels it sought.

> Municipalities have had difficulty finding community placements for participants, although they have encountered little trouble finding social assistance recipients who want work experience (Bezanson & McMurray, 2000, p. 22).

The unwillingness of many community-based or non-profit groups to engage in workfare has created much dissent and dialogue within community groups. Some view workfare as a lesser of two evils with regards to embracing welfare recipients, who already had seen their cheques cut by 26% and who were accessing services within foodbanks, community health centres and other organizations. In the Community Health Centre where I was employed, a few welfare recipients adamantly requested to be put on workfare in order to get additional funds for transportation. In Sudbury, other organizations were subcontracted to promote the workfare program to some of their clients. Doing so was highly criticized in the community, given the volatile political climate created by the welfare cuts. Many community groups vehemently opposed workfare, sensing the creation of an uncomfortable alliance between the state and community-based organizations fighting the social policies affecting their clients.

To engage in workfare would be to compromise community agencies' political positions. Shragge (1993), as well as other grounded academics, often alludes to this alliance-building with the state as being an uncomfortable one:

> Not surprisingly, there is tension in this alliance. Those who express reservations about such a partnership as the basis for community economic development fear that the democratic foundations on which many of these alternatives were built may be undermined.

There has been much criticism of the Ontario Works program, since recipients most often are placed in very precarious, low paid and short term jobs.

> It does not aim to train people for, or place them in, meaningful or long-term jobs. Ontario Works is part of a provincial policy supporting low-paid, temporary job creation (Bezanson & McMurray, 2000).

The Harris agenda has forced people to a labour market which has shrunk increasingly over the past twenty years and which is not flexible towards people with little or no skills. According to the National Council of Welfare (1998, January 7), Ontario Works assumes that there are enough jobs for everyone who will be seeking one.

> Yet no evidence has been presented to support such a belief, and no examination of the realities of the labour market facing welfare recipients appears to have been done in preparation of the new legislation.

According to Welfare Watch (1999, April 30) the focus on dependency and skills deficiencies places the emphasis on reform of individual deficiencies and downplays larger changes in the economy that have increased caseloads.

> Little attention is given to the problem of lingering unemployment or structural change in the economy which has displaced many people and rendered their work experience and skills outdated, the lack of supports to sole support parents, or the erosion of other income supports such as the Unemployment Insurance system.

One must also consider the education levels of welfare recipients in Ontario. According to a study conducted by Statistics Canada (1997), there has been virtually no net employment growth among those with only a high school education since 1990. "Among those with less than high school the outlook is grim: total employment fell by nearly 40 percent for those with eight years of education or less, and by nearly 30 percent among

those with only some high school" (Welfare Watch, 1999, April 30). An equally disturbing statistic is submitted by the National Council of Welfare which reported in April, 1999, that "70% of the municipal caseload in Ontario had a high school education or less."

2.1.4) Mothers, Poverty and Labour Pains

When one considers the economic situation of women in Ontario, the situation looks bleak. In fact, women across Canada have not seen huge improvements to their economic status since the Royal Commission on the Status of Women issued its report more than 30 years ago where the Commission found that:

> ...almost 52% of families with children headed by sole-support mothers were poor. Today, that percentage, which rose as high as 62% in 1984, now stands at 56%. The rate has been consistently above 50% since the early 1980's (Townson, 2005, March 15).

According to the literature, there appears to be sound analysis with regards to the vulnerability of working mothers, given their disadvantaged position in a labour market which demands more highly skilled workers, and offers at the same time low-skilled, low-paying jobs. According to several feminist scholars (Armstrong, 1990; Baker, 1998; Brisken 1998), women are overwhelmingly represented in low-paid employment sectors. In addition, the literature indicates that the state regulates almost every aspect of working mothers' lives. The notion of "two spheres" is often mentioned within the literature, reflecting work done inside and outside the home. Armstrong states quite clearly that those social policies affecting women's ability to mother should be viewed as women's issues:

> Given the segregation of many women in the home and their responsibilities for childbearing, regulations and policies related to such matters as housing, welfare programs, transportation, paid work done at home, and immigration have also increasingly been defined by feminists as women's issues (Armstrong & Armstrong, 1990, p. 122).

Armstrong supports the notion that the state regulates the different spheres of activity in which women find themselves. It becomes apparent that the state can have a huge impact on women's work and the quality of their lives:

> The state not only provides jobs for women. It also regulates or fails to regulate women's work in the home and in the market. Moreover, state policies can have a profound impact on the nature and conditions of women's work in both spheres. Such regulations and policies influence whether or not women take paid work, where that paid work is done, and under what conditions work within and outside of the home is undertaken (Armstrong & Armstrong, 1990, p. 120).

The nature and conditions of women's work in Ontario are precarious. Given the reality of the "minimalist" social policies of the Harris/Eves government, women have become extremely vulnerable. According to Lamarche (1999) women rely heavily on the State, suffer under restructuring, and engage in caring work (e.g. child-care, elder-care) which does nothing to guarantee economic security.

It becomes evident that one of the main reasons that women's poverty rates are high is the fact that they are the primary care givers of their families (Evans 1998; Ferguson 1998). According to Baines (1998), caring refers to the act of taking care of someone's physical, mental and emotional needs. These responsibilities are not reflected in welfare policy because, at least in Ontario, the family ethic model (nuclear model) is the prevailing model despite the fact that only 12% of Ontario's families conform to this model. Baines (1998) argues skillfully that Ontario's welfare system does not acknowledge that women spend more time caring for their families, which contributes to

the non-recognition of their work in the labour market. "If one adds to this the fact that women must take time off from their work to have their children, this explains, at least in part the gaps in income levels between men and women and the fact that when these childbearing women get older, they are, by default, poorer than their male counterparts".

In her research Evans (1998) explores this idea of non-recognition for mothering work and makes a strong case by exploring the relationship between women's caring roles and how they contribute to women's high rates of poverty, especially amongst single mothers and female elders. Given the fact that women spend more time caring for others than do men, they are disadvantaged when it comes to participating in the labour market; this results in inadequate incomes and pensions. According to the Evans (1998), to understand women's poverty one needs to examine "the intersecting process of the family ethic and capitalism that designates men as the primary workers in the public world and women as the primary workers in the private domain of the household" (p. 52).

In an article entitled "Dependency, Equality and Welfare," Kittay (1998), picking up on the notion of dependency, alludes to a potential tension within the notion of dependency between women who work and women supported by the state. Kittay suggests that it is rather peculiar that single mothers on welfare are viewed as being dependent on the welfare state but that stay at home middle class mothers are not viewed as being dependent on their husbands. Both types of mothers are providing care for their children, yet the mothers on welfare are seen as being more dependent than the middle class mothers.

In a most interesting article on feminist welfare politics, Gwendolyn Mink (1998) alludes to tensions amongst feminists with regards to mothering roles. Mink argues that feminists are caught in a delicate bind when advocating for equality and independence for women in the workplace, while also fighting to preserve what little remains of social welfare programs. The tension which is underlined relates to how middle class women are very much concerned with equality in the workplace as opposed to poorer women who have not found work outside the home and who raise their children. Mink examines the tensions surrounding the way the government supports middle class stay at home mothers through tax cuts and how the state forces poor single mothers to work outside the home through programs such as workfare.

In an article describing the value of mothers as workers, Jane Misra (1998) suggests that there are certain factors which must be harmonized in order to create women- friendly state policies. First, there should be some type of women's political movement which should represent women's concerns. Women's paid labour and unpaid labour (the notion of two spheres) must also be valued. Even though the literature of mothering and work is interesting, it is also thin. Much more research is needed in order to pull out mothering specifics relating to work and poverty.

> No longer prepared to argue that women are really the same as men, feminists have not developed a theoretical or strategic understanding of difference. Nor have class, race and ethnic differences in mothering received much theoretical or empirical attention (Armstrong & Armstrong, 1990, p. 33).

2.1.5) Social Assistance and Child Care

There is a common expression in Ontario which states that mothers are only one husband away from welfare. This expression highlights the very serious, if not precarious, role that women as mothers and workers face under government policies in Ontario.

Since the advent of the Harris government, women on social assistance must also work outside the home. Mothers on welfare can work up to 17 hours a week within non-profit or community agencies, be involved in job readiness programs or actually work in job placements orchestrated by private brokers. Very little attention is placed on mothers' childcare needs.

> The Harris government has made much of its commitment to break the dependency of families, particularly of sole support mothers, on social assistance. It is however, not prepared to invest money in child care to enable parents to enter the labour market (Kitchen, 1996, p. 106).

What is even more insidious is that in the first nine months after the Tories came to power, 8,000 subsidized childcare spaces were lost across Ontario and another 3,500 followed soon after (Lightman & Baines, 1996, p. 149). One need not provide much additional proof of Harris' total lack of comprehension of women's childcare needs in the province of Ontario.

As discussed earlier, the Ontario Works program contains elements of workfare designed to get welfare mothers working. The Common Sense Revolution states that employability programs will get mothers off welfare by upgrading their education levels or employability skills. This type of program is vulnerable to criticism, and rightfully so,

given the assumptions about the motivations of the beneficiaries, the nature of the job market, and the chances of being better off getting paid than claiming benefits (Baker, 2000; Shragge, 1997).

The issue of caring emerges when some welfare recipients are prevented from finding paid work or keeping a job (thus penalized by welfare) because they "experience chronic illness or disabilities, lack child care services, or retain responsibility for a child or other family member who is ill or disabled" (Baker, 2000, p. 90). Employability programs also undermine or do not recognize mothering as a form of work:

> Employability programs assume that beneficiaries are not working, yet some are already caring for children and performing family or community services (Baker, 2000, p. 90).

According to a report submitted to the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services regarding the Ontario Works program (KPMG, 1999), there is massive pressure on the waiting list for childcare spaces and subsidies as the Ontario Works program matures:

> Without substantial increased funding, this would create a perverse incentive structure where parents would be favoured in the allocation of child care because they are on social assistance and looking for employment, instead of off social assistance and in employment.

In an article published in the "Canadian Public Policy," Chaykowski and Powell (1999) state that the issue of childcare policy in Ontario will not be resolved until public opinion reaches the point that childcare is not a welfare mother's issue or a working mother's issue but simply an educational issue for small children. Chaykowski and Powell (1999) contend that government policy makers will have a hard time selling the necessity for increased funding in childcare benefits for welfare mothers making the transition from

welfare to work. "Childcare is more likely to receive popular support on the policy platform if it is framed in an educational context as a child well-being policy" (Chaykowski & Powell, 1999).

Unfortunately, it would appear that public opinion does not care who takes care of welfare mothers' children, as long as the mothers are working. Carol Sanger (1999) supports this claim in an article entitled "Leaving Children for Work":

> There is a general consensus, as reflected in recent welfare legislation that poor mothers should -indeed must leave their children to work and that the question of where or with whom these mothers leave their children is a matter for them to solve on their own. It simply matters less what becomes of poor children than that their mothers work.

Clearly, Ontario Works and its workfare agenda is, in its simplest form, a punishment for people who are poor. As one welfare mother expressed to me in July 2000 while I was working at the Centre de santé communautaire de Sudbury:

> As far as I can see, it's now a crime to be poor in Ontario; and for me, my punishment is workfare. It's not right.

It also becomes clear that social policy in Ontario directly attacks single mothers who form the majority of people on welfare with their children. How can one engage in mothering and caring practices adequately when one is in a perpetual state of crisis? With regards to childcare, as we have mentioned earlier, all mothers in Ontario are working mothers in one form or another. Government policy on childcare must consider and weigh the needs of welfare to work transition situations of mothers, as well as the needs of all working mothers.

2.1.6) The Family Support Plan of Ontario:

Female single parents and their children are by far one of the most vulnerable groups of people in Ontario society today. It is interesting to note that approximately 44% of the country's total social assistance population resides in Ontario (National Council of Welfare, 1998). According to Statistics Canada (1992):

> Ontario possessed the greatest concentration of lone parent families in Canada at 342,000 (36% of the total lone parent families country-wide) and 283,000 of the provincial total were female-led (p.18).

Given provincial government policies to reduce welfare benefits, single mothers on welfare now live well below the poverty line for a family of three, which is placed at $22,000 a year in a mid-sized city (Campaign, 2000; Campaign, 1995). With the cuts in 1995, mothers on welfare with two children made a minimum of $1239 a month or $14,868 a year (Kitchen, 1996). When one factors in the cost of housing, poor mothers everywhere in Ontario paid out more than one third of their welfare benefits on housing costs (Marnie interview/research participant). This situation has not improved since Eves took office.

The issue of poverty and mothering is fundamental when one examines the impact of the Family Support Plan of Ontario on both welfare and non-welfare mothers. The F.S.P. is a policy which ensures that non-custodial parents (usually men) pay their court-ordered support obligations to their children through custodial parents. Many social policy analysts believe that this is an expensive way of relinquishing state responsibility to parents who do not wish to pay child support or who simply cannot afford it. The Family Support Plan is modeled under the Federal Divorce Act of 1985. Child support falls

within provincial jurisdictions and is awarded and enforced through an adversarial court process. In Ontario, the provincial default rate on child support payments was estimated between 50 and 75% in the 1990's (Baker & Tippin 1999).

In Ontario, any child support payment made by a non custodial parent does not necessarily benefit the mother, but rather reduces government expenditures on income assistance. There are approximately 78,000 women and their children who rely on child support payments in Ontario. One can easily understand why single mothers would prefer to receive social assistance as opposed to receiving child support payments from their ex-partners. In cases where there was violent behavior or abuse in the relationship, the Family Support Plan forces women to still keep in contact with their ex-partners. In addition, whatever money is given to mothers on welfare is automatically deducted by social assistance.

> About 40% of Canadian women with child-support orders are receiving welfare or income assistance from their government. This means that any child support made by former husbands does not benefit them but rather reduces government expenditures on income assistance (Richardson, 1996, p. 242).

Dranoff (1996) states that Ontario has the only "maintenance enforcement program in Canada which fully offsets the cost of services and provides a similar amount as net return to the government." If a mother on welfare does not receive her child support payment from her ex-partner, the fact that she is on social assistance will guarantee that her income will be supplemented by social services. This is not an easy task; paperwork and a circus-like act to prove that she has not received payment from her ex-partner can be devastating when she needs to attend to immediate needs of paying for rent or putting food on the table. Equally appalling is the situation of single mothers who work in low-

paying jobs and who do not qualify for social assistance benefits. The fact that these women heavily rely on child support payments creates an even greater state of dependency on the ex-partners who have been ordered to pay support. As we have indicated earlier, the angst of making ends meet is real for poor working mothers (not on social assistance) because of a strong tradition of payments which are defaulted by ex-partners.

> Child-support payments are especially important to lone mothers who work in low-paid jobs. For those who must rely on social assistance however, whether or not the father pays does not affect the income of the mother and children (Baker & Tippin, 1999, p. 105).

It becomes apparent that mothers who are on social assistance and mothers who work in low paying jobs both experience a lose - lose situation with regards to support payments from their ex-partners. Mothers on social assistance who have been cut by almost 30% could definitely use additional financial support from their ex-partners. As we have seen, their support payments are deducted dollar for dollar by social services. On the other hand, single mothers who are employed but who do not qualify for social assistance for whatever reason (not being able to produce the required paperwork, for example), are relegated to a state of dependency on their ex-partners in order to provide for their children. This can be a very dangerous situation for mothers if there is a past history of spousal abuse. What is extremely worrisome are the effects of the mothers' caring skills upon their children. Not surprisingly, according to several researchers in child welfare, the dominant determinant factor of mothers in child welfare literature is that they live in poverty (Baines, 2000; Bala, 1991; Callaghan, 1993; Crosson-Tower, 1998; Lindsey, 1994; Swift, 1995).

2.1.7) The Spouse in the House Rule

The vulnerability of women in Ontario seems to have emerged as a constant theme thus far. The "Spouse in the House Rule" is a policy which is being hotly contested at the present time in Ontario and serves to illustrate just how vulnerable women really are. It is derived from the General Welfare Assistance Act and the Family Benefits Act, and was created by Harris when he came to power in 1995. According to the National Council of Welfare (1999), only 12% of families in Ontario fit the definition of the so-called nuclear family. Ontario case workers from the Ministry of Community and Social Services have the power to evaluate arbitrarily the nature of a relationship of a welfare recipient and, with a moment's notice, cut off benefits if the recipient is suspected of having a partner in the house. This was not always the case in Ontario; it is only since the arrival of Harris in 1995 that this policy was re-introduced after David Peterson had done away with it in 1987.

> Under the old provisions, cohabitation between opposite gender partners was permitted for up to thirty-six months until support obligation was enforced; Harris shortened this to a single night's encounter, without regard to financial capacity or readiness to pay on the part of the male. The effect, clearly, was to inhibit single mothers from establishing ongoing relationships with men and thereby to perpetuate their reliance on assistance, or conversely, to ensure women's financial dependency on men (Lightman & Baines, 1996, p. 145).

Another point, which is not evident in the Lightman and Baines article, is that the question of single mother's morality with regard to having a male partner comes into play. In an article entitled "Welfare's Ban on Poor Motherhood" Dorothy Roberts (1999) makes a strong case, arguing that the state views poor mothers on welfare as requiring moral supervision, thus justifying such measures as the Spouse in the House rule:

> Work requirements for welfare mothers with young children reflect an inability to see the value in their care for their children. The devaluation of welfare mothers' work is reflected as well in behaviour modification programs designed to reform poor women's lifestyles - programs that assume that poor mothers need moral supervision (Roberts, 1999, p. 157).

Moscovitch (1999) echoes Robert's argument on the morality of single mothers when he states that welfare mothers are being punished for trying to engage in building a relationship with a man:

> The clear intent of this change is to make it more difficult for a single person on assistance to progress into or try out a relationship, a choice available to people not on assistance. It is based on the idea that if a man is present in the home of a single female, then he should be paying if he has an income. The change will generate some savings (how much is not estimated), but is primary purpose appears to be both moralistic and punitive. The message is that (heterosexual) single people who "play house" should not be supported by the state. If they do, the state will punish them by cutting them off welfare.

A court ruling in June 2000, found that the provincial government's regulation defining a spouse in welfare law and policy discriminated against mothers on social assistance. According to an article in Welfare Watch (June 2000), four women on social assistance launched the Charter challenge when the Harris government changed the definition of spouse in 1995. The mothers, who are all on welfare, had won their case at the Social Assistance Review Board, but the government appealed the ruling. In June 2000, the Ontario Divisional Court found that the policy violated section 15 of the equality rights section of the Charter of Rights.

> The evidence shows that the legislation exacts a price from those women for their relationships which it does not exact from other women in society with similar relationships: their financial independence. The price so exacted is payable in human dignity (Welfare Watch, June 29, 2000).

What is clear to me is that the notion of dependency emerges often in the literature with regards to women who are supported by social assistance. I tend to agree with Mink and

Crompton (1998), as well as other authors, that feminists must also examine the notion of dependency of women who are not supported by the state, but who are supported by their spouses.

2.1.8) Gender Matters: Background Information on Northern Ontario

Given my research interests in women, mothers and community organizing in Northern Ontario, I believe it is important to try and highlight how the attack on the poor can be exacerbated in Northern Ontario. As I have mentioned earlier, a feminist lens brings women to the center of analysis (Crow & Gottell, 2000); it is also important to note that the notion of retrenchment as described by Pierson (1994) is appropriate in the context of Northern Ontario because it looks at how Harris' reforms impact on specific groups. In this case, women as mothers are viewed through one lens; another lens is also employed when looking at the geographic nature of Northern Ontario in order to comprehend the specificity of the impacts of reforms on this target population.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Northern Ontario's economy has been developed by rail, mining and lumber industries. Today the economy is primarily industry-based, with rapid expansions in the technological and health areas. In the northwest of the province, the core activity is still the pulp and paper industry (Kauppi & Reitsma-Street, 1996). The lack of economic diversity in Northern Ontario communities renders them extremely vulnerable to employment fluctuations. For example, when I was in grade 5 in 1974, there were approximately 18,000 men who worked for the mining industry in Sudbury. Twenty years later there are roughly 7,000 men and women employed at INCO and

Falconbridge mines who, with more sophisticated technologies, produce as much nickel output as in the 1970's. The neighboring town of Elliot Lake enjoys the dubious honor of having the highest unemployment rate in Northern Ontario at about 65% since the closure of Dennison Mines, the last of the area's uranium mines. When one examines the economic profile of Northern Ontario, the picture is bleak.

2.1.9) Poor Mothers in Sudbury, Ontario:

According to Kauppi and Reitmsa-Street (1996), the poverty rate for single-parent mothers in Canada has been reported to be 52 percent for those who were previously married and 75 percent for those who were never married. According to special tabulations of 1981, 1986, and 2001, census data on child poverty in Sudbury indicate that poverty rates were higher in Sudbury than in the province as a whole: 21.4 percent of all children under the age of 18 in the City of Sudbury were poor compared to 14.7 percent of all low-income families in Ontario during the 1991 census year. Reitsma-Street and Kauppi (1996) report that over one third of the women living in Northern Ontario cities and towns reported annual incomes under $10,000 in the last census. Oderkirk (1992) reported that 47 percent of all Canadian low-income families with children were single-parent families. In contrast, the proportion of poor families that is made up of single-parents was 70 percent in the City of Sudbury. Fifty percent of all the families headed by female parents were below the poverty line in 1991, compared to less than 15 percent of male single parents. Considering only the 3,960 poor children in single-parent families living in the Greater Region of Sudbury, fully 95 percent were in families headed by women.

It is therefore not surprising that single mothers have a very difficult time in assuming basic human needs such as housing. Shelter is a huge problem for women in Northern Ontario because there are extremely low vacancy rates. According to Crisis Housing, a non-profit housing resource centre in Sudbury, vacancy rates are less than 1%. As far as affordable housing is concerned, the subsidized units that do exist in Sudbury are backlogged with waiting lists, which are about two years long. Add to this the astronomical hydro rates in Ontario, particularly during the cold winter months of Northern Ontario, and it is easy to understand how difficult surviving is for poor women and their families. An analysis of women's total annual incomes in relation to gross rents in ten northern communities indicates that the average woman would be living under the poverty line when paying the average rent in her community. According to the Northern Ontario Regional Economist's Office (1995), the economic dependency ratio with the province as a whole shows clearly that dependency rates are higher in the North than they are in the southern and central areas.

> These ratios also provide an indication of the extent to which northern women are at greater risk of poverty than are men. For example, the EDR rate of 40.5 percent of women in the northeast was higher than the 24.5 percent rate for men in 1991. The 40.5 percent EDR for northeastern Ontario women is even more alarming when it is compared with the 28.1 percent rate for all women in Ontario (Reitsma-Street & Kauppi, 1996, p. 217).

The resource-based economies of the north (mining and pulp and paper industries) have meant that fewer women have had opportunities to work. Women's poverty rates have been greater in Northern Ontario than in Southern Ontario because of the limited employment opportunities which are available to women.

> Historically, women have had less access than men to employment in single-industry communities of the north. The lingering effects are manifested in the continued lower labour force participation rates, higher rates of part-time employment, the lower wages for women, and higher degree of gender inequality in wages (Reitsma-Street & Kauppi, 1996, p. 222).

When looking at the peculiarities of Northern Ontario as a geographic entity, it is important to note that housing becomes an important factor, which one must consider when ones examines the "Spouse in the House Rule." The severe shortage of housing in Northern Ontario forces women to try and negotiate living space with partners or roommates in order to provide shelter for their families. This is but one example of how social policy reforms impact heavily and differently on mothers in Northern Ontario. There are few or almost no housing refuges, shelters, or half-way housing programs for women living in Northern Ontario. This fact alone differentiates substantially the effects of certain welfare reforms with regards to housing in an urban versus northern setting. It is most difficult for mothers on welfare to survive on $1200 a month when the average cost of a two bedroom apartment in Northern Ontario is about $800.00 (Marnie interview, research participant). It is not difficult to understand that there is a tenuous dichotomy which can be drawn between mothers on welfare living in Northern Ontario and those living in Southern Ontario.

While both groups of women are in unenviable economic situations, the accessibility to housing resources for mothers in Southern Ontario places them in a slight advantage over their northern counterparts. When one also considers the issues raised earlier with regards to social assistance and childcare, as well as the Family Support Plan of Ontario, one can begin to understand how much more difficult it is for women in Northern Ontario to

access employment while on welfare, as well as access childcare which is almost non-existent. The sheer physical distances between homes and the downtown core of many Northern towns require that most people have cars. This is an impossibility for many mothers who are either on welfare or who are part of the working poor. Mothers must then rely on completely inadequate bus services to buy groceries, look for work and pay bills. In Sudbury, if one lives in the outlying areas of the city which are only a fifteen minute car ride to the downtown core, buses run only twice a day. With regards to child support, women in Northern Ontario must pay long-distance rates to Toronto in order to inquire about defaulted payments or any other issue with regards to income support. This is an additional expense, which many mothers simply cannot afford. If any of the mothers who are on welfare or who are working must entertain a relationship with an abusive ex-spouse for child support, there are very few women's shelters in Northern Ontario. I am not suggesting that life is easier for women as mothers in urban centres. What I am suggesting is that mothers living in Northern Ontario do not have access to as many resources as their counterparts in Southern Ontario. The absence of literature in this area is a sad testimony to the hardships which northern women face on a daily basis. In light of this reality, further research with regards to the impact of welfare reform in northern Ontario must be conducted.

Themes which have emerged in this chapter and merit further exploration are those around the notion of dependency, the importance of childcare as an issue for welfare to work transition mothers and also for women who are employed in the labour market. The precarious situation of women relative to their economic status and their spouses or ex-

spouses has also emerged as an interesting element in this piece of the research. For the purposes of this thesis, however, what is most important to me is to try and capture how social policy has impacted upon women in the province of Ontario. With regards to my thesis subject, I have attempted to examine through my interviews, how the Conservative government policies have impacted on women working as community organizers. As evidenced by the voices of the research participants who agreed to be interviewed for this thesis, they have clearly articulated in the following chapters that Harris' social policies have made their organizing lives a living nightmare.

One of the elements of organizing work which has manifested itself last year in Sudbury, and which has received national attention, is a coalition of community organizers, social workers and other concerned citizens to defend a woman by the name of Kimberly Rogers, who died tragically two years ago in her apartment while she was 9 months pregnant. Accused of welfare fraud, she was confined to her apartment under house arrest until the birth of her baby (Ontario Social Safety Network Summary, 2002, November 25). Her welfare payments having been cut off, Ms. Rogers died of heat exhaustion and poverty. A lengthy inquiry was conducted to understand the circumstances which led to her death. Many Ontarians blamed the Conservative government for her demise. After five weeks of intensive examination the Coroner's Jury made fourteen recommendations including: "the end of the lifetime ban from social assistance and an increase in social assistance rates to actually cover the basic cost of living" (PAR-L feminist listserve, UNB). For a long time, Kimberly Rogers was a symbol of everything that was wrong and continues to be wrong with how a government

can control, manipulate and ultimately destroy the most vulnerable in our society. The research participants all have stated that they must work harder at trying to alleviate the devastation of poverty enforced on the majority of their clients and communities by the Harris government. Feelings of rage, anger and oppression permeate much of the dialogue which I have entertained with them. Their voices will appear in the following chapters.

The next chapter focuses on the theoretical frameworks which best illustrate women's community organizing experiences. These frameworks contextualize the nature of women's community organizing work and create a space for understanding community work.

CHAPTER 3

Glynis George's (2000) book, "The Rock Where We Stand: An Ethnography of Women's Activism in Newfoundland", describes through a feminist lens, women's activism in the Maritimes. While her research approach is focused on trying to understand how a particular grassroots women's organization has an impact on the social fabric of the town of Bay George, she nonetheless brings to the forefront the incredible energy and power of women activists in Newfoundland. Feeling a certain connection with this particular author, I slowly started to feel that my research area was one which was legitimate and deserving of further exploration. Even though feminism was a hugely important influence for me as a Northern organizer, I was acutely aware that this was not the case for most of my female colleagues; I therefore understood very early on during the course of my research that I would have to keep my focus very wide and broad relative to trying to understand and illustrate the community organizing experiences of women in Sudbury.

This chapter attempts to illustrate the theoretical constructs which have emerged during the course of my research with the participants who have agreed to inform this thesis. Given the eclectic nature of women's community organizing, the theoretical frameworks are varied, rich and even at times complex. As I described in Chapter 1, I have attempted to address the construction of this thesis by employing a feminist lens. While the research participants may not be motivated by feminist ideals and theories, I, as the researcher, am. As such, this research exercise is an attempt to bring from the obscure to

the light, women's community organizing experiences as told through the voices of the research participants.

3.1.0) Theoretical Framework and Research Question

My starting point is that theory must be formulated according to our lived experiences as women and community organizers in Sudbury. Armstrong and Armstrong (1990) argue that for theory to be convincing, it must encompass women's experiences, which can provide systematic explanations for any social phenomenon and that, as feminist researchers, we must make central to any analysis the connections between the personal and the political.

Through my research, I seek to understand and celebrate the people with whom I have spent the better part of my life attempting to affect change and developing very real, profound and genuine relationships and friendships. I wish to theorize from the experiences of women who are strong and who are not afraid to speak up when defending their rights or the rights of others. Northern women in my eyes are deserving of respect and recognition, given the arduous nature of the work to which they are committed.

3.1.1) Negotiating the Research Question

Women as community organizers develop critical discourses on issues relating to the environment, economics, education and health. They engage in caring roles which have often been obliterated by social services and agencies which have dehumanized and

mechanized caring and nurturing work. As such, the intent of this research project is to explore the following:

What is the experience of being a female community organizer in Sudbury, Ontario?

I have attempted to understand women as organizers by looking at the following literatures:

1) Women and social policy.

2) Issues emerging from smaller communities, rural and northern social wok practice

3) Women, mothering and community organizing

The literature on women and social policy provides the backdrop for an analysis on women and social policy in Chapter 2 of this research project. The literature on the social construction of the Franco-Ontarian community, as well as the literature on race and racism help shape the context. These frameworks are woven within the data analysis chapter.

3.1.2) Issues Emerging from Smaller Communities, Rural and Northern Social Work Practice

According to Rothman and colleagues (1995), there are primarily three avenues of community organizing which are built around the following spheres; they are public organizations (health units), grassroots organizations which operate on a local level

(women's centres) and social movements (women's movement). There are diverging opinions with regards to initiating strategies for community organizing; however, there appears to be a consensus that the community in an urban, North-American context is in trouble, given the fact that capitalism and globalization is succeeding, at least in part, in homogenizing how communities interact with one another globally. Family based businesses are progressively being replaced by multinational corporations. The co-operative movement, for example, while present within Canadian society, has not known the expansion that it deserves because of fierce competition within private business spheres. In light of the devastation of capitalism, community organizers must confront numerous challenges relative to poverty, urban crime and racial tensions to name a few. Lee (1992) states that community development is a natural activity for human beings wanting to affect change:

> Community development is an ancient and persevering aspect of human activity. In some ways it is the most natural of human behaviours - getting together to make necessary changes in the way we live together (p. 39).

In Northern Ontario, as the industries which dominate towns close or move across the border, northern residents are left scrambling for survival. Because northerners live so far away from the decision-making centres of Toronto or Ottawa, provincial policies are often unadapted to northern realities (Delaney, 1995). Cuts to welfare, childcare subsidies, social housing and services have a crippling effect in northern communities, where there are very few alternative options to compensate for such cuts. Social problems such as incest, suicide, addiction and family violence are extremely high in many northern centres, rendering entire populations vulnerable (Zapf, 1993). To add to

this dismal picture, the lack of professionals in health, social services and education does nothing to alleviate the state of community affairs.

In an article entitled "Community, Culture and Control: Themes for the Social Services in Northern Communities", Brian Wharf (1999) argues effectively that community organizing efforts in the north are very difficult, given its political isolation from the decision-making centres of Southern Ontario.

> By contrast the most neglected rural and remote communities may be in provinces like British Columbia and Ontario where power is concentrated in the South and the interests of urban centres dominate provincial policies (Wharf, 1999, p. 344).

Wharf states, however, that community organizing in a northern setting "opens up spaces for citizens to participate in the process of government." Cassidy (1999) echoes this notion within the theme of "rurality," which may have applications in northern community organizing theory. Cassidy (1999) makes a case for northerners who are effective in their community organizing practices, given the very "smallness" of their geographic locations:

> People in small, rural communities can experience a potentially strong amount of solidarity, as they face the realities of the larger, more aggressive world "out there". They tend to have more of a common frame of reference. Because of their locality, their closeness, they often have strong information networks ... Many more examples could be cited of instances in which communities used their closeness, solidarity and knowledge of one another to counter large external forces (Cassidy, 1999, p. 233).

Zapf (1999) approaches the literature in a different way, albeit pertinent. Although he is not speaking exclusively to the issue of community organizing theory per se, he does recount the challenges which social work practice encounters in northern settings. For

the purposes of this research paper, I will draw from the literature review of community organizing to include social work practice because aspects of it are relevant.

According to Zapf (1999), the urban/rural dichotomy needs to be challenged and expanded by engaging dialogue with regards to social work practice in a northern setting. Zapf (1999) argues that the major models of professional social work practice have been developed and taught in urban centres. This, he claims, renders social workers who come from northern or rural communities to see themselves as "disadvantaged urbanites."

> Most students training to become professional social workers learn these models in urban university or college settings, reinforced by field placements in urban agencies (Zapf, 1999, p. 249).

Furthermore, when we do look at the literature regarding rural/northern community organizing and social work practice, most of what is written is American-based. Again, there are few applications to our realities as Northern Canadians. For example, Zapf (1999) states that the American literature claims that rural residents are able to maintain relationships with urban centres, given advances in transportation, which have reduced the isolation of many American rural communities. With regards to communities in Northern Ontario, transportation routes are oriented vertically, "reflecting links of dependency on southern Canada" (Zapf, 1999, p. 252). In Sudbury, the debate about having a two-lane highway between Sudbury and Toronto is political in nature and has been ongoing for over twenty-five years. Issues such as distance, isolation, lack of resources and even the weather are all challenges which are inherent to northern communities but which is almost completely absent from mainstream urban community organizing literature. Interestingly, as we will see, all of the research participants will

echo what the theorists are saying about the challenges to rural and northern communities.

3.2.0) Women, Mothering and Community Organizing

Many researchers recognize the value of women's contribution to effective problem-solving within community organisations (Dominelli,1990; Payne, 1990). As Dehli (1997) states, the work of "women in the community is quietly assumed and practically confirmed" (p. 47). The literature also talks about women who are engaged in community organizing efforts who are also mothers (Collins, 2000; Krauss, 1993; Naples, 1998) and this has implications for understanding the multiple roles that women play within the community.

The area of modern feminist theory and mothering practice is documented by a handful of female academics such as Chodorow, 1978; Rich, 1989 and Ruddick, 1989, but does not concentrate on women's community organizing in general or activist mothering in particular. Chodorow (1978) states that the area of mothering, per se, is one not valued in scholarly work:

> As a result, although women's mothering is of profound importance for family structure, for relations between the sexes, for ideology about women, and for the sexual division of labour and sexual inequality both inside the family and in the nonfamilial world, it is rarely analysed (p. 3).

In a groundbreaking book on the issue of mothering, Sara Ruddick (1989) discusses how, as a Ph.D. student in philosophy, she felt disillusioned by the way the discipline of

philosophy discounted women. She felt that her experiences as a mother and a woman were not honoured in philosophy.

> If I could not reject reason, could I honour reason differently? If I could no longer serve the Reason I had known, was it possible to reconceive. In the past, women who have criticized prevailing ideals of reason or failed to measure up to them have been called irrational. Would it be possible to reverse this judgement, finding fault not in women but in the ideals (Ruddick, 1989, p. 9)?

Like Ruddick (1989), I wish to reconceive the notion of community organizing and adjust its scope so that mothers as community organizers are valued as legitimate actors within community organizing and activism spheres. However, it has become painfully clear to me that, not unlike Hugh MacLennan's (1945) idea of "Two Solitudes," describing French-Canadian and Anglophone relations in the 1960's, the literature on community organizing is very gendered in nature. Female authors (Armstrong & Armstrong, 1990; Evans, 1998; Naples, 1998; Neysmith, 2000) talk about women's experiences primarily by contrasting their differing roles with men. Male authors (Biklen, 1983; Hardcastle et al., 1997; Lee, 1992; Panet-Raymond, 1989; Rothman et al., 1995; Shragge, 1993; Shragge, 1997; Wharf, 1992) talk about the numerous complexities of community organizing theory, which may or may not include women or mothers as actors. There simply is not much written on the value of women and mothering within community development theory.

Ledwith and Colgan (1996) suggest the notion that organizations within communities are not gender neutral; that, in fact, most organizations hold as members, key women who, by virtue of a certain degree of feminism and a particular focus on social issues, affect change. They also state that women's activism can be a focus of resistance and a force for collective identity.

> Where the conditions allow, we suggest that a key group of wise women can usually be identified in the vanguard of change: change agents who can effectively read gendered organisational politics and work to innovate change within their organisation. These change agents are likely to be women-aware and/or feminist women (Ledwith & Colgan, 1996, p. 283).

3.2.1) Mothers as Community Organizers

As I have mentioned before, I am interested in exploring the experiences of women as organizers; many of these women are mothers. This is not an easy task. According to Sharon Abbey (1999), the current research on mothering is not intended to be exclusionary or elitist.

> It does not attempt to exalt the maternal experience of insiders but instead tries to understand it more clearly from multiple perspectives (p. 53).

Mothering literature is not homogenous (Everingham, 1994; Rossiter, 1988). Liberal feminists state that governments should make the task of mothering as rewarding as possible without transforming patriarchal structures in North American society. Inversely, radical feminists argue that mothering is not biologically determined but is a learned experience (Chodorow, 1978; Ruddick, 1989). Mothering is, thus, socially constructed. Everingham (1994) argues that to ignore mothers' contributions to society, diminishes our understanding of "nurturing activities and the possible development of a socio-political system grounded in an ethic of care." Rossiter (1988) argues that the area of mothering is complex, given the notion that children's dependency parallels women's dependency on a patriarchal society.

Other feminists, myself included, suggest that economic conditions and social stratification are important elements of mothering research. Nancy Naples (1998) suggests that mothers' commitment to community work include their own personal experiences of racism and poverty. Naples challenges the traditional views and dominant constructions about poor mothers' lacking political interest or motivation to work. Because many women who work as community organizers experience racism and/or poverty, women's community organizing is a "logical outgrowth of their own encounters with inequality and injustice" (Naples, 1998, p. 18).

The area of mothering is one which is rich and complex. While not wanting to view mothering in essentialist or folkloric terms, I do believe that what is important is to highlight the tensions which exist within mothering roles. Mothering tensions exist not only between mothers themselves (mothers on welfare vs. mothers who are not on welfare, for example) but also in the eyes of public opinion and policy makers with regards to what roles they should be playing. The notion of working mothers (outside private sphere) versus stay at home mothers (working at home) often fuels ideological debates around mothering roles and societal expectations. The notion of mothering within the private versus public spheres has been a constant theme within the literature review. This brings us to another challenge when studying in the area of mothering and community organizing. Much of what is written on the subject of mothering understands the subject from a white, middle-class perspective (Chodorow, 1978; O'Reilly, 1998; Ruddick,1998). This becomes problematic when one wants to study in the area of mothering and community organizing, which generally tends to play itself out in low-

income communities. However, as we will see later, middle-class mothers are also considered to be engaged in what Nancy Naples (1998) terms as "activist mothering" which is work which often occurs in the toxic waste arena.

In a pioneering research project on women and community organizing, Naples (1998) undertakes a longitudinal study of women community workers working on the frontline of the fight for social and economic justice in low-income neighbourhoods in New York and Philadelphia. It is through her research that she uncovers a mothering theme. As mentioned earlier, Naples (1998) utilizes the term "activist mothering," as opposed to the term "mothers as community organizers". To me, and in the context of researching women as community organizers, I don't believe that there is an enormous difference between these terminologies; what is important to examine is the nature of the work which is being done by the mothers. Clearly, to me, the nature of the work can be qualified as both community organizing and as activism, given the politicised arenas in which women organizers find themselves.

Naples (1998) states that activist mothering is a construct derived from daily activities of community organizers. This challenges the "false separation of productive work in the labour force and reproductive work in the family and politics." Naples defines mothering and organizing as political activism which is a central component of mothering and community caretaking.

> The notion of activist mothering also highlights how political activism formed a central component of the community workers' motherwork and community caretaking. As a sociological concept, the term captures the ways in which politics, mothering and labour comprised mutually constitutive spheres of social

> life for the community. It serves to counter traditional constructions of politics as limited to electoral politics or memberships in social movement organizations as well as constructions of mother work and reproductive labour that neglect women's political activism on behalf of their families and communities (Naples, 1998, p. 111).

According to Naples (1998), a closer reading of the lives of women as community organizers reveals the inseparability of these multiple dimensions of social life and analysis.

Through her research Naples (1998) states that activist mothering provides an analysis of a new conceptualization of the

> interacting nature of labour, politics, and mothering - three aspects of social life usually analysed separately - from the point of view of women whose motherwork historically has been ignored or pathologized in sociological analyses (Naples, 1998, p. 113).

Activist mothering not only involves nurturing work, but also includes activities of caring within the community. Much of what propels women to become involved in community organizing is a concern for their families' well-being. Several of my research participants discuss the notion of mothering and activism when they describe their lived experiences as community organizers. Mothering is a relatively constant theme within the interviews. The literature on mothering has themes related to citizenship, poverty and lesbian identity. For the sake of clarity, I have reviewed the literature and, based on similar issues and themes, have chosen to attribute titles to the factors which I believe are inherent within mothering and community organizing experiences. They are as follows: Citizenship, Poverty, Lesbian Mothering and the Environment.

3.2.2) Citizenship

According to Sheila Neysmith (2000) the citizenship debate is an excellent arena for studying the reproduction of power relations within race, class and gender inequities.

> Although feminist debates about how to conceptualize as well as promote citizenship have consistently highlighted the deleterious effects of the private/public split, in the 1990's the issue took on a certain edge as neoliberalism, in its restructuring form, began to equate citizenship rights with ideas of choice, particularly choice in the market-place (Neysmith, 2000, p. 20).

Neysmith (2000) then argues that the concept of the citizen/consumer is etched in a white, heterosexual, middle-class backdrop. Excluded from this concept are all those who do not fit this traditional mould. Poor women in particular are limited in their engagement as citizens. Neysmith (2000) states that what is totally absent in this discourse is an awareness of some women's "exclusion because one needs time and money to be both consumer and taxpayer" (p.). Commitments to inclusiveness are charitably offered by the state through consultative measures and have proven to be exercises in futility in North America:

> This is certainly the consultation model that has been used around long-term care and child welfare policy, both of which have changed very little during the post-Second World War era (Neysmith, 2000, p. 21).

What is important for our understanding of activist mothering, is to realize that the political participation of women in community organizing is deemed as being dissident citizenship. I would say that this is more so for mothers (whether they are poor or not), given the fact that mothers are identified with work which is relegated to the private sphere, that is the home; even working mothers (that is women working for a salary outside the home) are perceived to navigate between both the private and public sphere.

When mothers organize around issues such as toxic waste or drunk-driving, their activism is brought out of the private sphere into one which is public. Naples (1998) argues that, when researchers limit their analysis of mothering practices to the nuclear family model and the private sphere, "we miss the material conditions that contribute to differing family forms as well as the social construction of gender and political activism" (p. 113).

What is interesting and sometimes amusing is that mothers themselves often do not see themselves as activists or community organizers. During one interview with an activist mother in Sudbury, she related a story regarding the perception of her handicapped son's school principal with regards to her advocating on behalf of his special needs. The principle accused her of being an "activist" and causing trouble. According to this mother:

> I didn't even know what the word meant and I remember going home and looking it up in the dictionary; I was hurt because I didn't think that I was that. A troublemaker" (Belinda).

Naples echoes the idea that women as mothers do not see themselves as activists or community organizers. According to her research, mothers do not interpret their activities as political but simply an activity concerned with the needs of their communities. According to Naples (1998), "research and politics are designed to serve those in power, not poor communities" (p. 21).

Many mothers who work as organizers simply see themselves as extending their caring role as mothers into their communities in order to address concerns which jeopardize

their families' health or well-being. Professor Celene Krauss, a sociology professor at Kean College of New Jersey has done much research in the area of community organizing and toxic waste. Krauss (1999) argues that women as mothers are forced to examine their assumptions about the family as a private sphere which according to them, should be separate from one which is public. Women threatened by toxic waste are forced to re-examine the role of the state as a protector of citizens to a role which allows corporations to threaten their families' lives with polluted water and hazardous chemicals.

> Ultimately, these women arrived at a concept of environmental injustice rooted in the inequities of power that displace the costs of toxic waste unequally onto their communities. The result was a critical political stance that contributed to the militancy of their activism. Highly traditional values of democracy and motherhood remained central to their lives: they justified their resistance as mothers protecting their children and working to make the promise of democracy real. Women's politicization around toxic waste protests led them to transform their traditional beliefs into resources opposition which enabled them to enter the public arena and challenge its legitimacy, breaking down the public/private distinction (Krauss, 1999, p. 138).

Theoretically, if mothers as organizers can be etched within a dissident citizenship discourse, to do so is to address the appropriation of power in the public arena. Community organizing as an activity is one which forces people to redefine their roles as citizens. In the case of women as mothers in the area of toxic waste, they may perceive their roles as mothers as extending beyond the private sphere of care into the public sphere of survival. Issues of gender, class and challenging authority are factors with which many mothers as organizers must negotiate as citizens.

3.2.3) Caring and Poverty

The themes of caring and poverty are factors which consistently emerge as contributing to women's organizing. The literature is strong with regards to asserting the fact that women are more likely to work part-time and interrupt employment patterns to take care of family members and the household (Armstrong & Armstrong, 1990; Baker, 1999; Neysmith, 1998; Reitsma-Street & Keck, 1996). Although children are the ones who most benefit from women's caregiving, according to Lipovenko (1997), women are 50 per cent more likely than employed men to be caregivers to individuals with chronic health problems or disabilities. The issue of restructuring is an interesting component of caring, which is brought to the forefront of women's organizing, thanks to the pioneering efforts of Sheila Neysmith (2000) in her book entitled "Restructuring Caring". Several authors examine how economic and social restructuring affect the responsibilities that women assume in caring for others. Neysmith (2000) suggests that restructuring affects the paid and unpaid work that women do and that the notion of power in the restructuring discourse "is exercised by limiting the relevant restructuring issues discussed in public policy" (Neysmith, 2000, p. 1).

> Specifically, there is very little recognition of how restructuring increases and changes the caring labour that women do and how these get played out in gendered, classed, and racialized ways (Neysmith, 2000, p. 1).

According to Neysmith (2000), restructuring and government disengagement with regards to health and social welfare programs means that the downloading of social care costs will be brought onto and into the lives of women:

> It became increasingly apparent that women, not business, government, and service agencies that are the focus of much policy and popular literature, were bearing the brunt of restructuring (Neysmith, 2000, p. 3).

In an article entitled, "Women's Caring: Work Expanding, State Contracting," Baines, Evans and Neysmith (1998) define caring in the following manner:

> Caring refers to the physical, mental and emotional activities and effort involved in looking after, responding to, and supporting others. In our society, much of this work is done by women in varying forms throughout their lives. It is done as mothers, daughters, and wives in the context of individual relationships, in the community as volunteers, through the professions as nurses, social workers, and teachers, and as low-wage workers in hospitals, child-care centres, and home-care services. The persons who receive care are usually those we view as dependent, and include children, people with physical, intellectual, or psychiatric disabilities, and the frail elderly. However, within the family, the cared-for may also include able-bodied men (p. 3).

In an article on caring within the Better Beginnings Better Futures project, Reitsma-Street and Rogerson (1999) highlight the issue of caring as one which is important to community organizing traditions. While the word "caring" is used in a general fashion throughout the article, we would suggest that the underlying assumption behind the notion of caring belongs to the sphere of mothering. Interestingly, I find it curious that the word "mothering" is not employed once within the context of the article. Besides this apparent weakness, I do believe in the validity of the caring argument as described by Reitsma-Street and Rogerson (1999):

> Persons who perform paid or unpaid caring work for children and adults inside the family home or in social service and educational centres have social, emotional, problem-solving and organizational skills that too often are devalued or made invisible; these competencies could and do add valuable strengths to organizations (p. 298).

I would go further and qualify that the "persons" to whom Reitsma-Street and Rogerson (1999) are referring are more likely to be women as mothers. I would also qualify that the notions of "caring" and "poverty" are inextricably linked to low-income women

living under the Harris/Eve Conservative government. As I've discussed in the social policy section, the 1990's have been characterized by a preoccupation with debt reduction through cuts to social programs. Debt reduction and social policy shifting has resulted as an attack on the poor, many of whom are women. Female lone parents represent 47 per cent of poor non-elderly families with children, but constitute 20 per cent of this population. According to Swift and Birmingham (2000):

> Canada is in fact among the three highest western countries in its poverty rate for single mothers, along with Australia and the United States. Recent figures show that 61.4 per cent of Canadian single mothers with children under eighteen live in poverty (p. 98).

According to Wharf (1992) the issue of women's poverty and thus, by extension, child poverty is one with which communities grapple consistently:

> Equally clearly, the issue of poverty or of child poverty cannot be resolved on a community-by-community basis but in a very important way the movement to end child poverty can begin in local communities (Wharf, 1992, p. 215).

As mentioned earlier, the reality of workfare also is linked to the idea of women's caring. Workfare programs in Ontario do nothing to respond to the needs of women who are actively engaged in the role of caring:

> Once required to participate in workfare, neither the act nor the regulations oblige the state to address the constraints that care- giving responsibilities (be they children or adult dependants) place upon women's participation in paid employment or in job readiness activities (Mosher, 2000, p. 36).

One begins to understand that the factors of caring and poverty are strong elements which may encourage or propel women to become involved in their communities in order to launch a counterattack against the state. It is in the chilly social climate of the Conservative government in Ontario that women and mothers were organizing in order to respond to the needs of their families and communities. Women as mothers were and

are leading the fight in communities across Ontario to contend with the issue of child poverty (Bélanger, 1995). Finally, it is important to reiterate the distinction that, according to the literature, community organizing strategies and developments are gendered and that mothers are often in the forefront of these efforts. As one of the research participants clearly articulated during the course of an interview:

> ... The one thing I noticed in my experience as an organizer, if you want to get the folks out, talk to them about their kids; that's the thing I can touch on women, and it'll get them going every time (Mary).

3.2.4) The Lesbian Mother and Education Factor

The literature with regards to lesbian politics and community organizing is very rich. Lesbians have a strong community organizing tradition related to issues regarding gay/lesbian violence, AIDS research and the recovery movement of incest survivors (Taylor & Rupp, 1998). Much of the literature highlights the politicized nature of lesbian feminist communities:

> Lesbian feminist communities view heterosexuality as an institution of patriarchal control and lesbian relationships as a means of subverting male domination. Relationships between women are not only personal affairs but also political acts (Taylor & Rupp, 1998, p. 67).

Feminist literature defines lesbian mothers either as women who have had children through alternative insemination processes or as women who have had children in heterosexual relationships and then "reconfigured their family lives in order to live as lesbians" (Fumia, 1999, p. 86). Initially, I had never considered that lesbian mothering was a form of activism per se; I simply viewed lesbian mothering as a form of caring for a child in a non-heterosexual environment. It is only after reading the literature on lesbian politics and mothering that I came to the realization that having a child in a

predominantly heterosexual society forces lesbian mothers to advocate on behalf of their children, primarily through the school system. Many lesbian mothers with whom I have spoken since the beginning of my research journey have confirmed the literature by stating quite clearly that their activism is primarily centred on issues regarding sensitizing teachers and school boards to the importance of having staff and curriculum which are lesbian/gay sensitive and positive. Interestingly, one of the research participants for this project is a lesbian mother and she was quite clear that her lived experience as an organizer was not only informed by her identity as a lesbian but, more importantly, that her experience with the local school board in Sudbury was quite positive:

> I noticed I started getting all these token appointments, because I was a lesbian mom. They would, I would get all these token appointments for different avenues, which actually really opened the doors because they (school board) were doing part of a growth process too, saying, "We have to start recognizing this because this really is in our school system" (Belinda).

It has become clearer to me through the scholarship and my own interviews, that lesbian mothers have advocated strongly for school material which reframes or redefines the traditional notion of the nuclear family.

> In order to begin to think about alternative family structures, or households headed by mother-lesbians, it is necessary to find an entry point into motherhood outside the North American ideal of womanhood (Fumia, 1999, p. 91).

Redefining the notion of family is full-time work for many lesbian mothers. Other mothering activities revolve around child custody issues, given the absence of legal recourses and the refusal of many governments to recognize same-sex marriages. The school factor is a highly problematic area of resistance for lesbian mothers, since lesbian mothers must continuously redefine and reinvent their personae as mothers. The school factor often emerges as a dominant theme in lesbian mothering activism:

> When I went to my first parent-teacher meeting I immediately tried to engage the help of the teacher in trying to value what my reality as a lesbian mother meant to me and to my son. She asked me how she could work with me and I told her that by being open-minded would be a good start. It's always been that way with me as a lesbian mom ... a constant battle (Lyne).

In an article entitled "Women in the Community: Reform of Schooling and Motherhood in Toronto," Kari Dehli (1997) explores the historical relationships between Toronto mothers and schools. Dehli (1997) makes a compelling case that criticizes the assumption of schools and, by extension, school boards that mothers are and should be at the helm of volunteer and community organizing activities:

> When trustees, administrators and community workers talk about the potential benefits of parent participation in children's schooling and about forging a new partnership between parents and teachers, it is Mother who is implicitly assumed to be the partner (p. 47).

One can understand the difficulties which are encountered when the designated parent in so-called alliance building strategies between teachers and school boards is a lesbian mother. The very mention of lesbian mothering challenges every basic assumption that traditional schools have about the notion of the family ethics model. As Fumia (1999) aptly describes in her experiences as a lesbian mother, her raison d'être as a mother is constantly called into question:

> I have become conscious of my changed status in institutional spaces such as my children's schools. My ears and eyes have been sharpened to the homophobic nuances "othering me" (Fumia, 1999, p. 93).

The notion of "othering" has implications in lesbian community organizing with regards to other forms of "others." For example, I believe that single parents can and do benefit from the organizing work in which lesbian mothers are engaged, in order to bring to the forefront the existence of different types of family models. Certainly single parent families ought to be viewed as legitimate forms of families and not as failed attempts at

"family" by the education system. I believe that is important to note that, while lesbian mothering in and of itself is a form of nurturing and caring, the politicized nature of lesbian feminism and culture renders the action of mothering as one which is politically charged. I believe that such a politicized form of mothering has positive benefits for alternate family structures. On a final note, it is important to mention that the issues of race, class and gender all intersect within women and mothering community organizing theory. While we have not made this the focus of this particular factor, it is important to mention, given the complexities of lesbian mothering. For example, in New York city lesbian mothers have organized around including gay/lesbian positive literature in multicultural communities:

> In their first action, they (lesbian mothers) marched into a Queens N.Y., school board meeting to the tune of "When the Dykes Come Marching In" and handed out lavender balloons inscribed "Ask about Lesbian Lives" to first graders to protest the board's refusal to allow a multicultural curriculum that included discussion of lesbian and gay men (Taylor & Rupp, 1998, p. 75).

Arnup (1997) argues that lesbian motherhood has created controversy and dissent within the lesbian community. Some feminists believe that lesbian mothering is a form of political retreat into the private sphere of caring. Still others believe that lesbian mothering is a form of political activism. According to Arnup (1997):

> Our differences expand and stretch people's notions of the acceptable, challenging longstanding notions about family and commonly held assumptions of children's need for a "father." Our presence in neighbourhoods, schools and day care centres has led to a growing awareness of lesbian families, and, it is hoped an acceptance of our way of life.

I believe that trying to get others to accept "their way of life" is a political issue and forces lesbian mothers into activism and community organizing, given that they must

advocate on behalf of their children through the schools and school boards in order to expand definitions regarding the nuclear model family.

3.2.5) The Health and Environmental Factor

Since the early eighties, the question or issue of toxic waste disposal has resurfaced periodically in Canada and the United States. According to Pulido (1997) and Krauss (1993 & 1999) the environmental justice movement began in the 1980's in response to a number of communities' exposure to toxic pollutants. "The uncontrolled hazardous waste fiasco known as the Love Canal in New York State was the pivotal event that made 'toxics' a household word" (Krauss, 1993). Closer to home in Northern Ontario, organizing around toxic waste has been commonplace for the past thirty years. Many actions have taken place against the effects of acid rain due to sulphur emissions from I.N.C.O., which is the largest employer in the mining industry in the Region of Sudbury. According to several health studies (Palangio & Pitblado, 2001), certain types of cancer rates for northerners are higher than anywhere else in the province of Ontario. While there is not enough empirical evidence to link I.N.C.O.'s disastrous reputation with regards to toxic emissions with the high rates of cancer, it does speak to the complacent refusal of governments in southern Ontario to act on behalf of taxpayers in Northern Ontario. For example, as recently as October, 2000, the city of Toronto voted through its municipal body to ship its garbage to Kirkland Lake in Northern Ontario. Fortunately for northerners, the deal has fallen through and now the state of Michigan has the dubious honour of creating jobs related to Toronto's garbage. Interestingly, yet not surprisingly,

many of the northern residents who mobilized around resisting Toronto's garbage were mothers.

According to Celene Krauss (1999), feminists identify the toxic waste movement as a women's movement, composed primarily of mothers. She argues that, given that mothers are most often responsible for their families' health, they are the organizers who get involved if there is a perceived threat to their families and, by extension, their communities:

> Because mothers are traditionally responsible for the health of their children, they are more likely than others within their communities to begin to make the link between toxic waste and their children's ill health. And in communities around the United States, it was women who began to uncover numerous toxi-related health problems: multiple miscarriages, birth defects and so on (Krauss, 1999, p. 133).

Krauss's (1999) research also indicates that mothers fight not only in a public sphere but in their private spheres as well. According to the Krauss (1998), women's entries into the public arena disrupt the power relationships and the traditional gender roles within their families.

> Women's visions of environmental justice and social inequality are mediated by subjective experiences and interpretations and rooted in the political truths they construct out of their identities as mothers and members of specific communities (Krauss, 1998, p. 149).

Krauss (1998) also makes a compelling argument with regards to women who are involved in toxic waste protests and undergo a political transformation on the process of "becoming" an organizer:

> The discovery of a toxic waste problem and the threat it poses to family sets in motion a process of critical questioning about the relationship between women's private work as mothers and the public arena of politics (Krauss, 1998, p. 134).

It is in this most interesting study of feminist geography literature that the idea of citizenship emerges once again. It becomes apparent that women who have never become involved in community organizing do so when they discover that the state does not play a protective role as it should but does much to protect the economic interests of big corporations.

Krauss (1998) states that activist mothers' involvement in the Love Canal prompted women to question their deeply held faith in democracy embedded in their working-class culture. The mothers assumed that the government would protect the health and welfare of their children. Instead, the mothers came to view the government as undermining, thus harming their families' well-being.

> Indeed a recurring theme in the narratives of these women is the transformation of their beliefs about government. Their politicisation is rooted in a deep sense of violation, hurt and betrayal from finding out their government will not protect their families (Krauss, 1998, p. 136).

Women as mothers are forced to negotiate their roles as complacent, trusting citizens to ones which take on big business and government in order to protect their families. In order to defend their families, mothers have no choice but to step out from their private spheres to one which is public. The very threat to their families' health transforms mothers into organizers. Whether or not they see themselves as organizers is secondary; what is important is that community organizing is now squarely placed in the hands of mothers who are forced to defend their families from strong alliances built between government and business. For women who have never organized in their lives, this is a brutal introduction to community organizing.

Feminist geographer Laura Pulido (1997) states that one must consider the demographics of mothering and community organizing in order to truly see who are the actors in this community organizing arena:

> While the goals of the movement are clearly significant, so too are its demographics. In contrast to the White, middle-class leadership of the mainstream movement, the grassroots movement for environmental justice is distinguished by a membership and leadership which is comprised largely of women, nonwhites, and other marginal groups (p. 15).

Unlike Krauss, Pulido (1997) is interested in environmental justice issues which particularly affect non-white and low-income communities in the U.S. Both Krauss and Pulido agree, however, that, regardless if mothers who are community organizers are white and middle-class or are members of different cultural communities, members of both groups must go through a process of developing an "oppositional or critical consciousness" in order to develop effective organizing strategies to defend their interests.

Feminist geography offers us extensive and important insight in the area of mothering and community organizing theory. The issues of citizenship, race, class and gender are all intersecting factors, which shape mothering activists' lives and their community organizing traditions and approaches in ways which need much further qualitative and quantitative research. What is certain is that mothers as community organizers are important actors in the field of community organizing initiatives and by virtue of their caring practices have been forced into playing a role called "organizer" or "activist". As one mother states in Krauss' (1999) article, the notion of being an organizer is one which was completely foreign to mothers organizing around the Love Canal issue:

> When it came to Love Canal, we never thought about ourselves as protestors. We carried signs, we barricaded, we blocked the gates, we were arrested. We thought of it as parents protecting our children. In retrospect, of course, we were protesting. I think if it had occurred to us we wouldn't have done it.

I find this particular issue very interesting because it speaks to the vocabulary that people use to describe women who become active outside the private sphere. Many of the research participants for this project alluded to the vocabulary of community organizing which spoke to how they negotiated their identities as community organizers. As one research participant states:

> ... the last media interview I did, they had put me down as a "professional protester"... and I thought, where the hell did that come from (Carol)?

Other words like "activist" and "community developer" and "organizer" were used interchangeably and depended greatly on the nature of the work of the research participants. This issue is further explored within the data analysis of the interviews.

As evidenced in the literature, mothering and community organizing theory is essentially based in an urban setting. Subsequently, I have had to create a space for my particular interest in women's community organizing experiences in a smaller urban/northern context. The particular area of women and mothers as community organizers is one which is found in several research areas, including mothering, feminist geography, caring and poverty, lesbian politics and education. Much of what I have reviewed is also heavily influenced by American writers. This has also been problematic for my interest in Canadian and northern-based community organizing. Nonetheless, I have tried as best as I can to sift through the literature which shapes women and mothers in their community organizing traditions.

What stands out for me are the issues of caring and poverty, important elements which may contribute to community organizers' work particularly under the oppressive reforms of Ontario's Conservative government. The notion of citizenship is also discussed at length, given the tensions which exist between Franco-Ontarians and visible minority Francophones in Ontario. Let us now familiarize ourselves with the methodology of this research project in order to then experience the voices of the women who have inspired this thesis.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1) Introduction

This chapter discusses the research focus and the methodology used to investigate the research question concerning the experiences of women's community organizing in Sudbury, Ontario.

In this qualitative research study, I wanted to create a space for women to reflect upon their experiences as community organizers. I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews with 16 women who were community organizers. I also conducted two focus groups; one at the beginning of the research trajectory and one at the end. I also incorporated reflexive ethnography (Ellis, 1995) through my personal narrative as a community organizer. There is a complementary relationship between qualitative research, reflexive ethnography (which is an element of qualitative research) and feminist research strategies which attempt to create spaces for women's voices and to bring from obscurity into the light certain elements of women's lives.

Access and selection of women as community organizers in Sudbury represented the first challenge for me as the researcher. Not wanting to interview only francophone women whom I had known in my own work as an organizer, I met with a professor and community organizer from the Faculty of Social Work at Laurentian University who

provided a list of names and contacts of unilingual anglophone women organizers whom she thought would be interested in being interviewed for this research study.

Recruitment was carried out with the aim to achieve diversity with regard to research participants' personal characteristics such as age, socio-economic background, whether or not they were mothers, ethnicity, arenas in which they worked as organizers, language and sexual orientation. The reason for the focus on diversity is simply an attempt to capture as much information as I possibly could through different women involved in community organizing in Sudbury. The list of contacts provided to me had several women whom I could possibly interview. Snowball sampling (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) provided additional names of women working as community organizers in Sudbury. Eventually, I managed to access sixteen women through the contact list and snowball technique who agreed to participate in this research study.

I did not know seven of the women who appeared on the list, although I had heard of them or collided with them socially in my work as an organizer. Most of the francophone women who appeared on the list were women with whom I had either worked or collaborated on different projects while working in Sudbury.

4.2) Qualitative Research Design

As stated earlier, this study utilized the generic qualitative method as presented by Lofland and Lofland (1995), Schatzman and Strauss (1973), whereby the underlying

principle is to get close to the people whom we choose to study. This approach provides the researcher with much room and flexibility in terms of determining techniques and strategies and also provides a space for the researcher to be very creative. According to Ellis and Bochner (2000) and Behar (1996), qualitative research should describe and develop a particular understanding for a social situation, a certain group of people, a certain event, etc. Ultimately, qualitative research attempts to try and understand a person's lived experience through his or her own words. Ellis and Bochner (2000), Tedlock (2000) and Madriz (2000) also argue a strong case that this particular type of research is suitable when there is little theory or research studies on a particular subject. Research on women in Northern Ontario is relatively rare. Use of qualitative methods designed to understand the lived experience of women as organizers in Sudbury contributes to the development of theoretical perspectives and alternative understandings on the nature of women and community organizing.

As outlined in Chapter 1, I decided to engage in a research process whereby my personal narrative would serve as a basis to explore certain experiences which have characterized my practice as a community organizer living and working in Sudbury. This is the space from which I was shaped as a woman and as an organizer and through this experience, I have attempted to connect to the research participants who have informed this thesis through sharing their lived experiences as women and organizers in Northern Ontario. Reflexive ethnography is a process whereby the self is articulated in order to gain insight into a certain element of research (Ellis, 2000). I used my own narrative as a way to raise

the questions which appeared to be important for me for the purposes of this particular project.

The underlying framework for this study is a feminist approach which enabled me to bring to light the work of women community organizers in Sudbury (Naples & Bojar, 2002). Semi-structured interviews were utilized in order to gather as much information as possible relative to women's community organizing experiences. Reinharz (1992) argues that this type of interview determines how the information is obtained and creates supportive spaces for women to tell their stories and for the researchers to construct the data based on their lives and stories.

The collection of data attempted to respect the aims and objectives of qualitative research.

> ... the field researcher is a methodological pragmatist. He sees any method of inquiry as a system of strategies and operations designed at any time for getting answers to certain questions about events which interest him (Reinharz, 1992, p. 281).

One of the advantages which I experienced through this type of qualitative research was my ability to adapt my research trajectory throughout the process and draw my own conclusions with regards to the merits of different research strategies. In addition to individual interviews, I also conducted two focus group interviews.

4.3) Data Collection – Interviews

After the interview guide was conceptualized, I asked general questions relating to where

the women grew up and who were some of their role models, as well as how they became involved in community organizing work. I asked these questions in order to gather as much information as I possibly could. There wasn't a calculated plan relative to why I asked certain questions; I simply wanted to solicit information in order to attempt to understand what shaped women as community organizers. In addition to some background information on where they grew up and how long they had lived and worked in Sudbury, I also asked the research participants questions about the nature of community organizing in Sudbury, who were some of the women with whom they collaborated, were there tensions in some of the relationships with the women with whom they worked, the political climate of Ontario, if role models had influenced them somehow, and how they would compare their experiences with those of colleagues working in larger urban centers, as well as other questions related to feminism and their experiences as mothers. The preceding questions were asked because of what had emerged in my own personal narrative. Wanting to verify if other women shared my thoughts and experiences on community organizing, I asked these questions in order to delve deeper into some of the themes which had emerged in my own story.

At the beginning of the research trajectory, I also decided to organize two focus group interviews in an attempt to capture dialogue between very seasoned community organizers. In the context of a group interview I hoped to extrapolate some relevant or additional information which perhaps was not emerging in the individual interviews. The first focus group interview pulled together Francophone community organizers and the second attempted to pull together a mix of Anglophone and francophone organizers.

The Francophone focus group focused primarily on issues relative to union organizing and feminism in a Franco-Ontarian context. The Anglophone focus group focused on the challenges of community organizing in a northern/urban context. Both focus groups were held at a community centre. Both interviews confirmed information that was shared during the individual interviews relative to perceptions of women's community organizing experiences and provided a space for women to share stories and get to know one another.

4.4) Description of the Research Participants

The sixteen women who participated in the study ranged in age from 26 to 57. Fifteen of the sixteen research participants had children. All of the research participants had an average of at least fifteen years of community organizing experience, except for two who had less than five. Twelve of the participants were originally from Northern Ontario; the others were either from another province or country. Most had either completed grade twelve or some level of university education, with the highest level of education being a Master's for one of the participants. Eleven of the participants worked full-time, one was retired, while three worked either full-time or part-time on a per contract basis and one worked as a student. Eight of the participants identified themselves as being Anglophone, eight identified as being Francophone (two also identifying as being not only francophone, but also a member of two different Black communities). The backgrounds of the research participants were varied.

Research participants worked in various areas; several were employed as community organizers for non-profit organizations, four were employed in the health sector, one was

a retired union organizer, two were self-employed and one was a full-time student and activist. In Chapter 5, I will profile each of the research participants through a brief portrait of their community organizing work.

4.5) The Interview Process

Much of the initial groundwork was done by telephone in order to review the research project with each participant, as well as answer any questions that they may have had. Interviews were conducted on three separate trips to Sudbury from Montreal where I was studying; interviews were conducted with fifteen women in person, either in their workplaces or in their homes, depending on what was most convenient for them. One interview was taped on the phone, due to illness. That was followed up with an additional phone call. As mentioned earlier, a focus group was conducted at the beginning of the research project and after all the individual interviews were completed in order to create a space for people who had not a chance to meet to discuss issues of community organizing. The interviews lasted approximately two to three hours, with much time spent locating common spheres of activities, catching up on news in Sudbury, etc. Some time was spent illustrating the importance of doing this research with several of the participants. All interviews were tape-recorded and consent forms were given to all research participants. Unsure of how they would react to me as an "outsider-insider" given the fact that I was coming back to my hometown as a doctoral student, I spoke to most of the participants at least twice on the phone before actually meeting them in person for the face to face interviews.

Each interview began with a brief request for demographic information such as the participant's age, where they were born, number of children, etc. The questions which followed were open-ended in nature and permitted women to discuss themes and issues which appeared to be most relevant to them.

While conducting the interviews, I kept a journal in order to record my thoughts, feelings, and impressions of each research interview (Kirby & McKenna, 1999). After all the interviews were completed, the tapes were transcribed. If an interview was conducted in French, the transcribing was done in the language of the interview. Many of the interviews with the francophone participants were in both French and English; therefore the data collected through the transcribing was also in both languages. This reality is completely in line with the bilingual identity of Franco-Ontarians, who often will dialogue in both French and English during the same conversation.

Each participant was identified with a pseudonym in order to ensure the confidentiality of the participants when using direct quotes. I also modified agency locations and nature of some of the work executed by the participants in order to protect their privacy. This was of particular importance to me, given that, even though Sudbury has a population base of over 150,000 people, it still is a community where people know one another relatively well. Since my research is gender specific, the chances of guessing who may have said what within the context of interviews is significant. If I had any questions pertaining to content and nature of the interviews, I followed up with phone calls.

4.7) Data Analysis

All interviews were audio taped and transcribed with the permission of the sixteen research participants. In addition to this work, I wrote copious notes in several reflexive journals in order to deconstruct and make sense of the data that I was gathering. This enabled me to decipher certain emerging themes which surfaced during the course of the research. Themes were grouped through highlighted descriptions with different colors. The multitude of themes which emerged from the data were then grouped under four predominant themes. These themes encompassed the following: women's identities, community organizing biographies, mothering and caring, tensions and contradictions. The color codes by theme allowed me to actually "see" the interplay of different colors which highlighted the different themes which I had uncovered and would inform certain ideas which I had recorded in my research journal. For example, pink and orange often collided, thus illustrating an interesting interplay between single-motherhood and workfare policies.

For all the rest of the information, Word had sufficient functions for me to store my data. Data was reviewed and subthemes and the relationships between subthemes were identified and analyzed.

4.7) Communication of Findings

Once the face-to-face interviews were done, I organized a focus group with three of the research participants. Since I had completed my individual interviews, I felt that one way

to both communicate and verify some of my findings was through this medium. Initially, six women had agreed to participate in the focus group, but due to the nature of their work as organizers, three called to cancel on the day of the focus group, stating work related reasons. What emerged in the focus group was a rich dialogue around the challenges of community organizing in a northern context. The focus group also provided a space for two of the Anglophone women to meet a Francophone organizer whom they had heard of but had never met.

Subsequent informal meetings with the research participants confirmed some of what they had previously shared through their stories.

4.8) Impact of the Research Process

The time spent with the participants was an enormous gift to me for the purposes of fulfilling my objective of completing a doctoral thesis. I felt honored and painfully aware that the women in whose homes or workplaces I found myself had truly taken precious time of their busy lives in order to inform my research. I felt pressured to ask the right questions and hopefully make them feel like I was not wasting their time. I believe that I was successful in making them feel comfortable with me and engaging them within the context of the interviews. This was evidenced by many spending close to three hours with me, putting off work that they had initially planned to do. (It is important to note that none of the research participants were paid for their time since I had no budget to do so). Ultimately, I believe that the time that we had spent together in discussion had been mutually beneficial.

The next chapter is an attempt to present a brief portrait of the research participants, as well as the nature of the work in which they were involved while research for this project was conducted.

CHAPTER 5

A BRIEF PORTRAIT OF THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

5.1.0) Introduction

In the pages that follow I will present the women who have been involved in this research project. Their biographies will set the stage for the analysis; through the interviews I will explore some of the elements which characterize their work as community organizers and how their work relates to the theoretical frameworks discussed in the preceding chapters.

5.2.0) Profiles of Research Participants in Sudbury, Ontario

As discussed earlier, I decided to interview Francophones, Anglophones and visible minority Francophones because they reflect the reality of the population of Sudbury. Given the fact that almost 30% of Sudbury's population is francophone, (the total population of Sudbury is approximately 160,000), it was important to have Francophone voices represented within this research. The juxtaposition of Francophone and Anglophone community organizers illustrates the complexity and divergent interests of women who organize along cultural and linguistic lines. As for the women of colour who are Francophone, their experiences speak to the intersecting challenges of race, racism and gender within the already minoritized Franco-Ontarian community. Their voices

speak to the subject of racism, which is rarely acknowledged in the literature on minority Francophone communities outside of Quebec.

5.2.1.0) Francophone Research Participants

5.2.1.1) Tessa

> J'me rappelle quand j'avais pris mes cours en développement communautaire au Collège. Louise était mon prof. dans l'temps. On a eu ben du fun les filles, car c'était à une époque ou les choses bougeaient. C'était à ce moment aussi que j'ai eu l'occasion de rencontrer pas mal d'anglophones qui travaillaient dans l'communautaire .

Tessa has been working as an adult educator and "travailleuse autonome" within feminist circles in Sudbury for more than 30 years, working on a variety of projects aimed at enhancing the lives of francophone women in Northeastern Ontario. She has worked on literacy and economic development projects for francophone women. Her story tells us about the way things were in Sudbury in the 1960's and 1970's within the local women's movement. Her analysis of alliances and tensions between Anglophone and Francophone women dominates her discourse even today; in fact, Tessa has purposefully worked only in French for the past 30 years as a political statement to her commitment to being able to live and work in "l'Ontario français". What constitutes community organizing in Sudbury for Tessa is the choice which was afforded to her by being able to consciously work exclusively in the French language. The high concentration of Francophones in the Sudbury Region also meant for her that there was a certain specificity to the nature of her contract work, which had much to do with the gaps in services for Francophones particularly around education and health issues.

5.2.1.2) Georgette

> Je passe presque tout mon temps à m'engueuler avec du monde de Toronto pour qu'on puisse se faire financer nos programmes francophones en santé. Tu parles d'une job!

Georgette has lived in Sudbury for almost fifteen years and has worked as a paid and unpaid advocate in the health care system for French language services. She is presently employed as an executive director of a non-profit association. Originally from Quebec, Georgette has established a deep respect and connection with Francophones in Sudbury; she often reflects, however, on how there is a sense of fear and lack of confidence amongst Francophones participating in political lobbying in Sudbury. Her work is nurtured by Francophones who have deep connections with the trade union movement in Sudbury. The trade unionists in the Sudbury Region are used to tenuous relationships with people in power, whether it be the two multinational mining companies which still dominate the economic landscape of Sudbury or the political powers in Ottawa or Toronto.

5.2.1.3) Manon

> Everything is down South. But there's still quite a few challenges because of the distance, because of people not having the adequate primary care.

Originally from a small farming community, Manon has worked for twenty years within the health care system as an advocate in Northern Ontario. She is a leader amongst women in her profession and has recently assumed an identity as a union organizer. She raises some of the challenges of engaging in community organizing work in a northern/urban setting. She often speaks about the tensions between Sudbury and

Toronto in terms of how community residents have difficulties accessing adequate health care.

5.2.1.4) Ghislaine

> Quand j'travaillais avec les sourds j'me suis rendu compte combien il était difficile pour eux de se faire comprendre non seulement a cause du fait qu'ils étaient sourds, mais parcequ'ils ont grandis la plupart dans des familles unilingues francophones.

Ghislaine has worked almost fifteen years as a youth organizer with minority Francophones in Ontario and in Western Canada. She describes the challenges facing northern organizers as opposed to their southern counterparts. She often speaks of the long distances between workshops and community forums which she organized while working in Sudbury and how she would compare the geography of Sudbury with that of Saskatchewan. Ghislaine is now working with women and children in a remote village in Mali; she believes that her work in northeastern Ontario prepared her well for the political, geographic and social isolation which she experiences as a project coordinator working within an international NGO.

5.2.1.5) Anne

> Fallait bien que j'arrive à Sudbury pour pouvoir travailler et collaborer avec des Africains!

Anne's voice brings energy and enthusiasm for what a northern/urban space offered her as a young Black woman. It is in Sudbury that Anne "became" an organizer and activist. By linking up with the Caribbean and African student association at Laurentian University, she illustrates how she found her voice as an organizer. Anne now works in

Toronto as a teacher. Anne's voice speaks to the complexities of race and gender issues within a Franco-Ontarian space. Not unlike her colleague, Barbara, Anne illustrates how it is often difficult for francophone visible minorities to claim a space which is their own in a French-speaking community outside of Quebec. In Sudbury, the cultural landscape has changed since the early 1990's, because of a small influx of African immigrants who for the most part came from the province of Quebec after completing their university studies. Anne's voice speaks to her challenges as a Black organizer while studying in Sudbury.

5.2.1.6) Barbara

> Quelqu'un m'avait déjà dit, dès le départ que tu n'est pas Franco-Ontarienne, il pense même pas donc que je sais qu'on ne me considère pas comme Franco-Ontarienne. Je suis francophone immigrante.

After many years of unemployment and several degrees later, Barbara finally has landed a full-time job as a teacher. Her integration as a member of a visible minority within the Franco-Ontarian community was very difficult. She presents issues of tension and identity politics and challenges basic assumptions of what exactly defines a Franco-Ontarian woman.

5.2.1.7) Eva

> Ah, oui. En fait, je pense qu'on est plus relaxe dans le monde rural. Donc, quand il y a une tempête de neige tout le monde sait d'avance si les choses seront annulées. S'il y a une réunion schédulée pour sept heures, tu peux être certaine que la réunion ne commencera pas avant sept heures trente. Mais, tout le monde y sera parce que c'est comme ça dans le monde rural.

Eva has worked for 22 years in health services and relates her experiences working in rural communities not far from Sudbury. She describes how the geographic specificity of Sudbury, which has characterized her work as a health care worker in Northeastern Ontario by virtue of the farms and lack of infrastructure inherent within these communities. Francophones are the community residents in most surrounding rural areas. At the present time Eva works in a residential home for seniors.

5.2.1.8) Nina

> J'me sens forte et très heureuse avec mon travail avec l'union. Là on vas pouvoir avoir de la justice pour tout l'monde alentour d'ici. C'pas parcequ'on était des femmes, c'est parcequ'on a su tenir notre boutte .

Nina identifies herself as a newcomer to community organizing. She became very empowered while organizing a union in her workplace for the very first time. She contributes a powerful statement on how francophone women view feminism. Sudbury is a community which has often been characterized by its working class traditions and intolerance or indifference to feminist issues, particularly amongst older Francophone women. Nina presently works as an administrator in a community based service delivery agency.

5.2.2.0) Anglophone Research Participants

5.2.2.1) Bonnie

> The union is good for things like that. They educate the women and listen to their voices. It wasn't always like that though. Nope.

Bonnie was a union organizer within the mining industry in Sudbury. Bonnie was one of the first women in Sudbury who worked underground with men during the 1970's. There were not many women who were able to sustain and maintain these physically demanding jobs, which were made much more difficult by the resistance of the men who did not want to share their space with women. A single mother, Bonnie gave up a job as a bartender to make more money as an INCO miner. Now retired, Bonnie's words touch upon the issue of single parenthood and community organizing.

5.2.2.2) Mary

> No one knows the shit we have to go through as single mothers. If you haven't done it, you can't possibly know how hard it is. When I realized that somehow because I was alone with my son, I was now part of a weird group of women called "single moms", that's when I became an organizer.

Marie is a well-known organizer and activist in the community; she works for a community centre outside of Sudbury. Her very powerful words raise the challenges of single parenthood, feminism and mothering. Marie is heavily involved in bringing changes to the welfare system in Ontario through direct action initiatives. She is one of the founding members of an anti-poverty group in Northern Ontario. Marie describes an undercurrent of intolerance in Sudbury, which for many does not illustrate compassion towards single mothers living on welfare assistance. According to Marie, Sudbury no longer can claim to be a working-class community because INCO workers have become more preoccupied with protecting high wages than with social justice issues.

5.2.2.3) Lyne

> Being a lesbian mom has been for the most part, a positive experience for me. It definitely has made me more politicized.

Lyne is active in the Sudbury community and also works as an adult educator for a non-profit community development group. She discusses the issue of lesbian mothering as a form of community organizing. She also brings her perceptions on what actually defines a community organizer. Her attention to language is a most interesting contribution to this research project, as is her respect for feminism and social change.

5.2.2.4) Marnie

> With all due respect to my colleagues in Toronto, they, well, they just don't get it. We often must put up with Torontocentric attitudes which sometimes have even jeopardized a housing project. It's crazy, but I guess that's what it means to live in Sudbury. It's not easy.

Marnie's words are extremely powerful and portray her disillusionment with engaging in community organizing under Mike Harris' government. A well-known social housing advocate and single mother, she frequents the same university as her 23 year old daughter. Marnie is finishing a Master's degree and hopes to begin a doctoral program in order to write about what is was like to work as a director of a social housing resource group under Mike Harris. Marnie is 55 years old and continues to play an instrumental role in raising awareness in lobbying local and provincial governments for social housing units in Northeastern Ontario. Marnie's experiences and her return to school illustrates the enormous role that Laurentian University has played in the lives of northern community residents who, by virtue of geography and economics, would not have access

to a post-secondary education, were it not for the delivery of distance education programs in Sudbury and in Northeastern Ontario.

5.2.2.5) Carol

> I think that you can wear many hats when you're a woman and an organizer. When I'm on T.V. I'm one thing, when I'm doing a presentation in front of people at City Hall, I'm labeled something else. It's o.k. though. I think the different names that people attribute to us speaks to the different things that we do as organizers.

Not unlike Lyne, Carol raises the issue of language and that of mentoring among women. She has worked in the past within a barter exchange program and community economic development agency in Sudbury. Carol has also worked as a social planner and now has a new job working as a health promoter. For Carol, one aspect of community organizing in Sudbury is the ease with which she can reach out and mobilize women within the working class neighborhoods of the Sudbury Region. Carol struggles with the lack of attention to Francophone issues because of lack of funding and resources for the Francophone women with whom she works.

5.2.2.6) Gwen

> I think we need to think about our own internalized oppression. Why do we constantly think that there is someone out there, in Toronto who can do it better, whatever "it" may be? It's annoying. I know so many women right here in town who could run circles around any guest speaker coming from down south.

Gwen addresses some of the professional tensions between community organizers in Sudbury and Toronto, and certain challenges to working in a northern/urban arena. She has worked as a nurse for several years. Gwen describes the ease of fundraising and community organizing in a community which she qualifies as being most generous with its time and money.

5.2.2.7) Rita

> Distance education for me was my life; it had to be, given my workplace. You just can't deliver courses in Northern Ontario in quite the same way you can in downtown Toronto. I was always painfully aware of the enormous distances of Northern Ontario when we would fly these tiny little planes at registration in September. It was amazing. When I tried to explain to my family in Southern Ontario that it took just as long to drive from Sudbury to Thunderbay as it did to Quebec City, they would just blankly stare at me, not quite believing what I was saying.

Involved in adult education for over twenty years, Rita raises the enormous challenges of women's community organizing in a northern/urban context. Prior to coming to Sudbury, Rita worked in Southern Ontario as an adult educator and administrator in two community colleges. She came to Sudbury in 1986 where she worked in the field of adult education. She was a pioneer in creating educational college programs for over 100 communities across Northeastern Ontario. She speaks of the sheer physical challenges of operating a distance education department aimed at community residents physically spread out over a two hundred thousand square mile radius. Rita is now retired.

5.2.2.8) Sadie

> There's a lot of money in this town and people who are interested in the arts or social change have to contend with a sort of classism that gets played out here. You know, people on the outside see us as a bunch of northern yahoos, so, when you're trying to fight that stereotype, people somehow forget who they are and how to be real.

Sadie is a feminist community organizer dedicated to women's issues and politics. Her primary organizing focus is healing through the arts. She speaks forcefully about the class differences which exist in Sudbury and which have challenged her as a woman and

community organizer. Sadie raises the challenges women face in a community which is still often dominated politically and economically by men.

The next chapter will draw from the experience of these women in order to shed some light on what characterizes the experiences of women as community organizers in Sudbury. What follows are the themes which have emerged from the interviews with the research participants who have informed the nature of this research project.

CHAPTER 6

DATA ANALYSIS

6.1.0) Introduction

The following presents a portrait which attempts to illustrate certain elements that characterize women's community organizing experiences in Sudbury through the lived experiences of the women who have informed this research project. It is an attempt to contribute to the body of literature on women and community organizing in order to shed light upon the descriptive themes which have emerged through this research. They are as follows:

Part I: Becoming a community organizer in Sudbury, Ontario

1. Defining Ourselves:

- politics of language

2. Personal Trajectories:

- role models

- a sense of place

- feminism

3. Mothering, Caring and Community Organizing

Part II: Tensions and contradictions in the practice of community organizing

- Ontario's political climate

- political isolation and geography

- poverty and government programs
- challenges and tensions between Anglophone and Francophone organizers
- challenges between Franco-Ontarian and visible minority francophone organizers

The first theme is one which alludes to how women define themselves as organizers and is supported by the literature on community organizing, as well as the literature on issues facing smaller communities. Additionally I have also drawn upon a small body of literature which has as its main focus, the social and political challenges experienced by Francophones living outside of Quebec. The second theme attempts to illustrate the biographies of the women who have grown into their social location as women and community organizers. The literature which supports this particular theme can be found in the writings specific to women and community organizing, as well as theoretical frameworks on women and social policy. The third theme looks at mothering and caring as elements characterizing the experiences of most of the research participants. The works of Nancy Naples (1998) and Celene Krauss (1998) on activist mothering have often been cited within the context of this research project. The literature on restructuring labour, as well as gender and social policy, also informs this particular theme. Finally, the theme on tensions and contradictions aims to illustrate certain complexities relative to Northern and Southern Ontario community organizing, relationships between Francophone and Anglophone women, and relationships between women of colour who negotiate their own social locations within minority Francophone circles. The literature on race and gender, as well as the literature on rural and northern social work practice, is cited. Even before I begin to present the data, it is probably worth

noting that the notion of what "characterizes" the experiences of women as organizers is a notion which at best is fluid and highlights the exploratory nature of this research project. What is presented herein is not meant to be definitive, but simply an offering to try and understand the voices which have informed this research project.

6.2.0) Part I: Becoming a Community Organizer in Sudbury

6.2.1.0) Defining Ourselves

6.2.1.1) The politics of language

When I first became involved in this research project, I did not pay much attention to the vocabulary I utilized during the course of my interviews. However, I had to reposition myself with regards to the vocabulary because the research participants were very careful to distinguish between the words 'community organizer' and 'activist'. I thought that to interchange the words was acceptable, given the fluid nature of community organizing, which contains both actions relative to community mobilization and political action. However, what emerged through the interviews is that the climate of the Conservative government of Ontario, coupled with the portrayal of the left in the media, rendered some of the research participants uncomfortable with identifying themselves as 'activists'. One participant, when being interviewed by the media, actually preferred being called a 'community organizer' because this, she felt, gave her more credibility. Yet another research participant found it strange and somewhat irritating that, when interviewed on television she was identified as a 'professional protester'. On the other hand, Ghislaine, one of the francophone participants clearly articulated in French that for her to be a

community organizer and an activist was a symbiotic relationship, given the political arena in which most minority francophone organizers found themselves in Ontario.

When I asked the research participants to define the word "community," the notion of language relative to the "act" of organizing was very quickly brought into the conversation. As mentioned earlier, the women had very definite ideas of how they perceived themselves as community organizers. Many saw their roles as being a cross between an organizer and an activist, depending upon the nature of the work in which they were engaged at the time. My own definition of a "community organizer" is someone who engages in collective work, whether paid or unpaid, in order to address or improve upon a situation or problem within a given community. To become empowered and benefit from working in collaboration with others and acquiring skills are important goals for a community organizer. To me, the community organizer comes from a space of logic and values, of partnership, of creating alliances and bridges with others.

Inversely, activism for me, was and is defined as something which is primarily motivated by ideology, by a sense of social justice and is usually politically charged. It is a form of action which is exhilarating, exhausting, not highly organized and yet manages to make a statement. Civil disobedience is something which I would sometimes equate with my own activism. I am aware that my definitions are not exhaustive, but, going into my research, I didn't expect them to be. Mary's statement encapsulates much of what the research participants had to say about defining community organizing and activism:

> I think activism-community organizing you're coming from it with a very, you know, it never ends up the way you think it's going to, but, I mean, you're coming to it with a conscious plan, you're coming to it with a conscious goal, um, you're going to work with the community to accomplish A,B or C. Or you're going to work with a community to see what it is they want to accomplish. It's um, it's, and it's probably more of a, anyway, it's more conscious, ugh, of a strategy than... Activism is very much, and that's what I find – that activists and artists have a lot in common. Activism comes from the heart, it has to come from a need to say something or do something, or be something because you can't imagine, you have to do something, because you're either so enraged by social injustice that you're witnessing or you're living. So, quite often it's not well thought out. Hopefully your strategies will be, but it doesn't come from the same place. Community organizing comes from, usually, a more intellectual space, that this is what we should do in order to... Activism definitely comes from the gut, you know? Which can make it dangerous, too, but, if you're getting into something because you're an activist, it's because you really believe that you have to do something because there's something so terribly wrong, that if you don't do something you just can't live with yourself. And, I find, the fit with artists works so well, because they often too come from the same place. It's not a career choice, you know? Like, activism is not a career choice. Community organizing can be a career choice (Mary).

I asked why there was the preoccupation with defining their roles as community organizers. Most of the research participants stated that since 1995 with the election of Premier Mike Harris and his Common Sense Revolution, the nature of their work as community organizers often entailed direct action initiatives, particularly at the beginning of his mandate. Many of the women partook in organizing around the Days of Action, whereby workers from across the province took days off to protest Harris's attack on the poor. Some of the women became founding members of coalitions to defend the poor in Sudbury, which took much time, energy and media attention. How the media portrayed the research participants made them pay attention to detail relative to the roles of "community organizer" versus "activist". The attention that they received in the media made them think about how the public perceived them.

The following quote illustrates how one research participant reacted to seeing how she was defined by the local media:

> ... the last media interview I did, they had put me down as a 'professional protester' ... and I thought, where the hell did that come from (Lyne)?

For Carol, the following quote illustrates that there is a difference in being called a "community organizer" in Sudbury, rather than being called an "activist". The research participants wanted to preserve their legitimacy as community organizers in a political climate which was highly negative towards people who criticized the Harris regime.

> ... And I like being an activist and, you know, I'm identified socially as an activist and I'm proud of it. When I'm making a point, and especially if it's getting covered by the media, if they use the term 'community organizer' for an organization or whatever, there's more legitimacy given to my quotes. So that's the difference in them. There's just been, all the way around, I mean, it's part of the whole right-wing conservative agenda that's happening, is to devalue and ridicule activists. I don't buy into it personally, but in order to be as effective as possible, I try to use my 'community organizer' title when I'm giving quotes (being interviewed by media) (Carol).

Interestingly, there appears to be marked difference in how the francophone research participants defined community organizing as opposed to their Anglophone counterparts. The Francophones' perception of self was based almost entirely within a continuum in terms of their organizing efforts. The fact that Harris came onto the political scene, while disturbing, did not make a huge impact on the nature of the organizing in which they were engaged. This can be explained by the fact that minority Francophones in Ontario have been fighting for language rights and education rights for over 50 years (Dennie, 1999) and Harris' arrival was just one more fight that they would have to take on in order to preserve their hard won struggles. When Harris threatened to close Montford, the francophone hospital in the Ottawa Region, Francophones throughout the province rallied, fought hard and won their case to preserve the hospital. For many Francophones,

being a minority francophone in Ontario means to be politicized as well. If you're a community organizer working in a francophone milieu, the nature of your work would appear to be more politicized as evidenced by Ghislaine:

> For Francophones, activism and community organizing are intimately linked if you want to sustain the development of the francophone population. Look at the development of any Centre or francophone service in Ontario. The community needs political recognition, etc... The process is one which takes a lot of time, therefore the two concepts are intimately linked (Ghislaine).

The notion of breaking new ground, of being able to challenge the political system was a common denominator in most of the interviews conducted with the francophone research participants. Manon felt doubly challenged in her role as a community organizer, since she was called upon to validate the legitimacy of the role of a nurse practitioner in a climate which was relatively hostile to the emerging role of nurse practitioners in the medical system. Add to that the sometimes hostile climate towards Francophones within a bilingual health setting, and one understands the challenges that Manon has often faced in her career. The notion of "pioneer" emerges in her interview as someone who is breaking new ground on many fronts.

> Oh, well, maybe I've never really thought about it in those terms, uh, 'activist'. Yeah, I guess I am. I consider myself a pioneer because, yes, I was from the first class to graduate. Yes, because I was the first Francophone in this area... Um, so yes, I do consider myself a pioneer. I was there when it first began, and I've been there all along, 'cause I've been involved in teaching part of the program too. And implementing the role, and trying to sell the role to people around me, and so, 'activist', I guess I would consider myself as one (Manon).

It may be important to note that the Anglophone research participants appeared to be much more present and perhaps comfortable in working and manipulating the media in order to get their point across on various issues, as evidenced by numerous references that they had been in the media. The same engagement with the media from the

francophone research participants was not as evident throughout the course of the interviews. According to Georgette, francophone women organizers do not appear to be as comfortable in relating to the local media:

> Pour la présence des femmes francophones dans les médias à Sudbury, y sont pas rendus là encore (Georgette).

What is noteworthy is that research participants were sensitive to the nuances and differences of being labeled as an "organizer" or "activist". Certainly the political climate and the media differentiated between community organizers and activists and, as such, many of the research participants felt it important to align themselves within the definition of "community organizer," even though much of their work was in the realm of activism and direct actions, primarily at the beginning of the Harris government's term in 1995. As such, the influence of language is one which is interesting as it relates to being able to work as a community organizer in a political context which would appear to be hostile to the Left.

Through the course of my research emerges at times a shift in self-perception amongst the research participants whom I interviewed, due to the arrogance of the Conservative government towards organizers and average citizens who dared contradict and contest the right-wing social policies of Ontario through demonstrations and strike actions. As Carol's statement reflects in her previous quote, under the Harris/Eves government, many community organizers thought it best to align themselves with a 'safer' title, such as 'community organizer' in order to be perceived as more credible in the eyes of the media and, ultimately, in the eyes of the people with whom they worked. As illustrated earlier, the literature on rural and northern social work practice speaks to the efforts of

northerners who engage in work which often is in direct opposition with the decision-making centres of Toronto and Ottawa. As articulated by Delaney (1999), "provincial policies are often unadapted to northern realities". Wharf (1999) also argues that community organizing is alive and well and is a testimony to the resilience of people living in areas far away from the centres of political power. In the particular case of the research participants for this project, the power clearly is personified by Mike Harris and his soldiers in the Common Sense Revolution.

Alinsky (1971) argues that the notion of a "realistic radical" is one who works as an organizer within a world "as it is and not how the organizer wishes it could be". The organizers in Sudbury have demonstrated that they have learned to renegotiate their identities as organizers in order to enhance their credibility in the eyes of those holding the political power. Ledwith and Colgan (1996) suggest that women can be a focus for resistance; in the case of the Sudbury organizers that resistance transcends even the barriers of language.

6.2.2.0) Personal Trajectories

6.2.2.1) Role models and mentors

When asked if the research participants had any role models in their family or in their communities, almost all of the research participants discussed having women in their lives who had influenced them while growing up or later on in life. Many of the women shared stories of mothers, grandmothers and aunts who were very involved in church activities. Both Anglophone and Francophone participants indicated that the church was

a significant place of activity for their role models, as well as for themselves. A few of the Francophone participants stated that their community organizing practices had begun early on, while being part of youth groups within the church. Activities were social in nature, usually around organizing dances, picnics and other socially related outings. This echoes the writings of Donald Dennie (1999) who has researched the Franco-Ontarian community extensively since the 1970's. Dennie (1999) questions the reductionist definition of what constitutes a "Franco-Ontarien." According to Dennie (1999), there is not enough information to characterize easily or explain the cultural nuances of the Franco-Ontarian community. In an article on the multidimensional aspect of the "Franco-Ontarien," Dennie (1999) states that:

> La communauté des chercheurs n'est pas suffisamment grande pour avoir permis des débats de fonds à ce sujet.

Several of the research participants indicated that their mothers and sometimes their fathers had been very active in the union at INCO and this influenced the ways in which they connected with people later on in their lives. Ghislaine and Gwen illustrate the presence of women and the church in their lives while growing up:

> My role models were the francophone women from the Cercle des fermières. Also my aunt. She could organize a community supper for 800 or 900 people at the church no problem (Ghislaine).

> ...the women of our neighborhood shared resources... they were active in their church... women were helping each other and looking out for one another, and looking our for one another's children was very normal (Gwen).

The area of intergenerational activism is very rarely theorized. Mondros and Wilson (1994) do attempt to deconstruct some of the influences which an organizer may have had in their lifetime; having parents who were organizers and/or activists can be influential in the life of a community organizer. Some of the women indicated that they

had had strong feminist role models who they referred to as "mentors," particularly when trying to adapt to being a single parent or integrating within the Sudbury community. Another mentioned having a professor at Laurentian as a role model and was extremely pleased when asked to become involved as a resource-person in the professor's classroom. Feelings of being validated and recognized for her community work were expressed. For example:

> ... I don't have a university degree and, like you say, you're not sure where you stand on facts and figures and stuff. So she (the professor) was always really respectful, which helped me with my own self-esteem, but she also invited me to do a presentation to her university class. And at that point, it was like yes, I have something worthwhile to say. If I'm being asked to speak to university students, then I've got something worth hearing. And that, uh, did a lot for my confidence level, a huge amount. I'm very grateful to her (Carol).

Nancy Naples (1998) argues that in low-income neighborhoods in New York and Philadelphia, mothers who have worked as front-line workers in social justice causes may have influenced their children in doing the same.

> Women of color as activist mothers, especially those living in poor neighborhoods, must fight against discrimination and the oppressive institutions that shape their daily lives and, consequently, as mothers they model strategies of resistance for their children (p. 114).

Additionally, Black feminist writers describe the practice of "othermothering", particularly within Black communities in Canada and the United States, which speaks to the issue of older Black women acting as role models and mentors for younger women. This practice of "othermothering" is actually etched in the literature on africentricity which is a "worldview" that sees African people as critical agents of their own experience" (Bernard, Bernard, Ekpo, Enang & Wane, 2000, p. 66). Patricia Hills Collins (1989) and bell hooks (1990) both support through their own research the notion that "othermothering" is an act which extends beyond the private sphere into the public

sphere in order to engage in the nurturance of the whole community, presumably to counteract the effects of oppression and racism.

Research participants, Mary and Lyne, identified "feminists" as role models or "mentors." Mary and Lyne both attributed their mentoring as having contributed enormously to their roles as organizers and, as such, had become very much politicized in their activities working with single mothers, within the gay and lesbian communities as well as in artistic circles. Skills development was often mentioned as something which they learned through modeling via their mentors.

6.2.2.2) A sense of place

Several research participants spoke to the frustration they experienced in trying to honor the expertise which was inherent within the Sudbury community and how difficult it was to convince decision-makers not to rely so heavily on experts from Toronto. Often, when questioned about this resistance to "Southern experts" coming to Sudbury to speak and facilitate on a variety of issues, most of the research participants stated enormous dissatisfaction with how unadapted the material was to Northern and Sudbury contexts. As the following participants explain:

> We're so quick to listen to people from elsewhere... instead of using the resources in our own community (Marge).

> You know, we do carry an internalized piece of northern oppression, that we hold ourselves out as not being as good as... I mean, what I talked about before: we want to hire a facilitator for something and we look outside our region, when I know tons of people in this community that facilitate marvelously (Gwen).

Numerous comparisons were made in relationship to being trained or taking courses from experts who would come to Sudbury. Other research participants would speak to having to fly to Toronto in order to take workshops or attend conferences and still feel dissatisfied with the nature and content of the courses which, according to them, did not adequately respond to their learning needs as illustrated by the following quote:

> ... I've been telling you about the Radical Retreat that I went to. Okay. We went there and there's only, out of three hundred people, two of us who were not from Ottawa or Toronto. All of the workshops were based on activism in a larger center. So none, there were so many things we couldn't relate to, and there was no room for discussing what we were dealing with (Carol).

Still other research participants would compare services and facilities in the education and health fields and wistfully relate stories of how difficult it was to engage in community organizing work within a northern context. Rita, for example, who specialized in distance education and adult education, defines herself as an education activist and adult educator. She compares Northern and Southern Ontario contexts in the following quote:

> In my work in education, I would often compare the facilities in the South which were superb. There were libraries, schools within blocks of one another. Here in the North, kids are bused back and forth for hours sometimes. You're constantly trying to find people to teach your courses; you don't have school caretakers and there is never any extra money for anything. The distribution of resources were and are inequitable when comparing Sudbury to Toronto (Rita).

Manon spoke of the isolation which she felt as a health professional working in Sudbury. She identifies herself as a community organizer and an activist, since she spends much time engaged in educating the health field and average citizens on the benefits of having a nurse practitioner as a health professional. She is also heavily involved within her small, local union:

> Nurses have better support because they have access to the conferences, they have a lot more access to education material than we do up here in the north. If we want some education, we have to go out down south, and we have to rent a room, and we have to pay for the conference, and it's a lot more expensive for us, and it means a lot more time off the job – because we have to get there and we have to get back. And, they are a larger group, and closer together, so they can meet together, and have meetings and talk with each other. There is more support between the nurse practitioners down there (Manon).

Brodie (1996) argues that there is much evidence that demonstrates that the decline of the welfare state has eroded the empowerment earned by feminists of the second wave. Cohen (1997) and Armstrong (1994) also argue that social restructuring is set within a gender framework. Women are directly affected by cuts in social welfare programs, both as welfare clients and state workers. As evidenced by the voices of the research participants, it has not been easy to engage and sustain work as community organizers within a Harris context. Even prior to the onslaught of social cuts, the work of community organizing was not valued. Naples (1998) states that it is crucial to understand the complexity of community organizing work:

> When researchers and observers naturalize women's social housekeeping role in their neighborhoods and communities, they underestimate the important skills, experience, and networks women develop as a consequence of community-based work (p. 39).

Further research would be most helpful in order to understand how women actually maintain and/or sustain their level of enthusiasm to continue their work within community organizing spheres. Themes of resilience and resistance certainly appear to be common denominators, both in this research and the sparse literature on this subject.

Finally, when asked about the positive aspects of their work, the research participants spoke at length of how proud they were that, despite numerous challenges, they were still

able to derive enormous satisfaction from their work as community organizers. Despite the difficulties, every one of the research participants were very quick to celebrate what was positive about organizing in Sudbury and that there was something about Sudbury which actually enhanced their capacity to work as community organizers. The following quote illustrates how Sudbury as a community is an ideal space in which to organize:

> I think what has been a gift here, has been around our size. We're having a fundraiser two weeks from now to raise money for an emergency fund. And I have been able to pick up the telephone and phone the mayor's office, the president of the university, the president of both colleges, all of the directors of the school boards, uh, any major business in the community. You know, I've been able to just pick up the phone, get the person at the top...Um, if I lived in Toronto, there's no frickin' way I could, you know, say "Yes, it's me, I'm calling for Mel Lastman (Gwen).

Many of the research participants alluded to the working class values which are inherent in a mining town such as Sudbury. They stated that there is an ease with which an organizer can rally people around a project or an idea and how quickly people would pull together and work as a team. Gwen shares her insight with the following quote:

> People aren't afraid of hard work, people aren't afraid to roll up their sleeves, people aren't afraid to, and there's an expectation that that's what you'll do when something needs to be done, that people will chip in and do it. Um, which in my mind is working-class values. And so, I think that's a strength, and I also think it creates a challenge, because we never see ourselves as excellent as we are (Gwen).

The following statements are actually more reflective of what the majority of the research participants had to say on Sudbury and how their community organizing was influenced by a sort of pioneering spirit which created spaces for much creativity in their organizing practices:

> There's a pioneer spirit here and that brings you a good many steps. There's an understanding of the concept of 'frontier' in the sense that you're breaking new ground and that makes it easier to start new projects. There seems to be a celebration of the geography and climate which are not always seen as an obstacle

> but something you triumph; all of these elements give you fertile ground for new ideas (Rita).
>
> What's positive is that in Sudbury there are untapped markets to do all kinds of projects. There is a desire to collaborate and people are courageous, they're not afraid to try to do things (Rita).

Francophone communities, while dispersed throughout the Region of Sudbury, are highly concentrated in many areas. The francophone participants often compared their organizing experiences with those of their colleagues in Toronto, where the francophone population is more dispersed and not as cohesive in their social interactions as it is in Sudbury. The following statement clearly illustrates the Francophones' appreciation of being able to work in a bilingual community:

> In (Toronto), people do not volunteer in the community (francophone) and they have a hard time getting volunteers. And how can they go about to recruit volunteers and retain them and so on. So I think there, they do have similar things to us, but they've lost, and I reinforce: they've lost how to work together and how to help each other... Maybe it's because of their particular situation and where the francophone population is very dispersed, throughout Toronto. As opposed to, in a smaller area, we have pockets of them, so that you can still work and get a large number working together (Eva).

Within the literature on rural and northern communities, Cassidy (1999) speaks to the notion of "solidarity" which exists in smaller communities in the face of larger urban centres. Cassidy (1999) states that:

> ... They (smaller communities) tend to have more of a common frame of reference. Because of their locality, their closeness, they often have strong information networks... Many more examples could be cited of instances in which communities used their closeness, solidarity and knowledge of one another to counter larger external forces (Cassidy, 1999, p. 233).

For the community organizers in Sudbury, it would appear through their voices that, while their work is tedious and difficult, at least the research participants have found a

degree of satisfaction which perhaps encourages them to continue in their work as organizers.

Despite their frustration, the research participants seemed solid in their belief that their mentors and role models had adequately prepared them to face such challenges in their work as community organizers. Their voices speak to the alliances and networks which they have created for themselves, as well as to a solid sense of self in the knowledge that they are competent and effective social change agents. Finally, and most importantly, their sense of place contributed to their identity as organizers.

6.2.2.3) Feminism

When they were asked if being women influenced the way that they worked as community organizers, the discussion quickly turned to notions of feminism and what that meant to the research participants. Anglophone and Francophone community organizers appeared to have marked differences of how feminism not only guided them, but also separated them, based on cultural and linguistic lines. Throughout the data, feminism was either defined in terms which appeared to be contradictory or feminism alluded to women's being angry or aggressive. For the Francophone research participants, feminism was something which belonged to other women and certainly didn't appear to be a term which they identified with organizers. Feminism was perceived by some of the research participants as unimportant to their organizing efforts. When asked if she was guided by her feminism, Carol indicates, "not consciously." Then she goes on to state the following:

> Oh, well it influences the way that I don't buy into, 'can't do it because you're a woman' or you know. So yeah, I'm just, I'm as capable, if not more capable, than most people around. So my feminism kicks in there. Oh yeah. So like, in that way, it's like a bedrock of what I'm doing, of anything I do in my life (Carol).

The following quote from Gwen illustrates certain contradictions in the talk about feminism and community organizing:

> ... for me, part of being a feminist is around making things happen (Gwen).

She then follows with an argument denying her femaleness within her community organizing practice, seeing this as perhaps getting in the way of being taken seriously:

> Well, in my own personal journey, what I've noticed is, that I try to ignore the fact that I'm a woman as much as I possibly can (Gwen).

The notion of feminists being "angry" emerged a few times throughout the interviews. The following quote captures the essence of what many of the participants had to say about feminism coming from a space of anger:

> Um, I've tried not to really think about the way that I approach life in, in those terms. Um, I think that, um, for me, whether you're male or female shouldn't matter, and I think I've actually moved beyond, um. Some of the um, the sort of, the 'anger' stage and sort of more the 'doing' stage (Marnie).

For the francophone research participants, their level of enthusiasm for being defined as feminists was even less than that of their anglophone counterparts. Only one of the francophone research participants, Tessa, identified without shame that she was a feminist and guided as such within her community organizing experiences. The following quote, however, is quite typical of how the francophone participants reacted to questions pertaining to feminism and community organizing:

> Let me tell you something; there's a feminist on our Board and she hasn't done a damn thing for women here. So, feminism for me... I'm a woman. Feminists are extremists. I'm normal. I'm a human being. They are the first ones to cut your throat. You're not like that, but there are some who are (Nina).

Tessa, who is in her mid-fifties, reflected on how francophone women defined anglophone women in the 1970's:

> It was the Anglophones that used to say that they were feminists; they were much more marginalized and 'out there' than the Francophones (Tessa).

Eva's statement illustrates how feminism and its connection to their lives as female community organizers is viewed:

> I can't say that I am guided by feminism and I've always steered clear – not that I don't think it's important. I think it's important that women become more vocal and I've, uh, but it's not really my how can I say, the thing that will push me to do things (Eva).

Clearly for the research participants, feminism does not appear to be the "thing that pushes women to do things". Engaging in community organizing work is quite simply something which is framed in a preoccupation to better the lives of community residents, patients, families, women, single mothers and people living in social housing. Of course the literature in feminist organizing would support the notion that many women as organizers do not identify as feminists but certainly engage in something called "doing feminism" (Grant, 1993; Tong, 1998). Evidently, the women whom I interviewed clearly are engaged in work which the literature would define as "feminist," but who would scoff at the idea and even perhaps reject the notion that feminism had anything to do with the nature of their work.

6.2.3.0) Mothering, Caring and Community Organizing

For some of the research participants, the fact that they were mothers was the motivation for their becoming involved within various spheres of community organizing. Some

describe being a single parent as important in their decision to becoming engaged in community organizing. Lyne, a lesbian mother who, by virtue of having two children in the primary school system, became very active advocating on behalf of her children, says:

> It became quite clear to me that my life had changed since becoming a single parent and I was lucky to gain strength from other women who were in the same situation (Lyne).

The following speaks to the shift that Mary experienced when she became a mother and single parent.

> ... I wouldn't probably be an activist if it wasn't for the fact that I'm a mother. And I think that that's quite clear to me, and that's always been clear to me. I mean, it's not, you know, I might have been a feminist and I might, I would probably have the same level of consciousness, but not the same level of activism. But I still feel that it was a major reason for me to be an activist. I couldn't, well, first of all, I became an activist when I became a single parent, and understanding suddenly how parents, in general, and children, but in particular single parents and their children, are vilified and marginalized by society, was my first impetus to become an activist. I mean, up until then, I could bitch and belly-ache or you know... But, um, no, it was definitely the fact that I was a mother (Mary).

Mary illustrates the energy and anger about her lived experience as a single mother and how being a single mother informs her community organizing practices:

> When I was in Toronto, I didn't have connections here but I knew that if I was ever in trouble, I could just call Sudbury, and somebody would be there within a few hours. I was meeting women that didn't even have that, you know? So, uh, that did happen to me, actually. I got very sick and needed an operation. It happened so quickly, and I just remember them putting me under, and me thinking of this one other mother I knew, trying to think of her phone number for them to call her and go and pick up my child after school. Of course, I'm going under, I'm on an operating table, there's nobody in Toronto that my child knows! It was terrifying. I did happen to, I did give them the right phone number because that was like a miracle, you know, as I'm going under. So anyways, you know, she picked my child up. It was fine, but it was terrifying. And I think, you know, when people are shitting all over single mothers all the time, it still enrages me, and it's the one thing that'll still get me going out there you know? It's like, you fuckers, you don't have a clue. Not a clue what these women are going through (Mary).

Mary states quite clearly that, when she wishes to organize around a certain theme in a particularly high risk neighborhood in Sudbury, she often accesses the participation of the residents through the mothers in the community:

> ... in my activist work, I find, and now I know if I'm trying to do some organizing or stuff, that's the thing I can touch on women, and it'll get them going every time. I mean, you talk about their children, that's what brings out the ferocity and the, and the protectiveness and the anger and the rage, and the, you know, willingness to fight for your kids. For your kids in particular, but also for your kids in general and looking at the world around you, you know (Mary)?

Again, she reflects on her own life as a single parent which speaks to her desire to create community in order to access support and break the extreme isolation she felt as a single parent:

> ... I understood the need, as a single parent I understood the need, very early on, I didn't feel it was very healthy for one adult and one child to be living together alone. It was too intense. My child and I have a very intense relationship. I just didn't feel it was natural. So as much as possible, I tried to live in co-operative situations. And that, of course, meant uh, a conscious decision to create community, you know? To work at creating community. And I was very lucky in Sudbury (Mary).

Lyne is very articulate when it came to defining her work as a community organizer which is clearly anchored in the realm of caring:

> My work is an extension of mothering. The role of caring is one which I take seriously (Lyne).

She then spends much time illustrating how she became involved with her children's school advocating on behalf of her children and ensuring that there was a space to honor the needs of those who came from same sex households. According to Lyne, her experience with the schools and school board was very positive, although at the same time described as tokenism as evidenced by the following quote:

> ... I noticed I started getting all these token appointments, because I was a lesbian mom. They would, I would get all these token appointments for different

> avenues, which actually really opened the doors because they were doing part of a growth process too, saying 'We have to start recognizing this because this really is in our school system (Lyne).

The impact that mothers have had on their children also emerged. Many of the mothers commented on how their community organizing had impacted upon their children, both in a positive and negative manner. Manon stated that she was very proud that her daughters were able to see her win an effort to unionize her workplace and she felt equally proud that her daughters could see that change was possible. Gwen stated that, depending on where she was on her journey as an organizer, she believes that her children had been influenced as well:

> Each one of my kids has been impacted significantly and very differently, depending on when they were born and where I was on my journey... the youngest one probably has a keener sense of social justice and community organizing (Gwen).

Marnie who is also a single mother, shares stories of how her community work in social housing has impacted on her children. She states as well that she has seen her own children become involved in volunteer activities and attributes this to how fulfilled her children saw her while she was heavily engaged in the political arena of social housing in Sudbury:

> ... I think that there's been times they've been gypped because I've been away a lot. But I think that on the whole, if you were to ask them, and when I'm not around, I think that they are, proud of, at least I hope they're proud, of what I've been able to accomplish... because they've seen the fulfillment that you get from volunteering. I feel that I've achieved a lot because they've gotten involved with children in recreation programs and I think it's really positive... that says something about the kind of values that I've been able to instill in my children. And uh, and I feel good about that (Carol).

In another interview, Bonnie reflects that her years in the union movement in Sudbury appeared not to have much influence on her son, as illustrated below:

> My son's working for a company up North. They're trying to kick the union out. So there you go. Yah. I know my son made a comment not too long ago that he thinks unions are good but he thinks in some cases they go too far, so that's his attitude. I'm not sure where I went wrong with him, actually (laughing), (Bonnie).

Throughout the interview process, the research participants expressed their firm commitment to social change and some of the sacrifices that they made in order to work in the area of community organizing. Through their voices, it becomes clear that the research participants hope that somehow their children will see the value of community organizing within the Sudbury community. Naples (1998) argues that mothers who are marginalized and who may come from ethno-cultural communities may pay more attention to social justice issues and, as a result, transmit this attention onto their children. "Lessons carved out of the experiences of everyday racism, contribute to mothering practices that include handing down the knowledge of racism from generation to generation".

For the research participants, their knowledge of community, social exclusion or marginalization have informed their work as community organizers and, as such, have also informed their mothering. Arnup (1997) argues that there is tension within lesbian communities around the notion of mothering and its place within the sphere of political activism. Fumia (1999) insists that her status as a lesbian mother has shifted in institutional spaces such as her children's school. She argues that, as a result of being a mother, she has a heightened awareness of the homophobic attitudes manifested in institutional spaces. Lyne's experience as a lesbian mother living and working in Sudbury, also suggests that she became politicized in order to create safe spaces for her

children. Lyne's experience as a member of the Catholic school board speaks to her ability (and the relative openness of the school board) to have her voice heard at a higher political level. What is interesting and not discussed in the literature is Lyne's ability to navigate the Catholic school system, which traditionally, holds very strict definitions of what constitutes a family according to Catholic doctrine.

6.3.0) Part II: Tensions and Contradictions in the Practice of Organizing

6.3.1) Ontario's Political Climate

What was it like working as a community organizer under the Harris government? Research participants spoke at great length on how things had changed on the political and social landscapes since the Common Sense Revolution. This so-called revolution altered how women as community organizers engaged in their work in Sudbury in 1995. The research participants spoke with much passion about Sudbury's political isolation, which had been exacerbated by the Harris government. Mary's statement captures the essence of the message which I received from all of the research participants; namely that, because of Sudbury's geographic and political isolation, community organizers felt afraid and vulnerable when the Harris government came to power:

> Provincially, Sudbury has no representation in Queen's Park. We never elect Tories, we've never elected Tories. Northern Ontario is just not part of the decision-making that goes on in Southern Ontario, so we simply do not have a voice in the structure of Ontario, in the decision-making structure of Ontario. It's very scary. I think that, uh, I think a couple of things that happened in Ontario. I mean, when the NDP got in power, we were all shocked. We were just totally

> shocked. I remember I had to go down to the Steel Hall just 'cause I had to be with other people. Uh, it was, and then of course the disillusionment that happened, when the NDP couldn't do all the things that we thought the NDP government should be able to do, and for whatever reasons, there was a recession. And the social contract was a stupid thing. So there was a lot of disillusionment, and then, inadvertently I think, that disillusionment led to Mike Harris being able to come in as strong as he did. So activists weren't in good shape when Mike Harris came into power to begin with. First of all, we'd had a government that supposedly was supposed to be on our side, we weren't quite sure how to react to policies that they were initiating, that was, um... So we sort of became, um, impotent, you know? We didn't know how to react anymore (Mary).

All of the research participants used a vocabulary of war. Many words such as "regime", comparing Harris to Hitler, the words "attack" and "devastation" were often used in order to illustrate that they did not feel that community organizing in Sudbury or, anywhere else for that matter, felt very safe. What is evident is the extreme anger the research participants expressed about the harsh reforms to social policies, particularly towards the most vulnerable in Ontario. As mentioned earlier, welfare payments, funding for social housing, services for the disabled, women's shelters, daycares, education, hospitals and other services were slashed in 1995 and continued to suffer under Premier Ernie Eves and his successor Premier McGuinty. All of these cuts have directly impacted on the nature and volume of work with which the research participants must contend in their daily lives as community organizers. The following quote from Mary is one which accurately describes a context of hatred when assessing the difficulties of community organizing and also speaks of the resilience of community organizers. She finishes by theorizing that strong activism and resistance is not at the present time omnipresent, but she does leave hope that perhaps one day the resistance of the left will re-appear.

> ... Because we're letting them get away with that kind of shit, it's bringing the whole province down, and so it's hard to organize around that kind of hatred. And it's completely changed the whole dynamic of what we're working with

> here. Like, I think resistance is still there, and people are in pain, and people are definitely in shock about what's happening in their province. But then the truth is, right, is that people survive anything, right? We're resilient, we'll get through. I think that we are getting through. The time for strong activism certainly isn't now, hopefully we're building that back so that we can reclaim our Ontario (Mary).

She believes that the respect that the Ontario government had for the Left in the past has now completely disappeared. This is consistent with a predominant theme of fear which permeated most of the interviews with the research participants:

> ... One of the big problems that we saw, was that the province wanted to download, um, Family Benefits to all municipalities. And we rightly saw that as a big problem, and we managed to fight it, at that point. And now with Harris in it's all been downloaded. Um, so, and I remember going to demonstrations in Queen's Park, and politicians would actually come out and address the protesters. I mean, even if they'd insulted them, they would come out and acknowledge that they were there. I mean, things have shifted so much, and I don't think people realize. Now they greet you with cops and tear gas (Mary).

The following voices are from research participants who all encapsulate the hopelessness which often emerged during the interviews. The first quote is from Marnie who works in the area of social housing. When Harris came into power, he almost immediately put an end to all funding to non-profit housing resource groups. Marnie has been working since 1995 at trying to maintain non-profit housing units in the Sudbury Region. She spoke at great length of how many families in the Sudbury area were on waiting lists for subsidized housing and how they would have to wait for years before they could get a unit. She was very distraught particularly with the way the Ontario Conservatives has impacted her ability to work within the realm of social housing:

> Extremely, extremely difficult. Ah, extremely difficult to work in this kind of environment where, um, people are not really respected by this government and people's basic needs are not acknowledged by this government (Marnie).

Manon assisted in organizing a union under the Harris government. The ability to do so

has been rendered much more difficult because the politicians have managed to change several labor laws in favor of private business and management.

> It is not easy. It is very hard because right now, politics are not for the union, they are for management (Manon).

Carol supports the notion that the tide is changing, relative to renewed action and organizing amongst people from the left in Ontario.

> ... Like, at first when Harris came in, there was unbelievable devastation. Uh, I watched women that had been activists for decades just deflate ... And everybody was just tired, tired. Too much on their plate. That seems to be turning around some now (Carol).

There appeared to be no major differences in ways in which both anglophone and francophone research participants reacted to the devastation brought forth by the Harris government, other than to confirm that both groups of organizers were working feverishly at preserving and fighting for various issues within their communities. Francophone participants were more combative perhaps because of what had taken place in Ottawa with the case of Montfort.

6.3.2) Political Isolation and Geography

As previously discussed, Sudbury is situated in Northeastern Ontario, which is approximately a four hour drive from Toronto and a six hour drive from Ottawa. Heavily dominated by multinationals and unions, Sudbury has consistently voted New Democrats as its political leaders for over twenty years. This has been problematic for Sudburians, given the fact that New Democrats have dominated the political arena in Ontario only once in the 1990's under the leadership of Bob Rae. As mentioned earlier in the introductory chapter, many Northerners feel isolated and neglected by the political

decision-making centers of Toronto and Ottawa. This is captured by Marnie:

> ... they have very little economic power, they have very little social power, because it's true that people in Northern Ontario do feel, that decisions are made in Toronto or they're made in Ottawa, that people don't really consider what's really going on in the north, that we don't have the population, um, we are far away, we're remote. And so people just don't feel that they have any power, whether it be social, economic or political (Marnie).

In addition to political isolation, research participants often shared that Sudburians are aware that their geography is highly problematic. Meetings are difficult when there are no cars and adequate public transportation services. There are enormous costs associated with flying back and forth to Toronto or Ottawa in order to negotiate or participate in meetings with government officials responsible for determining economic envelopes for programs and development. As Georgette states:

> In Sudbury, you're not on Queen's Park front door. You are constantly having to fly back and forth to Toronto and this costs money (Georgette).

Carol depicts how the notion of empowerment is compromised within a Sudbury organizing context, given the geography and distances inherent to this part of the province:

> ... absolutely everything we do has to include a transportation budget. Everything we do has to include daycare. Everything we do has to include food, so it's, to have a meeting that costs you nothing is pretty near unheard of, or you know that you're only going to get the middle class people, ... but the people, it impedes people being activists for themselves, which is not an empowering position. And even if you do provide transportation and all that stuff, there's always that disparity in the relationship. 'We have provided you with so much that you could participate'. Nobody has bad feelings about it, everybody's doing it to be good and to be kind, but it's a power imbalance, and it's almost impossible to overcome (Carol).

The political and geographic isolation of Sudbury compared to Toronto and Ottawa were important themes which emerged in the stories of the lived experiences of women as

community organizers in Sudbury, Ontario. These themes are supported by the literature. Delaney and colleagues (1999), Zapf (1993 & 2001) and Wharf (1999) all argue that the notion of political and economic power is one which eludes northern communities.

6.3.3) Poverty and Government Programs

Poverty issues were omnipresent within the interview data; all of the research participants shared stories of how the economic climate of Sudbury made organizing extremely difficult, particularly when working with families in high risk neighborhoods. The reality of poverty was an important influence on how the research participants engaged in their community organizing practices:

> ... if you don't have money, you're in the house all the time, 'cause you don't have a car to get around. If you do have bus fare, it's an all day thing. You can go in the morning, and you can come back at night, but that's all. So, daycare, we had a couple of young women talking about it. If they get it, the daycares are very rarely attached to workplaces. So, and our buses don't start until usually seven, and it's often not physically possible for somebody to leave their home, get to their daycare, get to their job, get back to their daycare, which usually closes after their job is done, and at home. It's not physically possible to do that with our bus routes. So, you have less access when you're up here. It's cold, we have heating, I mean this one's been going on, heating bills have doubled this winter, and are looking on tripling. If you don't have the money for it, you're going to be sitting in the cold. There's not an option. Whereas when you get into Southern Ontario the heating bills are less, the cost of living is less. Food is more expensive up here, because they add the transporting everything to us. So everything costs more, but the social assistance we get is the same as what they get in Toronto (Carol).

Related to the issue of poverty was the community organizers' enormous dissatisfaction with programs funded by provincial programs based in Toronto. Several of the research participants had much to say with regards to the fact that much work had to be done in order to 'make people understand' that funders had to be cognizant of the particularities of Sudbury, such as geography, culture (bilingual programs) and the lack of infrastructure

and services. The irritation is evident in Lynn's statement:

> ... Even if we're discussing dollars, and how dollars are distributed to northern Ontario for women's organizations or groups. Um, let's present it as needs for women , put into a pot of – well, the majority of women need more training, let's say, in non-traditional trades. Well, that might make sense if you're sitting in London, and you have access to the Ford plant, the GM plant or the Hyundai plant. But when you're sitting in Northern Ontario, training the woman in a non-traditional trade, means she has to uproot herself from this community and go elsewhere ... So our programs that we like to do, and, not like to do, that need to be done in Northern Ontario, aren't reflective in the budgeting or the financing that's provided to us, and that all comes from Southern Ontario (Lyne).

Heating costs are more problematic in Sudbury than Toronto. Research participants often had to deal with low-income families who simply could not afford the hydro costs for the winter and they collectively blamed bureaucrats in Toronto for not being sensitive enough to the basic needs of families living in Northern Ontario. Heating costs and cold weather challenged the ability of the research participants in their daily lives as community organizers:

> Our heating costs up here are astronomical, they're not in Windsor. So they have to make sure they're setting budgets that reflect the communities where those housing projects exist. And uh, and people in Toronto have to appreciate the kinds of expenses that it takes to run a project in Northern Ontario, in isolated communities. And uh, and they really don't have a concept of what that means (Marnie).

Marnie stated that she envied organizers working in Toronto because she felt that people in Toronto had developed more political awareness around social justice and poverty issues. Below she reinforces the idea that decision-makers in Sudbury are not receptive and understanding with regards to issues of gender and structural poverty. She points out that class and gender politics underlie the relationship between the political decision-makers and women on welfare. As such, individuals are blamed for their own poverty:

> So it's very, very discouraging, very depressing at times, um, having to deal with that in this current environment... I think that Northern Ontario citizens tend to

> have a very traditional view that says that if you need a rent-geared-to-income unit, if you need social assistance, if you need help from the government, it's because you have failed. Not that the system has failed, that you have failed, that there's something lacking in you. And whereas in larger communities, there tends to be a broader base of people that have developed an analysis of the economic system and the social system and the political system that says that it's not necessarily your fault that they find themselves in these conditions, in Northern Ontario, there hasn't been in my opinion that broad base of people that have done that kind of analysis and had that understanding. And so you tend to have people serving on municipal boards, um, and in key positions of power within, in the, smaller communities that really have a very old, sort of traditional view of why people are on social assistance (Marnie).

Caring and poverty discussed by the organizers have widely been discussed in the literature as contributing to women's organizing (Armstrong & Armstrong, 1990; Baker & Tippin, 1999; Neysmith, 2000). As discussed previously, the dismantling of social programs under a conservative regime meant that social care costs were downloaded onto the backs of women. Evans and Wickerle (1997) argue that ideological shifts which shape economics and politics have profound implications for women. The shift to a more conservative social agenda meant a 28% cut to their welfare benefits for women on assistance in Ontario in 1995. Kitchen (1996), Lamarche (1999) and Moscovitch (1999) convincingly argue that for nine years, the government has launched a vicious attack on the poor through dismantled social policies. Ontario's social policies are leading women and their children down a path which affords them neither personal nor economic security. This inevitably means that women as community organizers work in a political arena which at often times impede their ability to engage effectively in community organizing practices with vulnerable clienteles.

6.3.4) Challenges and Tensions Between Anglophone and Francophone Community Organizers

Francophone research participants asserted their identities as organizers who had a tradition of fighting for language rights, given the politics of being a minority francophone in the province of Ontario. Eva, for example, states much of the dialogue entertained with the francophone research participants:

> It's something that as a francophone, you're kind of born with you're going to have to fight for anything you want. And when we were young, we fought with the Protestants, and we fought for the French schools and we fought for everything, and it's ingrained in us that if we want the francophone services, we're going to have to fight for them. Not fight physically, but be vocal about it... (Eva).

Francophone participants reflected a feeling of being under attack or being antagonized by certain Anglophones. Feelings of always anticipating a 'fight' when it would come to accessing monies for projects seemed to be consistent with a sentiment of having to preserve and defend the francophone integrity of certain projects or programs within bilingual or francophone organizations. The following reflects what several of the francophone research participants had to say relative to feeling marginalized in their organizing efforts. Inversely, however, most of them acknowledged often that many healthy alliances did exist between anglophone and francophone organizers and there appeared to be a mutual respect and recognition for each other:

> There's a very strong anti-French sentiment here and very strong conservatives. And then there are in your face liberals as well. It's a funny community that way (Rita).

Tessa reflected back on her organizing days in the 1970's and 1980's and illustrated some of the negative feelings that certain francophone organizers had relative to their organizing experiences with anglophone organizers. Her words reflect a subtle

underlying tension between anglophone and francophone organizers on matters of trust:

> It's hard to create alliances, it's not evident. When we first started a local non-profit years ago, it's the Francophones that started it and then the Anglos took it over (Tessa).

Tessa also states quite clearly that there are different reasons why francophone women organize, as opposed to their anglophone counterparts. The nature of the organizing appears to be influenced by linguistic and cultural lines, therefore rendering cohesive and unified organizing amongst women both Anglophone and Francophone very difficult. For the francophone research participants there is simply no room to create spaces to collaborate on projects which would marginalize in any way francophone issues. This point is well articulated by Tessa:

> Almost all the francophone organizers had worked with the Anglophones but we also had projects which were uniquely francophone and not a priority for the Anglophones. In those days, when you were with the Anglophones it was hard to mobilize around cultural issues which were viewed as less important perhaps as universal issues (Tessa).

Carol alludes to the matter of funding for projects which almost always have a bilingual component when working within the Sudbury community. Anglophone organizers viewed paying attention to the bilingual nature of a project as being tedious and heavy to manage. This issue would be viewed very differently by the francophone research participants; they saw it as being symbolic of what was difficult about in working in two languages. For several of the francophone participants, it simply is too difficult to try and organize in both official languages because inevitably the francophone population perceives its involvement as being less valued and not respected in terms of programs and projects. The following statement highlights these difficulties:

> ... No, it is difficult. 'Cause I'm Anglophone, and my French is minimal. And it is difficult, um, to have the alliances. Well, part of it comes back to the financial

> thing, to do anything bilingually costs more, and we're not being given money to do that. And, we're not demanding money to do that, either (Carol).

What was common to both anglophone and francophone research participants is the recognition that working in a bilingual environment was not easy. For some of the Anglophones, the question of time management was perceived as being able to engage in community organizing initiatives in English because Francophones in Sudbury were bilingual. For the Francophones, it was very clear that engaging in community organizing initiatives should be first and foremost in a spirit of doing so by and for Francophones in order to preserve a sense of language and culture. To bring community organizing efforts together would be for the Francophones to dilute the francophone presence within community initiatives. It's important here to state that the dialogue within the context of the interviews pertaining to challenges and tensions between anglophone and francophone organizers was extremely fluid. Even though there was dialogue around some of the difficulties, both anglophone and francophone research participants had much to say in terms of valuing and honoring the work that was being done within the various communities in Sudbury. Along with a mutual sense of recognition, both groups of research participants were very careful not to say things which would appear to be too negative towards each other and the fact that they were all organizers working in a spirit of empowerment with families and various communities seemed to be the ultimate focus for both groups of research participants.

Franco-Ontarians perceive an element of threat with regards to the anglophone dominant culture in Ontario (Dennie, 1989; Gervais, 1983; Paquette, 1996). As Bagaoui and Laflamme (1997), in an article on Franco-Ontarian community associations, encapsulate

what I would qualify as the collective sense of threat of minority Francophones living in Ontario.

> The Anglophone is similar to our 'self'. And the mass communication society in which we find ourselves underlines this similarity whereby it homogenizes its populations. It is unlikely that we have nothing to share with this 'other' who appreciates the same types of music, who admires the same movie stars, who obeys the same laws, who know the same debates on abortion , who lives the same economic crisis, that does the same type of work... The Anglophone is different to our 'self': the Franco-Ontarian illustrates through various epithets his specificity. And language is there to remind the ultimate difference, notably when it is etched within a cultural character that is not exclusively linguistic. And this 'other' is different than our 'self" when we take into consideration it's social position and historical attitude. In this network of information, the Anglophone appears to be potentially dangerous insomuch that one must know how to exchange with him without being devoured by him (translation\author), (Bagaoui & Laflamme, 1997, p. 84).

The voices of the francophone research participants echo these identity issues as minority francophones. Issues of trust which were highlighted speak to Francophones seeing themselves in positions of extreme vulnerability in a menacing anglophone world. The very few Franco-Ontarian academics who work in the area of feminism in "l'Ontario Français", speak to how much more vulnerable francophone women in Ontario are relative to the social status that they occupy in Ontario. In a much quoted article on Franco-Ontarian women, Danielle Coulombe (1992) speaks to the issue of 'status' of northern francophone women in Ontario:

> To live in French in the North corresponds with a status which is doubly if not triply minoritized when it comes to women (translation\author), (p. 152).

Sociologist Christiane Bernier (1995) speaks to the invisible role which Franco-Ontarian women "occupy" or not, within French-Canadian literature:

> Upon a quick tour of different known bibliographies including those of the "Revue du Nouvel-Ontario", one can measure up to what point it is difficult to carve a space of research on Franco-Ontarian women (translation\author), (p. 57).

And social work professor Marie-Luce Garceau (1999) supports this claim when she states that:

> Recognizing the small space which is afforded to them, Franco-Ontarian women are rising up against masculine knowledge which forgets their very existence (p. 161).

The research participants' voices did much to validate the bridge between theory and practice, especially when it came to speaking on issues of trust between francophone and anglophone organizers. This particular challenge, which influences the way women as organizers engage in community organizing in Sudbury, appears to be exacerbated by the presence of visible minority Francophones who also want to feel validated and recognized as minority Francophones living in Ontario. As we will see below, the challenges only become more complex.

6.3.5) Challenges Between Franco-Ontarian and Visible Minority Francophone Organizers

What was most disturbing during the interviews with Anne and Barbara from the francophone Black community in Sudbury is the enormous sense of frustration and anger which was expressed regarding the challenges in engaging in community organizing spheres within a Franco-Ontarian group. Female Francophone visible minorities (from both Haitian and African communities) are not able to appropriate a socio-political space within the Franco-Ontarian community in Sudbury. This would appear to be supported by the literature illustrated in Chapter 3 on the issue of citizenship. On this subject, Neysmith (2000) argues that the citizenship debate is one which can help us understand the reproduction of power relations within race, class and gender inequities. The

argument that the concept of a "citizen" is etched in a white, heterosexual and middle-class backdrop is evidently challenged by the presence of organizers such as Anne and Barbara who are Black community organizers working in a Franco-Ontarian community which is not used to sharing a socio-political space.

The emergence of Black Francophones in Northern Ontario is a relatively recent phenomenon (Diallo & Lafrenière, 1997). It is, however, unlikely that the trend will diminish as more and more immigrants are being encouraged to locate away from larger urban centers. The fact that francophone immigrants are choosing to come to Sudbury is because a bilingual community like Sudbury is attractive to unilingual Francophone immigrants. The challenge of integrating visible minority Francophones lies in the fact that Franco-Ontarians are extremely protective of the rights and freedoms for which they've fought in the past. To be a Francophone in Ontario is in essence to be a political entity. Franco-Ontarians see visible minority Francophones as a threat to economic envelopes which are allotted to Franco-Ontarian community groups. Now with the arrival of "other Francophones" a certain level of Eurocentric discourse manifests itself by closing networks and doors to visible minority Francophones in order to preserve the Franco-Ontarian integrity of francophone organizations. Gramsci (1988) argues that ideological power is an insidious type of oppression, given the fact that it can permeate much in the way that we learn and integrate knowledge. Cox and Ephros (1998) posit the idea that every group has its "own stories of outsiders" (p. 117). The way in which Franco-Ontarians collide socially and politically with visible minority Francophones is tenuous and the exclusionary behavior of certain Franco-Ontarians "de souche" does

nothing to fortify the francophone presence within the province of Ontario. There is a definite need to name what is going in "l'Ontario français" and address some of the challenges within the larger francophone community. Kreps and Kunimoto (1994) most accurately describe the meaning of group when they argue that a group shares "beliefs, experiences and patterns of meanings" (p. 26). While this may be true for the Franco-Ontarians, what space does this definition of group symbolize to visible minority Francophones who want to integrate within the larger Franco-Ontarian community? Clearly, within the context of minority and minoritized Francophones in Ontario, multiple layers of oppression are being played out within francophone circles. The following statement illustrates the difficulties in negotiating one's identity when moving to Sudbury as a visible minority francophone.

> I am not Franco-Ontarian. It's not like I don't want to be. For me, I know that I am Franco-Ontarian because when I arrived in Sudbury this is the first and last place that I have lived since coming here. This is where I live my 'francophonie' with Franco-Ontarians, therefore I am francophone (Barbara).

During the course of her interview, Barbara spent much time deploring how other Francophones see her as a Black francophone woman. She clearly expressed what many francophone immigrants have expressed to me in the past, when I worked with this particular group as an organizer in a Community Health Centre. I was not surprised by what she had to say on the subject, although I was at times embarrassed by the behavior of certain Franco-Ontarians.

> I want people to see me for me, as a human being, not as someone who comes from an inferior culture, but as someone who is equal, who can live decently, in harmony with others (Barbara).

Another obstacle she has faced is her feeling of not fitting in anywhere within the larger multicultural community. When asked if she would feel more welcomed working and

organizing within a multicultural association, she clearly stated that this was not possible, since, while theoretically the multicultural association was bilingual, the reality was and is that are very few services within the association for unilingual Francophones, hence contributing once again to her feeling of marginalization.

> I also bring a little something extra to 'la francophonie'. I don't fit in at the multicultural centre (Barbara).

Anne stated similar experiences of feeling marginalized when attending school at Laurentian University. She mentioned several incidents of being the only Black francophone student in her program. This rendered her at times vulnerable because of the collective nature of school assignments. She often found herself working alone or with other students who were disinterested in her presence or contribution to group work and assignments. When I asked her how she felt about this, she stated that she was used to this type of scenario, having experienced similar marginalization while attending high school in Quebec. When probed further, she expressed anger at being left out:

> There was even a teacher at my Faculty who asked me to leave the lunchroom because students were not allowed. I felt that she disliked me because I was Haitian. I also remember while I was on placement with two Franco-Ontarian girls, never feeling like I was part of that group. They always had lunch together and I was never included. One day I lost it with them over something I can't remember now, and then they said that I was too sensitive. I often felt like I couldn't win with the Francophones in my program (Anne).

Interestingly Anne states that her experience as a young Black community organizer in Sudbury was positive. She spoke in glowing terms of how she felt integrated and respected as a young Black student. Unlike her student experience, as an organizer, Anna was satisfied with her community organizing work, as well as her colleagues. When probed further on her experiences as an organizer in Sudbury, she stated that she felt that she could be creative and develop alliances with different groups of people. This was

something that she says she did not experience in Québécois society. The contradictions in her interview relative to her experience as a student and as an organizer are vivid as evidenced by the following statement:

> Community in Sudbury was another kind of community. Imagine, I had to move to a northern Ontario community to get to know different people from various African countries as well as white people. It was a terrific experience. As a Black organizer in Sudbury I felt respected because people from that town identified Blacks as being students at Laurentian or at one of the other two community colleges. I believe that I grew into the role of 'activist and community organizer' while studying in Sudbury. Community organizing gave me a voice and for the first time in my life I felt like people were actually listening to me (Anne).

Barbara's experiences, on the other hand, did not yield the same degree of satisfaction or integration. Contrary to Anne, who engaged in purely volunteer activities based in a university setting and within a multicultural student organization, Barbara became involved in order to integrate within the larger Franco-Ontarian community in the hopes of one day developing sufficient contacts to access employment. Barbara discusses how she feels about her experience within the Franco-Ontarian community:

> I became a volunteer in a local non-profit. I was a member of the Board and my objective was to encourage other visible minority francophone women to become involved. At the beginning many of my friends and colleagues participated in some of the activities of the agency but we didn't get what we thought we wanted out of our organizing efforts. There always seems to be a sort of barrier; you can come to the meetings and all but you soon realize that this isn't what people expect of you. Franco-Ontarian women, well, there's a bit of resistance towards us, they're not open, it's difficult (Barbara).

An enormous amount of pain and anger was evident when she shared her frustration at not being able to access full-time employment within the francophone community. Hampered by her inability to master the English language, her potential to work in Sudbury, is limited to working in French only. Her underlying rage at feeling victimized by racist attitudes within the Franco-Ontarian community in Sudbury is clear:

> It's been ten years that I've been running after a job and it's been ten years that I haven't found something valuable. It's not easy here; can you imagine? I have a Master's degree and all of my colleagues in my program have found full-time work except for me. It's been five years since I've been looking for work within the francophone milieu and I still haven't found something (Barbara).

She then goes on to name the issue of not being able to move forward and also naming the issue of injustice relative to her situation:

> It's hard to integrate here because people have a tendency of giving small little jobs. Especially for the women here; you know small little contract jobs make me crazy. I am not at a level where I think I have to beg for work. I want to assert myself, I want to be fulfilled. I have done everything but I have encountered barriers and I cannot move forward. There is injustice here and it hurts me (Barbara).

Barbara shared that she is committed in valuing and promoting Black culture in Sudbury but as something which is rich and valuable and not as something exotic to celebrate only during Black History Month. The overriding feeling throughout the interview, however, was enormous frustration and anger. Her story is the story of many Black francophone women in Sudbury who are experiencing difficulties in integrating within the larger francophone community.

Tensions between Franco-Ontarians and visible minority Francophones may explain the discouragement that Black women organizers experience in their work as community organizers. However, and perhaps inversely, there may be signs that racism can also be perceived as being an element which would characterize the ability of Black women to become involved within the community. At the time of the interviews, Barbara was working on developing education programs on African culture within the schools in Sudbury. Somehow she rationalized that she was going to prove that 'Blackness' was worth honoring and respecting. What discouraged her as an organizer was the fact that

she found herself in a very precarious job in order to do so. The literature on race and racism speaks volumes to the lived experiences of people trying to integrate and create spaces for themselves within dominant societies (Collins, 1995; Hooks, 1990; Hooks, 2000; Thomas, 2000). The experiences of Barbara and Anne, who are marginalized and yet seek to validate their voices within a minoritized Francophone milieu, are examples of this. According to Pollack (2004), such a "framework in which to challenge oppressive assumptions and practices and open up spaces to construct alternatives" is necessary.

In the "Encyclopédie Universalis Corpus" under the heading "Minorité" Demichel (1989) characterizes 'minorities' (p. 431) as forming a distinct race, language or religion and who share a common history. He also qualifies minorities as being sufficient in numbers to constitute a group but too few to be considered noteworthy within the larger population in which they find themselves. Finally he states that minorities are capable of distinguishing what makes them constitute a 'minority' group and that if one feels oppressed by virtue of being different than one simply is.

This helps to understand the tensions between Franco-Ontarians and visible minority Francophones living in Sudbury, Ontario. In both groups, the definition of 'minority' is one which fits. What becomes problematic in trying to understand what characterizes women's community organizing experiences in Sudbury are the enormous challenges within the Francophone community of creating alliances and solidarity between the larger Franco-Ontarian community and the newly emerging visible minority Francophone

community. Dennie (1999) describes the Franco-Ontarian community as one which is framed within a modern industrialized society which must negotiate class struggles and power, and which navigates amongst multiple divisions. Clearly, the Franco-Ontarian community must contend with the fact that the face of "la francophonie ontarienne" is changing. Michèle Kérisit (1998) of the School of Social Work at the University of Ottawa, questions the relevance of the literature on oppression for whether it emanates from Quebec (Jacob, 1992), or France (Cohen-Èmérique, 1993), Great Britain (Dominelli, 1984; Dominelli, 1991; Dominelli, 2001) or the United States (Locke, 1992), much of what is written is situated in a context of social relations between a 'majority' group and 'minority' groups generally comprised of immigrant or refugee populations. Kérisit (1998) states quite clearly that the research on relationships between minority Francophones and visible minority Francophones living outside of Quebec is very sparse.

She argues that the presence of visible minority Francophones is slowly changing the landscape of "la francophonie" in Ontario. There are no clear statistics on how many visible minority Francophones actually do live in Ontario, although she has relied on numbers from the Association Canadienne Française de l'Ontario that estimates that there are approximately 85,000. There is tension between Franco-Ontarians and visible minority Francophones precisely because both see themselves and are socially constructed as being minorities in the province of Ontario. The revealing tension between both groups of Francophones is the political identities to which they adhere. For Franco-Ontarians, preserving language and culture is the main battle which motivates most of the community organizing and activism amongst Francophones in Ontario. For

visible minority Francophones however, speaking French and living in French is not necessarily an "act of rebellion relative to the dominant society which speaks English; au contraire, speaking French could be a symbol of the one who dispossessed you of your maternal identity" (Kérisit, 1998, p. 83) if you are an immigrant from Africa for example.

Elsewhere I have written on the subject of redefining a francophone space for francophone Africans in Sudbury (Diallo & Lafreniere, 1997). Members of the African francophone community in Sudbury support much of what Kérisit has to say about the French language not being a major battleground for visible minority Francophones. Our research indicated that for Franco-Ontarians, language was intimately linked with identity whereas for francophone Africans, the French language was more a functional tool with which they could work and communicate (Diallo & Lafrenière, 1997). That is not to say that francophone Africans did not value the importance of accessing French language services in Sudbury; in fact, they were the Francophones who needed the services most in French, since many of the African francophones in Sudbury were not bilingual.

What this element of tension between the larger Franco-Ontarian community and visible minority francophones reveals is a major difference in the ways with which all minority Francophones negotiate their identities living in an anglophone dominated space. It is therefore not surprising that there is tension in the ways in which the research participants who are francophone and visible minorities articulated their lived experiences as community organizers within the francophone community in Sudbury.

Why is this research project important to understand? The following concluding chapter will attempt to answer this question and highlight what were the most interesting patterns which emerged from this research. Links back to the literature strands as well as completing the circle with regards to the initial research question raised will also be examined.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

7.1) Connecting Personal Narrative and Research Data

The intent of my research was to raise an awareness of what it means to be a woman and an organizer in Sudbury. The research sheds some light on the roles that women as organizers play in spheres relative to caring and community organizing. It also expresses certain realities regarding the complex nature that women's community organizing entails relative to socio-political, geographic and cultural contexts, and, as such, should be given consideration when examining different elements of community organizing practice. It also shares some preliminary insights on how theories of oppression and marginalization contribute to the challenges of community organizing practice in a northern/urban context.

In the first chapter of this research project, I spent much time detailing how I was shaped as an organizer living and working in Sudbury. A dominant theme in my story is how I was heavily influenced by my father's community organizing experiences. When I relate this influence with those of my research participants, what is contradictory in our stories is the fact that I was influenced primarily by a male role model, while most of the research participants modeled their community organizing practices on female role models and mentors. Where our stories did converge, however, is in our desire to 'connect' with others in the hopes of recreating community. When my parents' marriage

dissolved, connecting with others through community organizing initiatives was my way to recreate the concept of family and feel connected to others. Several of the women whom I interviewed, particularly two of the single mothers, clearly indicated that breaking a sense of isolation and re-creating family and community was a primary motivator in getting involved with others.

The area of mothering and community organizing is one which is significant because it illustrates the importance of understanding the intersectionality of gender, class and caring. What appears important within my own narrative, as well as those of the research participants, is an overwhelming feeling that somehow our work is framed in a desire to 'take care', to engage in work which somehow 'makes things better' for others and/or to 'defend' or advocate on behalf of others who are too fragile to do so for themselves. Most of the women whom I interviewed were involved in many spheres of activity which had much to do with single mothers, social housing, women and health, including mental and physical health issues for older women. Connections between their community organizing work and mothering roles as caring work would need to be further explored. My education as a feminist was hugely challenged by the voices of the research participants. As I mentioned earlier, I was aware that feminism was probably not a major issue for the women who agreed to share their stories with me. What I had not anticipated is the outright rejection of feminism as significant to their community organizing practices. Whereas in my narrative I acknowledge the space from which I have been involved as a woman and organizer, very few of the research participants viewed their activism as being firmly grounded within a feminist framework. What

emerged, however, through their words is a somewhat contradictory rejection of feminism juxtaposed with an understanding and commitment to working much of the time on issues which concerned women, such as housing and health. As one woman quoted earlier stated, feminism was not what pushed them to engage in community organizing. This was not true for all of the research participants, however, a few clearly articulated that feminism was what propelled them in their organizing activities. Interestingly, the single mothers who were interviewed indicated that feminism was an important influence on their community organizing practices.

Nowhere do our stories collapse and collide more into one another than on the subject of community organizing under a Harris/Eves Conservative government. All of the research participants had much to say on the difficulties of working in a climate which one woman qualified as "organizing around hatred." It was difficult to hear their stories pertaining to the monumental challenges of working with single mothers, psychiatric survivors, the elderly, the disabled, children, the homeless and other marginalized populations in Sudbury. It is important to note that, when I first started on my research journey, I wanted to capture the resistance work of women as organizers in Sudbury. I soon discovered, however, that the theme of resistance was one which I would have to revisit at another time and place, since the preliminary interviews clearly indicated to me that resistance work was not the way women as organizers would qualify the nature of their work but, more accurately, as work which was etched in a mode of survival. Only a few of the women interviewed felt that the tide was turning with regards to engaging in work which would challenge the Conservative government. Overwhelmingly, I saw evidence

of women organizers who, even though they were not completely discouraged, certainly were disillusioned with how they perceived the future, not only for themselves but also for the social justice issues which were of value to them. The most devastating picture was illustrated by Marnie who worked in social housing. Unconvinced that social housing would ever be a priority for the Conservatives in Ontario, she was too cautious even to think of what the future of social housing held for Ontarians. Her words, as well as those of the other organizers illustrated an attempt of doing the best that they could with the resources that were available to them. A spirit of uncertainty and insecurity permeated much of their dialogue.

In my narrative I alluded to my experience as a student organizer while an undergraduate. I shared my feelings about creating alliances with activists and organizers working in anti-apartheid spheres. I described how, in my role as president of the francophone student association, I received very little support for my work in developing through a theatrical project an effort to raise awareness of the political regime of apartheid in South Africa. My deception is explained by the fact that Franco-Ontarians, seeing themselves as marginalized within a dominant Anglophone culture in Ontario, do not seem to possess the will or enthusiasm to see beyond their own oppression and identify with the oppression of people living on another continent.

When I came back to my own narrative, I couldn't help but make connections to the Francophone visible minority women who clearly had much to say in the way of not feeling very welcomed or nurtured within the larger Franco-Ontarian community. To

me, multiple oppressions seem to play themselves out amongst visible minority Francophones and Franco-Ontarian women. Trying to live and thrive as a Francophone in Ontario is not easy. Clearly, there appears to be resistance between the larger Franco-Ontarian community against embracing the presence of other Francophones or as some colleagues would qualify as les "nouveaux francophones de l'Ontario." As mentioned earlier, I believe that this resistance is related to how the government defines 'minority francophone,' and therefore, how much money they would receive for services in French. There is much room for further research in order to understand why the larger Franco-Ontarian community does not, for example, see visible minority Francophones as allies in their fight for political and social recognition. What is interesting is that the social-political landscape of "l'Ontario français" is changing, and therefore, the nature of francophone community organizing is slowly being altered. The visible minority research participants have indicated that they will not back down from attempting to claim a space which is rightfully theirs, despite enormous difficulties and racist attitudes.

With regards to tensions with Anglophones, that is also a theme, which albeit not dominant within my own narrative, is certainly one that is illustrated within the nature of my work as a community organizer. My own community organizing practice was clearly framed along linguistic lines. I almost exclusively worked within francophone circles while in Sudbury and certainly was privy to much of what the research participants had to say with regards to issues of trust and sometimes feeling 'unsafe' in a community which, even though it is bilingual, has a strong intolerance towards Francophones. On this point, our stories were complimentary.

My narrative merges succinctly with those of the research participants in a collective experience of feeling frustrated and challenged by numerous experiences of feeling undervalued in our work as organizers. The political isolation exacerbated by the ignorance of funders and other decision-makers who have demonstrated a relative insensitivity to the nature of our work is a common denominator which binds our stories as women and community organizers working in Sudbury. Although only one of the research participants actually uses the term "internalized northern oppression," it is evident throughout the data collected that there is a dichotomous relationship with wanting to be valued and seeing value in the work that we do but somehow never seeming to be recognized or appreciated, not only by many in our own community but by those outside our community as well. The women interviewed often felt frustrated when talking about "bringing in" resource people and guest speakers to the Sudbury community and, as a result, often felt cheated of the opportunity to be truly understood by outside experts. The fact that most of them could identify "experts" within the Sudbury community who could do the work of facilitating or sharing on a particular subject was also a common thread which was identified as being somehow a sad testimony as to how Sudburians view their own level of competence and expertise.

The feeling of somehow being undervalued and misunderstood is a common thread in our narratives. To me, the notion of oppression is one which, while not articulated by most of the research participants, does, however, emerge within the context of multiple stories, indicated in feelings of being undervalued and somehow feeling invisible.

Even though the research participants had much to complain about regarding the challenges of organizing in Sudbury, all of them concluded in one way or another on what was positive about Sudbury as a space to engage in community organizing practice. Their sense of place was a common thread throughout the interviews. The very nature of this research project is a testimony to what I describe in my introduction as the "value in how I was shaped as a community organizer." My belief in the specificity of Sudbury as a space which defines and shapes women as organizers is legitimate. This belief was validated numerous times when the research participants alluded to Sudbury's relatively small size, which permitted organizers to engage easily in outreach activities for fundraising purposes.

Other women alluded to the 'working class' mentality of Sudbury as a space which meant that people were not afraid to 'roll up their sleeves and become involved.' Still others spoke to the sense of community which Sudbury provided for single mothers and their children. They spoke of the 'pioneer' spirit of Sudbury, whereby community organizers could be 'very creative' and 'test new projects' without fear. Even Sudbury's very harsh winters were viewed by some organizers as something to overcome and to conquer. My desire to explore how Sudbury shaped me as an organizer surfaced several times amongst the research participants, revealing a space which, albeit very challenging, was one which was warm and nurturing as well.

7.2) Connecting Practice to Theory

When I first became involved in this research project, I did not pay much attention to the vocabulary which I utilized when engaging dialogue during the course of my interviews. However, I had to reposition myself with regards to my vocabulary, given the fact that the research participants were very careful to distinguish between the words 'community organizer' and 'activist'. I thought that to interchange the words was acceptable, given the fluid nature of community organizing, which contains both actions relative to community mobilization and political action. What emerged, however, through the interviews is that the climate of the Conservative government of Ontario coupled with the portrayal of the left in the media, rendered some of the research participants uncomfortable in identifying themselves as 'activists'. One woman quoted earlier clearly stated that, when being interviewed by the media, she actually preferred being called a 'community organizer' for this, she felt, gave her more credibility. Yet another research participant found it strange and somewhat irritating that, when interviewed on television, she was identified as a 'professional protester'.

According to one of the francophone women, to be a community organizer and an activist was a symbiotic relationship given the political arena in which most minority francophone organizers found themselves in Ontario. Donald Dennie (1989) and other Franco-Ontarian authors (Bagaoui & Laflamme, 1997; Bernier, 1995; Cardinal & Coderre, 1990) argue for the francophone community that organizing among Francophones is by definition a political action.

Add to this, the tensions highlighted between the larger Franco-Ontarian community and visible minority Francophones, and one can witness a major difference in the ways with which all minority Francophones negotiate their identities while living in an Anglophone dominated space. It is therefore not surprising that there is tension in the ways in which the research participants who are Francophone and visible minorities articulate their lived experiences as community organizers within the Francophone community in Sudbury. Albeit a challenge which is highly complex and is most deserving of future research, the information which was shared within the context of my interviews is very reflective of what is evidenced in the emerging literature on the tensions between Franco-Ontarians and visible minority Francophones. For the purposes of this research, the very tensions between both minority groups are very real influences on how visible minority francophone women experience their community organizing work in Sudbury.

7.3) Future Research Directions

Armstrong and Armstrong (1990) argue that there is an "acute need for a theory that would help us understand not only how women's consciousness develops, but also how different kinds of consciousness arise, and how they lead to different forms of resistance". My research is an attempt to clear a path to future research on what leads to different forms of resistance.

At the beginning of this research project I stated that my intent with this research is to understand what it means to be a woman and an organizer in Sudbury. This research

project has shed some light on what characterizes women's community organizing in a northern/urban setting. It has revealed among other things, what contributes to their relationship and, more specifically, their engagement within the community. This project also attempts to differentiate or highlight a certain specificity to urban/northern organizing, which may be characterized as being somehow different than community organizing in Southern Ontario.

So convinced am I that there is "something in all that nothing" (Rossiter, 1988) that I believe that this research serves as a threshold for future comparative research on what motivates women to become involved in community organizing work. Why are there women who get involved in the community, whereas many do not? What is the ingredient which makes women leave the safety of the private sphere to join that of the public sphere? Is it their children? Their family's health? Their own health? The political climate in which they find themselves? If I can begin to answer some of these questions, I believe that we could begin to decipher ways in which we can encourage marginalized populations such as low-income women or immigrants and refugees who traditionally do not have a voice in mainstream society to claim that voice and speak out on issues which are important to them. I also believe that my research can lead me to areas of study on issues relative to identity and identity negotiation, which is important when someone changes because of personal and social circumstance.

One of the most interesting and stimulating highlights of my research is the tension which I captured between Francophone and visible minority Francophones in Sudbury. It is unfortunate that Franco-Ontarians do not see the value of creating alliances with

unilingual Francophones from other countries. An exciting field of research which I have stumbled upon through this project is engaging in comparative work with the province of Quebec on how visible minority Francophones integrate in minoritized milieux. Why are there a significant number of visible minority Francophones leaving the province of Quebec and attempting to integrate within the province of Ontario? Are the reasons purely economic or are there underlying reasons which speak to the difficulties of integrating within Francophone spaces? Are Francophone spaces more oppressive than Anglophone spaces with regards to embracing diversity? Do Francophones in Canada and Quebec see themselves only as oppressed and not as oppressors? Anecdotal evidence would suggest that visible minority Francophones leave the province of Quebec because they cannot fully integrate within Quebecois society because of their experience of high levels of racism and exclusion. Unfortunately, if these same visible minorities come to a francophone space in " l'Ontario français", there is evidence to suggest within my own research that they are not more welcomed here. What would be interesting to research is once visible minority Francophones integrate within the province of Ontario and learn English, does their facility to integrate socially and economically increase? If so, what can minority Francophones in Canada and Quebec do to become aware of these challenges and, more importantly, how can we create spaces which are inclusive and nurturing to our international francophone colleagues?

Additionally, I believe that this research can also have implications on the way we deliver social work education. Community organizing does not, in my opinion, enjoy the respect it so deserves in the way in which social work education is designed and delivered.

Social work education today is still taught along two mutually exclusive lines: clinical social work (the most desired form of social work amongst students) and macro social work practice (the unfortunate poor cousin of social work practice).

Because I have much respect for community organizing practice, I believe that my research now and in the future could be viewed as influencing the perception of community organizing as a legitimate component of social work practice. To push the envelope further, maybe my research will ultimately suggest that we need to take community organizing out of social work altogether and create a completely independent discipline within the social sciences which honours, not marginalizes the very rich and complex nature of community organizing. There is evidence that this is beginning to happen as programs dedicated to social justice are mushrooming in universities within the province of Ontario.

My research also points to the inherent weaknesses of social work education in the way that social work educators view the world. Not all social work is executed in an urban setting. The challenges of engaging in social work practice in a rural or northern space are real and deserve attention within the context of our classrooms. My research on the concept of "urban imperialism" is one which I plan to pursue in the future.

Ultimately, my research attempts to shed light on what it means to be a woman and an organizer in Sudbury. That this research is the first attempt in the literature to focus on women as community organizers in Northern Ontario suggests to me that, if nothing else,

this research may be of interest to academics working in urban/northern spaces, particularly in Northern Ontario. For me, it is a way to honour the community which has shaped me as a woman and as a community organizer.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbey, S. (1999). Researching motherhood as a feminist. *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering, 1*(1), 45-55.

Abramovitz, M. (1996 & 2000). *Under attack: Fighting back: Women and welfare in the United States.* New York: Monthly Review Press.

Adler, P.A., & Adler, P. (1987). *Membership roles in field research.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Alinsky, S. D. (1971). *Rules for radicals: A practical primer for realistic radicals.* New York: Vintage Books: A Division of Random House.

Aptheker, B. (1989). *Tapestries of life: Women's work, women's consciousness and the meaning of daily experience.* Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.

Armstrong, P. (2000). *Restructuring public and private: Women's paid and unpaid work.* In B. Crow, & L. Gotell (Eds.), *Open boundaries: A Canadian women's studies reader* (pp. 184-204). Toronto, ON: Prentice Hall Canada.

Armstrong, P., & Armstrong, H. (1990). *Theorizing women's work.* Toronto, ON: Garamond Press.

Armstrong, P., & Armstrong, H. (1994). *The double ghetto: Canadian women and their segregated work.* Toronto, ON: McClelland and Stewart.

Arnup, K. (1997). In the family way, Lesbian mothers in Canada. In M. Luxton (Ed.), *Feminism and families* (pp. 80-97). Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

Babcock, P., & Merriam-Webster Editorial Staff (Eds.). (1986). *Webster's third new international dictionary of the English language* (unabridged). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster Inc.

Bagaoui, R. (1999, October 25). Personal communication.

Bagaoui, R., & Laflamme, S. (1997). Les organismes franco-ontariens face à la crise de l'état providence: Continuité et rupture. *Revue du Nouvel-Ontario, 21,* 73-89.

Bailey, R., & Brake, M. (Eds.). (1975). *Radical social work.* London: Edward Arnold.

Baines, C. (2000). Restructuring services for children: Lessons from the past. In N. Bala, J. Hornick, & R. Vogl (Eds.), *Child welfare law* (pp. 1-16). Toronto, ON: Thrompson Educational Publishing.

Baines, C., Evans, P., & Neysmith, S. (1998). Women's caring: Work expanding, state contracting. In C. Baines, P. Evans, & S. Neysmith (Eds.), *Women's caring: Feminist perspectives on social welfare* (pp. 3-22). Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press.

Baines, C., Evans, P., & Neysmith, S. (Eds.). (1998). *Women's caring: Feminist perspectives on social welfare.* Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press.

Baines, C. T. (1998). Women's professions and an ethic of care. In C. Baines, P. Evans, & S. Neysmith (Eds.), *Women's caring: Feminist perspectives on social welfare* (pp. 23-46). Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press

Bala, N. (1991). An introduction to child protection problems. In N. Bala, J. Hornick, & R. Vogl (Eds.), *Child welfare law* (pp. 1-16). Toronto, ON: Thompson Educational Publishing.

Baker, M. (1990). The perpetuation of misleading family models in social policy – Implications for women. *Canadian Social Work Review, 7*(2), 169-182.

Baker, M. (2000). Labour market poverty, gender and the global economy: Comparing Canada, Australia and New Zealand. *Social Work and Globalization (Special Issue) Canadian Social Work, 2*(1), 88-104.

Baker, M., & Tippin, D. (1999). *Poverty, social assistance, and the employability of mothers.* Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Barter, K. (1999). Reclaiming community: Rethinking practices for the social work generalist in northern communities. In R. Delaney, K. Brownlee, & M. Sellick (Eds.), *Social work with rural and northern communities* (pp. 154-181). Thunder Bay, ON: Lakehead University.

Bashevkin, S. (2002). *Welfare hot buttons: Women, work, and social policy reform.* Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Beatty, H. (1997). Social assistance reform act, 1997: A preliminary analysis. *RCH Alert, 6*(5), 1-12.

Behar, R. (1996). *The vulnerable observer.* Boston: Beacon Press.

Bélanger, J. M. (1995). *The role of the state and the community in community participation: A case study.* Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University.

Bélanger, J. M., Kauppi, C., Moxam, B., & Sanderson, R. (1999). Child and youth poverty in Sudbury. *The Social Policy Council of Sudbury.* Sudbury, ON: Laurentian University.

Belenky, M. F., Bond, L. A., & Weinstock, J. S. (1997). A *tradition that has no name: Nurturing the development to of people, families, and communities.* New York: Basic Books.

Belenky, M. F., Clinchy, B. M., Goldberger, N. R., & Tarule, J. M. (1973). *Women's ways of knowing: The development of self, voice, and mind.* New York: Basic Books.

Bernard, C., Bernard, W. T., Epko, C., Enang, J., Joseph, B., & Wane, N. (2000). She who learns teaches: Othermothering in the academy. *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering, 2*(2), 66-84.

Bernier, C. (1995). Femmes et ethnicité en Ontario français: Limites des convergences théoriques des discours de l'identité. *Recherches Féministes, 8*(2), 47 -66.

Bernier, C. (1998). Ethos familial et contexte minoritaire: Comparaison des representations de la famille entre mères Francophones et Anglophones de la region de Sudbury. *Revue du Nouvel-Ontario, 22,* 9-44.

Berthoud, R. (Eds.). (1985). *Challenges to social policy.* Brookfield, VT: Gower Publishing.

Bezanson, K., & McMurray, S. (2000, September). Booming for whom? People in Ontario talk about incomes, jobs, and social programs. Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

Biklen, D. P. (1983). *Community organizing: Theory and practice.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Bishop, A. (1994). *On becoming an ally: Breaking the cycle of oppression.* Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

Bock, M. (2001). *Comment un people oublie son nom: La crise identitaire franco-ontarienne et la presse francaçaise de Sudbury.* Sudbury, ON: Institut franco-ontarien/Prise de parole.

Bosch, G. (1999). Working time: Tendencies and emerging issues. *International Labour Review, 138*(2), 131-149.

Brisken, L., & Eliasson, M. (Eds.). (1999). *Women's organizing and public policy in Canada and Sweden.* Queens, ON: McGill-Queens' University Press.

Brodie, J. (1996). Canadian women, changing state forms and public policy. In J. Brodie (Ed.), *Women and Canadian Public Policy.* Toronto, ON: Harcourt Brace.

Browne, P. L. (1997). Déjà vu: Thatcherism in Ontario. In D. Ralph, A. Régimbald, & N. St-Armand (Eds.), *Mike Harris's Ontario: Open for business, closed to people* (pp. 37-44). Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

Burke, B., & Harrison, P. (1998). Anti-oppressive practice. In R. Adams, L. Dominelli, & M. Payne (Eds.), *Social work: Themes, issues and critical debates* (pp. 229-239). London: MacMillan Press.

Cardinal, L., & Coderre, C. (1990). Les francophones telles qu'elles sont: Les ontaroises et l'économie, *Revue du Nouvel-Ontario, 12,* 151-181.

Cassidy, F. (1999). Organizing for community control. In R. Delaney, K. Brownlee, & M. Sellick (Eds.), *Social work with rural and northern communities* (pp. 230-247). Thunder Bay, ON: Centre for Northern Studies.

Chaykowski, R., & Powell, L. (1999). Women and the labour market: Recent trends and policy issues. *Canadian Public Policy, XXV,* 1-25.

Cheal, D., Woolley, F., & Luxton, M. (1998). *How families cope and why policymakers need to know.* Canadian Policy Research Network. Ottawa, ON: Renouf Publishing.

Chodorow, N. (1978). *The reproduction of mothering: Psychoanalysis and the sociology of gender.* Berkeley, CA: University of California.

Church, K. (1995). *Forbidden narratives: Critical autobiography as social science.* Newark, N.J: Gordon and Breach.

Cohen, M. G. (1997). From the welfare state to vampire capitalism. In P. M. Evans, & G. R. Wickerle (Eds.), *Women and the Canadian welfare stat: Challenges and change* (pp. 28-67). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Cohen-Emeriqu, M. (1993). L'approche interculturelle dans le processus d'aide, *Santé mentale au Québec, XVII*(1), 71-92.

Coholic, D., & Blackford, K. (2003). Exploring secondary trauma in sexual assault workers in Northern Ontario locations: The challenges of working in the Northern Ontario context, *Canadian Social Work, 5*(1), 43-58.

Colgan, F., & Ledwith, S. (1996). Movers and shakers: Creating organisational change. In S. Ledwith, & F. Colgan (Eds.), *Women and organisations: Challenging gender politics* (pp. 278-300). London: MacMillan Press.

Collins, P. H. (1986). Learning from the outsider within: The sociological significance of black feminist thought. *Social Problems, 33*(6), 14-32.

Collins, P. H. (1989). The social construction of black feminist thought. *Signs, 14*(4), 745-773.

Collins, P. H. (2000). *Black feminist though: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.

Common sense returns. (2002, April 16). *Globe and Mail, Toronto,* p. NA.

Corrigan, P., & Leonard, P. (1978). *Social work practice and capitalism: A Marxist approach.* London: MacMillan Press.

Cosslett, T., Lury, C., & Summerfield, P. (Eds.). (2000). *Feminism and autobiography: Text, theories, methods.* New York: Routledge.

Côté, D., des Rivières, M., Thivierge, N., & Tremblay, M. (1995). *Du local au planétaire: Réflexions et pratiques de femmes en développement régional.* Montreal, QC: Les Editions du remu-ménage.

Coulombe, D. (1985). Doublement ou triplement minoritaire. *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa, 55* (2), 131-136.

Cox, C., & Ephross, P. (1998). *Ethnicity and social work practice.* Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press.

Crawford, L. (1996). Personal ethnography. *Communication Monographs, 63,* 158-170.

Cromption, R. (Ed.). (1999). *Restructuring gender relations and employment: The decline of the male breadwinner.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Crosson-Tower, C. (1998). *Exploring child welfare: A practice perspective.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Crow, B. (2000). *Radical feminism: A documentary reader.* New York: New York University Press.

Crow, B. A., & Gotell, L. (2000). *Open boundaries: A Canadian women's studies reader.* Toronto, ON: Prentice Hall ally and Bacon Canada.

Dalrymple, J., & Burke, B. (1995). *Anti-oppressive practice: Social care and the law.* Buckingham, PA: Open University Press.

Dare, B. (1997). *Harris' first year: Attacks and resistance.* Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

Davis, A. (1989). *Women, culture, and politics.* New York: Random House.

Davies, L., & Krane, J. (1996). Shaking the legacy of mother blaming: No easy task for child welfare. *Journal of Progressive Human Services, 7*(2), 3-22.

Delaney, R. (1995). Northern social work practice: An ecological perspective. In R. Delaney, & K. Brownlee (Eds.), *Northern social work practice* (pp. 1-34). Thunder Bay, ON: Lakehead University.

Delaney, R., & Boersma-Fieber, S. (1995). Partnerships and First Nations people: A search for congruence. In R. Delaney, & K. Brownlee (Eds.), *Northern social work practice* (pp. 162-181). Thunder Bay, ON: Lakehead University, Centre for Northern Studies.

Delaney, R., Brownlee, K., & Sellick, M. (2001). Surviving globalization: Empowering rural and remote communities in Canada's provincial north. *Rural Social Work, 6*(3), 4-11.

Delaney, R., Brownlee, K., & Sellick, M. (Eds.). (1999). *Social work with rural and northern community.* Thunder Bay, ON: Centre for Northern Studies.

Delaney, R., & Weening, J. (1995). Partnerships: A cornerstone for Northern practice. In R. Delaney, & K. Brownlee (Eds.). *Northern social work practice* (pp. 58-83). Thunder Bay, ON: Lakehead University, Centre for Northern Studies.

de la Riva, P. (1998). *Mine de rien: Les Canadiens Français et le travil minier à Sudbury 1886-1930.* Sudbury, ON: Prise de parole.

Demichel, A. (1989). Minoritiés. *Encyclopédie Universalis Corpus, 15,* 430-435.

Dennie, D. (1979). Le mouvement syndical en Ontario...et les Franco-Ontariens. *Revue du Nouvel-Ontario, 2,* 41-58.

Dennie, D. (1989). L'étude des réalités franco-ontariennes: Á la recherche dún nouveau modèle théorique. *Revue du Nouvel Ontario, 11,* 69-83.

Dennie, D. (1998). Les Franco-Ontariens. Une perspective multidimensionnelle. *Revue du Nouvel-Ontario, 22,* 101-124.

Dennie, D. (1999). *Les Franco-Ontariens et le matérialisme historique.* Livre non-publié soumis à un éditeur pour fins de publication.

Dennie, D. (1999, October 6). Personal communication.

Dennie, D. (2001). *À l'ombre de l'INCO: Étude de la transition d'une communauté Canadienne-Française de la région de Sudbury (1890-1972).* Sudbury, ON: Collection Amérique Française.

Denzin, N. K. (1989). *Interpretive biography.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publishers.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Devereux, G. (1967). *From anxiety to method in behavioral sciences.* New York: The Hague: Mouton.

Diallo, L. (1993). Report on resident participation in the Sudbury Better Beginnings Better Futures project. *Research Coordination Unit.* Queens, ON: Queen's University.

Diallo, L., & Lafrenière, G. (1997). Stratégies pour une redéfinition de l'espace francophone à Sudbury. *Reflets: Revue ontaroise d'intervention sociale et communautaire, 4*(1), 140-150.

District of Sudbury Social Services Administration Board. (1997). *Ontario works district of Sudbury business plan.* Sudbury, ON: Social Services.

Dominelli, L. (1990). *Women and community action.* Birmingham: Venture Press.

Dominelli, L. (1991). *Women across continents: Feminist comparative social policy.* New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Dominelli, L. (1995). Women in the community: Feminist principles and organizing in community work. *Community Development Journal, 30*(2), 133-143.

Dominelli, L. (1996). Deprofessionalising social work: Anti-oppressive practice, competencies and post-modernism. *British Journal of Social Work, 26*, 153-175.

Dominelli, L. (1997). *Anti-racist social work: A challenge for white practitioners and educators* (2nd ed.). London: MacMillan.

Dominelli, L., Lorenz,W., & Soydan, H. (Eds.). (2001). *Beyond racial divides: Ethnicities in social work practice.* London: Ashgate Publishing.

Dooley, M. D. (1995). Lone-mother families and social assistance policy in Canada. In J. Richards & W. G. Watson (Eds.), *Family matters: New policies for divorce, lone mothers and child poverty, social policy challenge.* Toronto, ON: C. D. Howe Institute.

Drache, D. (1992). Conclusions. In D. Drache (Ed.). *Getting on track: Social democratic strategies for Ontario.* Queens, ON: McGill-Queens' University Press.

East, J. F. (2000). Empowerment through welfare-rights organizing: A feminist perspective. *AFFILIA, 15*(2), 311-328.

Ellis, C. (1995). *Final negotiations: A story of love, loss, and chronic illness.* Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Ellis, C. (1998). Exploring loss through autoethnographic inquiry: Autoethnographic stories, co-constructed narratives, and interactive interviews. In J. H. Harvey (Ed.), *Perspectives on loss: A sourcebook* (pp. 49-61). Philadelphia, PA: Taylor and Francis.

Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: Research as subject. In N. Denzin, & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.), (pp. 733-768). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Employment and Immigration in Canada. (1992). *Northern Ontario outlook.* Northern, Sudbury, ON: Sudbury: District Economist's Office, Northern Ontario Economic Services Directorate, Ontario Region.

Epstein, R. (1999). Our kids in the hall: Lesbian families negotiate the public school system. *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering, 1*(2), 68-82.

Evans, P. M. (1998). Gender, poverty, and women's caring. In C. Baines, P. Evans, & S. Neysmith (Eds.), *Women's caring: Feminist perspectives on social welfare* (pp. 47-68). Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press.

Evans, P. M., & Swift, K. (2000). Single mothers and the press: Rising tides, moral panic, and restructuring discourses. In S. M. Neysmith (Ed.), *Restructuring caring labour: Discourse, state practice, and everyday life* (pp. 73-92). Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press.

Evans, P. M., & Wickerle, G. R. (1997). The shifting terrain of women's welfare: Theory, discourse and activism. In P. M. Evans & G. R. Wickerle (Eds.), *Women and the Canadian welfare state: Challenges and change.* Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Everingham, C. (1994). *Motherhood and modernity.* Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Open University Press.

Featherstone, B. (1992). I wouldn't do your job: Women, social work and child abuse. In W. Hollway, & B. Featerstone (Eds.), *Mothering and ambivalence* (pp. 178-189). London: Routledge.

Fellin, P. (2001). *The community and the social worker.* Itasca, IL: Peacock Publishers.

Ferguson, E. (1998). The child care debate: Fading hopes and shifting sands. In C. Baines, P. Evans, & S. Neysmith (Eds.), *Women's caring: Feminist perspectives on social welfare.* Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press.

Fernandez, E. (1996). *Significant harm: Unravelling child protection decisions and substiture care careers of children: Perspectives of child welfare workers and biological parents.* London.: Avebury.

Fincher, R., & Panelli, R. (2001). Making space: Women's urban and rural activism and the Australian state. *Gender, Place and Culture, 8*(2), 129-148.

Fine, M., Weis, L., Weseen, S., & Wong, L. (2000). For whom? Qualitative research representations and social responsibilities. In N. Denzin, & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.), (pp. 107-131). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Finger, A., & Rosner, V. (2001). Doing feminism interdisciplinary contexts. *Feminist Studies, 27*(2), 4999-503.

Fook, J. (2001). Emerging ethnicities as a theoretical framework for social work. In L. Dominelli, W. Lorenz, & H. Soydan (Eds.), *Beyond racial divides: Ethnicities in social work practice* (pp. 1-14). London: Ashgate Publishing.

Fook, J. (2002). *Social work: Critical theory and practice.* London: Sage Publications.

Freire, P. (1993). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (Twentieth Anniversary Edition). New York: Continuum Publishing.

Friedman, N. (1990). Autobiographical Sociology. *American Sociologist, 21,* 60-66.

Fumia, D. (1999). Marginalized motherhood and the Mother-Lesbian subject. *Journal of the Association of Research on Mothering, 1*(1), 86-87.

Garceau, M. (1999). Place aux actrices sociales! Les Franco-Ontariennes de 45 à 64 ans, dans feminist success stories – Célébrons nos réussites féministes, Karen Blackford, Marie-Luce Garceau et Sandra Kirby (dir.), Les presses de l'Université d'Ottawa.

Garland, W. A. (1988). *Women activists - Challenging the abuse of power.* New York: The Feminist Press.

Geertz, C. (1995). *After the fact: Two countries, four decades, one anthropologist.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

George, G. (2000). *The rock where we stand: An ethnography of women's activism in Newfoundland.* Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Gervais, G. (1999, October 6). Personal communication.

Gibson, C. M. (1997). Facing off on social policy: Can the right and left find middle ground? *Social Service Review, 71*(2), 171-199.

Gil, D. (1990). *Unravelling social policy.* Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Books.

Glenn, E., Chang, G., & Forcey, L. (1994). *Mothering: Ideology, experience, and agency.*

New York: Routledge.

Gould, N., & Taylor, I. (Eds.). (1996). *Reflective learning for social work.* Brookfield, VT: Aldershot.

Gramsci, A. (1988). *Antonio Gramsci reader: Selected writings, 1916-1935.* New York: Schocker Books.

Grant, J. (1993). *Fundamental feminism: Contesting the core concepts of feminist theory.* New York: Routledge.

Gray, R., & Gray, C. (2000). *Legacy – A conversation with dad.* Harriman, TN: Men's Studies Press.

Gutiérrez, L., & Lewis, E. (1999). *Empowering women of colour.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Hardcastle, D. A., Wenocur, S., & Powers, P. R. (1997). *Community practice: Theories and skills for social workers.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Harding, S. (1987). *Feminism and methodology.* Bloomington, IN: Bloomington University Press.

Haas, L., Hwang, P., & Russel, G. (Eds.). (2000). *Organisational change and gender equality: International perspectives on fathers and mothers in the workplace.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hainsberg, J., & Ruddick, S. (Eds.). (1999). *Mother troubles: Rethinking contemporary maternal dilemmas.* Boston: Beacon Press Publishers.

Hayano, D. (1979). Auto-ethnography: Paradigms, problems and prospects. *Human Organization, 38,* 113-120.

He's similar to Haris, Eves says: Former premier had social conscience, but just didn't wear it on his sleeve. (2002, December 18). *Globe and Mail, Toronto,* p. 1.

Health and Social Services Committee. (1999, February). *Sudbury: Fourth quarter and year end report.* Sudbury, ON: Employment Support Services Section.

Higgins, P., & John, J. (Eds.). (1988). *Personal sociology.* New York: Praeger.

Homan, M. (1999). *Promoting community change: Making it happen in the real world.* Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing.

Hooks, B. (1990). *Yearning: Race, gender and cultural politics.* Toronto, ON: Between the Lines.

Hooks, B. (2003). *Teaching community: A pedagogy of hope.* New York: Routledge.

Human Resources Development Canada, Cost-Shared Programs. (1995). *Social security statistics.* Hull, P. Q.: Supply and Services, Canada.

Jackson, M. (1989). *Paths toward a clearing: Radical empiricism and ethnographic inquiry.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Jacob, A. (1984). Les composantes d'une problématique complexe: Intervention sociale, groupes ethniques et classes sociales. Dans *La formation en travail social au Québec : D'une école à l'autre.* Québec, Regroupement des unités de formation universitaires en travail social (RUFUTS).

Jacob, A. (1991). L'immigration et la politique sociale contemporaine. Dans *Le travail social et ses rapports avec les communautés culturelles et les populations autochtones.* Montreal, Regroupement des unités de formation universitaires en travail social et Association canadienne-française pour l'avancement des sciences (RUFUTS-ACFAS).

Juteau-Lee, D. (1982). The Franco-Ontarian Collectivity: Material and symbolic dimensions of its minority status. In R. Breton, & P. Savard (Eds.), *The Quebec and Acadian Diaspora in North America* (pp. 167-182). Toronto, ON: The Multicultural Society of Ontario.

Kamerman, S., & Kahn, A. (1989). Single-parent, female headed families in western Europe: Social change and response. *International Social Security Review, 42,* 3-34.

Kauppi, C., & Reitsma-Street, M. (1996). Women and poverty in northern Ontario. In M. Kechnie, & M. Reitsma-Street (Eds.), *Changing lives: Women in Northern Ontario* (pp. 213-223). Toronto, ON: Dundurn Press.

Kechnie, M., & Reitsma-Street, M. (Eds.). (1996). *Changing lives: Women in northern Ontario.* Toronto, ON: Dundurn Press.

Kérisit, M., & St-Amand, N. (1997). Community strategies for surviving and resisting the cuts. In D. Ralph, A. Régimbald, & N. St-Armand (Eds.), *Mike Harris's Ontario: Open for business, closed to people* (pp. 144-156). Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

Kirby, S., & McKenna, K. (1989). *Experience, research, social change: Methods from the margins.* Toronto, ON: Garamond Press.

Kitchen, B. (1996). Ontario's march towards workfare. *Canadian Review of Social Policy, 37,* 94-96.

Kitchen, B. (1997). Common sense assaults on families. In D. Ralph, A. Régimbald, & N. St-Armand (Eds.), *Mike Harris's Ontario: Open for business, closed to people* (pp. 103-112). Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

Kittay, E. (1998). Dependency, equality, and welfare. *Feminist Studies, 24,* 32-43.

KPMG National Consulting Services. (1999). *Ontario works in Toronto: An operational review.* Toronto, ON: Ministry of Community & Social Services.

Krane, J., & Davies, L. (2000). Mothering and child protection practice: Rethinking risk assessment. *Child and Family Social Work, 5*(1), 35-45.

Krauss, C. (1989). Community struggles and the shaping of democratic consciousness. *Sociological Forum, 4,* 227-239.

Krauss, C. (1993). Women and toxic waste protests: Race, class and gender as resources of resistance. *Qualitative Sociology, 16*(3), 247-262.

Krauss, C. (1998). Challenging power: Toxic waste protests and the politicization of white, working-class women. In N. A. Naples (Ed.), *Community activism and feminist politics: Organizing across race, class, and gender* (pp. 129-150). New York: Routledge.

Kreps, G., & Kunimoto, E. (1994). *Effective communication in multicultural health care settings.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Krieger, S. (1984). Fiction and social science. *Studies in symbolic interaction, 5,* 269-287.

Krieger, S. (1991). *Social science and the self: Personal essays on an art form.* New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press.

Kuyek, J. N. (1990). *Fighting for hope: Organizing to realize our dreams.* Montreal, QC: Black Rose Books.

Lafrenière, G. (1999). *Exploration des liens entre l'économie sociale et le travail social.* Sudbury, ON: Thèse de Maîtrise, Université Laurentienne.

Lamarche, L. (1999, November). *Women's right to participate in public policy-making: From the rhetoric to the practice of citizenship.* Paper presented at the LEAF annual conference, Vancouver, BC.

Lamoureux, H., Mayer, R., & Panet-Raymond, J. (1989). *Community action.* Montreal, QC: Black Rose Books.

Langley, J. (2001). Developing anti-oppressive empowering social work practice with older lesbian women and gay men. *British Journal of Social Work, 31,* 917-932.

Ledwith, S., & Colgan, F. (Eds.). (1996). *Women in organizations: Challenging gender politics.* London: MacMillan Press.

Lee, B. (1992). *Pragmatics of community organization* (2nd ed.). Toronto, ON: Commonact Press.

Leonard, P. (1984). *Personality and ideology: Towards a materialist understanding of the individual.* London: Macmillan.

Leonard, P. (1997). *Postmodern welfare: Reconstructing an emancipatory project.* London: Sage Publications.

Lightman, E. (1997). It's not a walk in the park': Workfare in Ontario. In E. Shragge (Ed.), *Workfare: Ideology for a new under-class* (pp. 85-107). Toronto, ON: Garamond Press.

Lightman, E., & Baines, D. (1996). White men in blue suits: Women's Policy in Conservative Ontario. *RCPS, 38.*

Linden, R. (1956). *Making stories, making selves: Feminist reflections on the Holocaust.* Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press.

Lindsey, D. (1994). *The welfare of children.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Little, M. J. H. (1998). *'No car, no radio, no liquor permit' The moral regulation of single mothers in Ontario, 1920-1997.* Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press.

Lofland, J., & Lofland, L. H. (1995). *Analyzing social settings: A guide to qualitative observation and analysis* (3rd ed.). Toronto, ON: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Logan, J. (2001). Sexuality, child care and social work education. *Social Work Education, 20*(5), 563-575.

Luxton, M. (1980). *More than a labour of love.* Toronto, ON: The Women's Press.

Luxton, M., Rosenberg H., & Koç, S. A. (1990). *Through the kitchen window: The politics of home and family* (2nd ed.). Toronto, ON: Garamond Press.

Macey, M., & Eileen, M. (1996). An examination of anti-racist and anti-oppressive theory and practice in social work education. *British Journal of Social Work, 26,* 297-314.

MacLennan, H. (1945). *Two solitudes.* Toronto, ON: Collins.

Maidment, J., & Cooper, L. (2002). Acknowledgement of client diversity and oppression in social work student supervision. *Journal of Social Work Education, 21*(2), 399-407.

Maines, D. (1993). Narrative's moment and sociology's phenomena: Toward a narrative sociology. *Sociological Quarterly, 34,* 17-38.

Maroney, H. J. (1988). Using Gramsci for women: feminism and the Quebec State. *RFR/DRF, 17*(3), 26-30.

McCabe, A. (Ed.). (1993). *Journal of Narrative and Life History.* Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Elbaum.

McCain, M., & Mustard, F. (1999). *Reversing the real brain drain: Early years study final report.* Toronto, ON: The Canadian Institute for Advanced Research.

McKnight, J. (1995). *The careless society: Community and its counterfeits.* New York: Basic Books.

Michaud, J. (1999). *Les femmes francophones et le travail obligatoire: Un enjeu pur l'économie social.* Sudbury, ON : Presses du l'Université Laurenienne.

Mink, G. (1998). The lady and the tramp: Feminist welfare politics, poor single mothers, and the challenge of the welfare justice. *Feminist Studies, 24,* 55-64.

Mink, G. (Ed.). (1999). *Whose welfare.* New York: Cornell University Press.

Mione, A. (1994). Housing: Not a gender neutral issue. *The Sudbury women's housing network.*

Misra, J. (1998). Mothers or workers? The value of women's labour: Women and the emergence of family allowance policy. *Gender and Society, 12,* 376-399.

Mondros, J., & Wilson, S. (1994). *Organizing for power and empowerment.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Morris, M., Robinson, J., & Simpson, J. (1999). The changing nature of home care and its impact on women's vulnerability to poverty. *Research Directorate, Status of Women Canada.*

Moscovitch, A. (1999). Social assistance in the new Ontario. In D. Ralph, A. Régimbald, & N. St-Amand (Eds.), *Mike Harris' Ontario: Open for business, closed to people* (pp. 80-91). Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

Mosher, J. (2000). Managing the disentitlement of women: Glorified markets, the idealized family and the undeserving other. In S. Neysmith (Ed.), *Restructuring caring labour - Discourse, state practice and everyday life* (pp. 30-51). Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press.

Mullaly, B. (1995). Why workfare doesn't work. *Perception, 18*(3), 9-12.

Mullaly, B. (1997). *Structural social work: Ideology, theory and practice* (2nd ed.). Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press.

Mullaly, B. (2001). Confronting the politics of despair: Toward the reconstruction of progressive social work in a global economy and postmodern age. *Social Work Education, 20*(3), 303-320.

Mullaly, B. (2002). *Challenging oppression: A critical social work approach.* Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press.

Naples, N. (Ed.). (1998). *Community activism and feminist politics: Organizing across race, class and gender.* New York: Routledge.

Naples, N. (1998). *Grassroots warriors: Activist mothering, community work and the war on poverty.* New York: Routledge.

Naples, N. A., & Bojar, K. (Eds.). (2002). *Teaching feminist activism : Strategies from the field.* New York: Routledge.

National Council of Welfare. (1998, January). Welfare reform and the labour market: Are there enough jobs? Ontario social safety network background. Retrieved, 1999, from http://www.welfarewatch.toronto.ca/wrkfrw/labmar.htm

Nelson, G., Prilleltensky, I., & MacGillivary, H. (2001). Building value-based partnerships: Towards solidarity with oppressed groups. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 29*(5), 649-673.

Neysmith, S. (Ed.). (2000). *Restructuring caring labour: Discourse, state practice and everyday life.* Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press.

Neysmith, S. M. (1998). From home care to social care: The value of a vision. In C. Baines, P. Evans, & S. Neysmith (Eds.), *Women's caring: Feminist perspectives on social welfare* (pp. 233-249). Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press.

Ng, R., Walker, G., & Muller, J. (Eds.). (1990). *Community organization and the Canadian state.* Toronto, ON: Garamond Press.

Northern Ontario Regional Economist's Office. (1995). *The labour force income profile.* Sudbury: Human Resources Development Canada.

Nozick, M. (1992). *No place like home: Building sustainable communities*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Council on Social Development.

O'Reilly, A. (1998). Mothers, daughters, and feminism today: Empowerment, agency, narrative, and motherline. *Canadian Women Studies, 18*(2&3), 16-21.

Oderkirk, J. (1992). Parents and children living with low incomes. *Statistics Canada: Canadian Social Trends, 27,* 11-15.

Ontario Coalition Against Poverty. (2003). Retrieved from http://www.ocap.ca/

Ontario Minister of Finances. (1995, July 21). *Ontario fiscal overview of spending cuts.* Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer.

Ontario Ministry of Community Social Services. (1996, June 12). News Release. *People will work for their welfare cheques starting this September.* Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer.

Ontario Progressive Conservative Party. (1995). *The common sense revolution.* Toronto, ON.

Ontario's Progressive Conservative Party. (1994, May). The common sense revolution. Retrieved 1999, from http://www.ontariopc.com/feature/csr/cssr_text.htm

Orange, J. (1996). *Entrenching barriers to employment workfare and single mothers.* Toronto, ON: University of Toronto, Faculty of Law, Centre for the Study of State and Market.

Orloff, A. S. (1993). Gender and the social rights of citizenship: The comparative analysis of gender relations and welfare states. *American Sociological Review, 58,* 303.

Palangio, A., & Pitblado, R. (2001, March). *Sudbury & District Health Unit Area demographic profiles: A statistical compendium.* Sudbury, ON: Sudbury & District Health Unit, Public Health Research, Education and Development (PHRED) Program.

Panet-Raymond, J. (1987). Community groups in Quebec: From radical action to voluntarism for the state? *Community Development Journal, 22*(4), 281-286.

Paquette, G. (1996). *L'Ontario français, valeur ajoutée?* Anne Gilbert et André Plourde (dir.) Ottawa, Centre de recherché en civilization canadienne-française de l'Université d'Ottawa.

Payne, C. (1990). Men led, but women organized: Movement participation of women in the Mississippi delta. In V. Crawford, J. Rouse, & B. Woods (Eds.), *Women in the civil rights movement* (pp.156-179). Brooklyn, NY: Carlson.

Peace, B., & Fook, J. (Eds.). (1999). *Transforming social work practice: Postmodern critical perspectives.* New York: Routledge.

Pelton, L. (1978). Child abuse and neglect: The myth of classness. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 48,* 608-617.

Pelton, L. (1989). *For reasons of poverty: A critical analysis of the public child welfare system in the United States.* New York: Praeger.

Pelton, L. (1997). Child welfare policy and practice: The myth of family prevision. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 67*(4), 545-553.

Pelton, L. (2000). Review of children who have been: The legacy of child welfare in America. *Family Preservation Journal, 5,* 52-57.

Personal Narratives Group. (Eds.). (1989). *Interpreting women's lives: Feminist theory and personal narratives.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Peters, R. (1993). Better Beginnings Better Futures: A community-based approach to primary prevention. *Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health, 13*(2), 183-188.

Pollack, S. (2004). Anti-oppressive social work practice with women in prison: Discursive reconstructions and alternative practices. *British Journal of Social Work, 34,* 693-707.

Pope, J. (1990). Women in the welfare rights struggle: The Brooklyn Welfare Action Council. In G. West, & R. Blumberg (Eds), *Women and social protest* (pp.57-74). New York: Oxford University Press.

Powell, M., & Keck, J. (1995). Women and the changing face of labour in Northeastern Ontario. dans *Hard lessons - The mill union in the Canadian labour movement, Steedman, Mercedes, Suschnigg, Peter, Buse, DieterK. (dir.).* Toronto, ON: Dundurn Press.

Prince, M. (1987). How Ottawa decides social policy. In J. Ismael (Ed.), *The Canadian welfare state: Evolution and transition.* Edmonton, AL: University of Alberta Press.

Pulido, L. (1997). Community, places, and identity. In J. P. Jones, H. J. Nast, & S. M. Roberts (Eds.), *Thresholds in feminist geography: Difference, methodology and representation* (pp. 11-28). Oxford, England: Rowman & Littlefield.

Rabier, C. (1990). Les Franco-Ontariens et l'ideologie dominante, *Revue du Nouvel-Ontario, 11,* 159-169.

Ralph, D. S., Régimbald, A., & St-Amand, N. (Eds.). (1997). *Mike Harris' Ontario: Open for business, closed to people.* Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

Ramirez-Valles, J. (1999). Women, the welfare state and their transnational dimension: The case of Mexico's community health worker programs. *International Journal of Health Services, 29*(3), 597-621.

RDI - Téléjournal (2000, October 17).

Redfield Jamison, K. (1995). *An unquiet mind.* New York: Random House.

Region of Sudbury. (2000). *Health and social services committee – Employment support services section, 1999 fourth quarter and year end report.* Sudbury, ON: Region of Sudbury.

Reinharz, S. (1992). *Feminist methods in social research.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Reissman, C. K. (1991). When gender is not enough: Women interviewing women. In J. Lorber, & S. A. Farrell (Eds.), *The social construction of gender* (pp. 217-236). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Reitsma-Street, M., & Arnold, B. (1994). Community-based action research in a multi-site prevention project: Challenges and resolutions. *Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health, 13*(2), 229-240.

Reitsma-Street, M., & Keck, J. (1996). The abolition of the welfare snitch line in Sudbury. *Atlantis, 21*(1), 123-132.

Reitsma-Street, M., & Neysmith, S. M. (2000). Restructuring and community work: The case of community resource centres for families in poor urban neighbourhoods. In S. M. Neysmith (Ed.), *Restructuring caring labour: Discourse, state practice, and everyday life* (pp. 142-163). Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press.

Reitsma-Street, M., & Rogerson, P. (1999). Implementing principles: An alternative community organization for children. In K. Blackford, M. L. Garceau, & S. Kirby (Eds.), *Feminist success stories* (pp. 289-306). Ottawa, ON: University of Ottawa Press.

Rich, A. (1976). *Of woman born: Motherhood as experience and institution.* New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Richardson, L. (1990). Narrative and sociology. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 19,* 116-135.

Richardson, L. (1994). Nine poems: Marriage and the family. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 23,* 3-13.

Roberts, D. (1999). Welfare's ban on poor motherhood. In G. Mink (Ed.), *Whose welfare* (pp. 152-170). New York: Cornell University Press.

Rose, N. E. (1993). Gender, race and the welfare state: Government work programs from the 1930s to the present. *Feminist Studies, 19*(2), 319- 342.

Rossiter, A. (1988). *From private to public: A feminist exploration of early mothering.* Toronto, ON: The Women's Press.

Rothman, J., Erlich, J., & Tropman, J. (1995). *Strategies of community intervention: Macro practice* (5th ed.). Itasca, IL: Peacock Publishers.

Ruddick, S. (1989). *Maternal thinking: Toward a politics of peace.* Boston: Beacon Press.

Ruddick, S. (1998). *Woman of peace: A feminist construction.* New York: New York University Press.

Rutman, D., Strega, S., Callahan, M., & Dominelli, L. (2001). *Young mothers in/from care project.* Paper presented at the Forum on Policy and Practice, Victoria, BC.

Sainsbury, D. (1996). *Gender, equality and welfare states.* Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Sanger, C. (1999). Leaving children for work. In J. Hanigsberg, & S. Ruddick (Eds.). *Mother troubles.* Boston: Beacon Press.

Schofield, J. (1996). The theory and practice of community-based feminist activism. *Atlantis, 21*(1), 105-108.

Schwartzman, L. H. (2002). Feminist analyses of oppression and the discourse of "rights": A response to Wendy Brown. *Social Theory and Practice, 28*(3), 465-481.

Sellick, M., Delaney, R., & Brownlee, K. (1999). Reflective practice: The key to context-sensitive practice in northern communities. In R. Delaney, K. Brownlee, & M. Sellick (Eds.), *Social work with rural and northern communities* (pp.121-140). Thunder Bay, ON: Lakehead University Northern Studies.

Shapiro, S. V. (1993). The gender basis of American Social Policy. In L. Gordon (Ed.). *Women, the state and welfare* (pp. 36-54). Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin.

Shragge, E. (1993). *Community economic development: In search of empowerment.* Montreal, QC: Black Rose.

Shragge, E. (1997). Workfare: An overview. In E. Shragge (Ed.), *Workfare: Ideology for a new under-class* (pp. 17-34). Toronto, ON: Garamond Press.

Shragge, E. (Ed.). (1997). *Workfare: Ideology for a new under-class.* Toronto, ON: Garamond Press.

Sibeon, R. (1991). *Towards a new sociology of social work.* London: Avelbury.

Social Planning Council of Sudbury. (2000, June). *Health and social services director's financial report.* Sudbury, ON: Sudbury Region Children's Forum.

Social Planning Council of Sudbury. (2000, July). *Supporting children and families: A community plan for Sudbury and region.* Sudbury, ON: Sudbury Region Children's Forum.

Stall, S., & Stoecker, R. (1998). Community organizing or organizinng community? Gender and the crafts of empowerment. *Gender & Society, 12*(6), 729-756.

Stanley, L., & Morgan, D. (Eds.). (1995). Sociology special issue: Biography and autobiography in sociology. *The European Journal of Women's Studies, 2*(1), 131-133.

Stanton, T., & Swift, K. (1996). 'Difference' and social work curriculum. *Canadian Social Work Review, 13*(1), 75-87.

Starhawk. (1987). *Truth or dare: Encounters with power, authority and mystery.* San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row.

Statistics Canada. (1995). *1996 labour force activity, occupation and industry, place of work, mode of transportation to work, unpaid work: Ministry of Industry.*

Statistics Canada. (1997). *Labour market information.* Catalogue number 71-001-PPB (monthly January – May 1997).

Statistics Canada. (2001). 2001 Census: Population by selected ethnic origins, Sudbury. Retrieved on July 3, 2003, from http://www.statcan.ca/English/Pgdb/demo43q.htm

Stock, P. (2003, February 17). Ontario drifts leftward: Trailing in the polls, Premier Ernie Eves rejects Mike Harris' legacy. *The Record, 30*(4), 10-11.

Struthers, J. (1996). *Can workfare work? Reflections from history.* Ottawa, ON: Caledon Institute on Social Policy.

Sudbury/Manitoulin Training and Adjustment Board. (1996). *Verifact: A socio-economic profile of the districts of Sudbury and Manitoulin.*

Swift, K., & Birmingham, M. (2000). Location, location, location: Restructuring the everyday lives of welfare moms. In S. Neysmith (Ed.), *Restructuring caring labour - discourse, state practice and everyday life* (pp. 93-115). Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press.

Swift, K. J. (1995). *Manufacturing 'bad mothers': A critical perspective on child neglect.* Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Swift, K. J. (1998). Contradictions in child welfare: Neglect and responsibility. In C. T. Baines, P. M. Evens, & S. Neysmith (Eds.), *Women's caring: Feminist perspectives on social welfare* (pp. 160-190). Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press.

Taylor, V., & Rupp, L. (1998). Women's culture and Lesbian feminist activism: A reconsideration of cultural feminism. In N. Naples (Ed.), *Community activism and feminist politics: Organizing across race, class and gender* (pp. 57-79). New York: Routledge.

Thompson, A., Hallsworth, G., & Bonin, L. (dir.). (1994). *La bibliographie du nord de l'Ontario: 1966-1991.* Toronto, ON: Dundurn Press.

The Merriam-Webster Dictonary. (1997). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.

Tong, R. P. (1998). *Feminist thought: A more comprehensive introduction* (2nd ed.). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Townson, M. (2005, March 15). Women's poverty rates reach 20-year high: Sole supporting mother, elderly women hardest hit as the percentage of women living in poverty rises. Retrieved 2005, from http://www.straightgoods.com/item276/shtml

Torman, S., & Battle, K. (1999). *Good work. Getting it and keeping it.* Ottawa, ON: Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

Valtonen, K. (2001). Social work with immigrants and refugees: Developing a participation-based framework for anti-oppressive practice. *British Journal of Social Work, 31,* 955-960.

Vic, G., & Wilding, P. (1994). *Welfare ideology.* Hemel Hempstead, Herts.: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Vodde, R., & Gallant, J. P. (2002). Bridging the gap between micro and macro practice: Large scale change and a unified model of narrative-deconstructive practice. *Journal of Social Work Education, 38*(3), 439-459.

Wallace, C. (1993). The 1880s. In C. Wallace, & A. Thomson (Eds.), *Sudbury: Rail town to regional capital* (pp. 11-32). Toronto, ON: Dundurn Press.

Wallace, C. (1993). The 1980s. In C. Wallace, & A. Thomson (Eds.), *Sudbury: Rail town to regional capital* (pp. 275 – 286). Toronto, ON: Dundurn Press.

Wallace, C., & Thompson, A. (1993). *Sudbury: Rail town to regional capital.* Toronto, ON: Dundurn Press.

Wane, N. (2000). Reflections on the mutuality of mothering: Women, children, and Othermothering. *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering, 2*(2), 105-116.

Wane, N. N., Deliovsky, K., & Lawson, E. (Eds.). (2002). *Back to the drawing board: African-Canadian feminisms.* Toronto, ON: Sumach Press.

Webster's new collegiate dictionary. (1981). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.

Welfare Watch (1999, April 30). Workfare Watch Project: Interim report – Broken promises: Welfare reform in Ontario. Retrieved, 2000, from http://welfarewatch.toronto.on.ca/promises/intro.htm

Welfare Watch (2000, June). Retrieved from http://welfarewatch.toronto.on.ca

Westhues, A. (Ed.) (2003). *Canadian social policy: Issues and perspectives.* Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid University Press.

Wharf, B. (1992). *Communities and social policy in Canada.* Toronto, ON: McClelland and Stewart.

Wharf, B. (1999). Community, culture and control: Themes for the social services in northern communities. In R. Delaney, K. Brownlee, & M. Sellick (Eds.), *Social work with rural and northern communities* (pp. 342-351). Thunder Bay, ON: Centre for Northern Studies.

Wharf, B. (Ed.). (1993). *Rethinking child welfare in Canada.* Toronto, ON: McLelland and Stewart.

Williams, C. (1999). Connecting anti-racist and anti-oppressive theory and practice: Retrenchment or reappraisal? *British Journal of Social Work, 29,* 211-230.

Wilson, A., & Beresford, P. (2000). Anti-oppressive practice: Emancipation or appropriation? *British Journal of Social Work, 30,* 553-573.

Yalnizyan, A., Ide, T. R., & Cordell, A. J. (1994). *Shifting time: Social policy and the future of work.* Toronto, ON: Between the Lines.

Zapf, M. (2001). Notions of rurality. *Rural Social Work, 6*(3), 12-27.

Zapf, M. K. (1991). Educating social work practitioners for the north: A challenge for conventional models and structures. *The Northern Review, 7,* 35-52.

Zapf, M. K. (1993). Remote practice and cultural shock: Social workers moving to isolated northern regions. *Social Work, 38*(6), 694-704.

Zapf, M. K. (1999). Educating social work practitioners for the North: A challenge for conventional models and structures. In R. Delaney, K. Brownlee, & M. Sellick (Eds.), *Social work with rural and northern communities* (pp. 248-273). Thunder Bay, ON: Centre for Northern Studies.

Appendix

McGill University Research Ethics Board II

Ethical Considerations of Proposed Research Involving Humans

Instructions: Please answer the relevant questions and submit *eight typed copies* to Lynda McNeil, Research Grants Office, James Administration Bldg., rm 429. For undergraduate research, forms should be submitted to your departmental representative. Additional necessary documentation may be attached (e.g., sample advertisements). However, please DO NOT submit previous ethics applications EXCEPT in the following case. If you require renewal of an on-going, previously approved project and nothing has changed or only minor changes have been made to the protocol (the title of the project must still be the same), submit a one-page letter stating that no changes have been made or describing the minor changes and attach a copy of the previous application (in eight copies).

Title of Project:

Determinant Factors Influencing Upon Women's Community Organizing Experiences in Sudbury, Ontario.

Applicant's Name: Ginette Lafrenière

Applicant's Signature: **Date:** February 11th, 2002

Department: School of Social Work

Fax Number: 1-514-487-3138

E-Mail:

Undergraduate Student? (Y or N): **If Yes, Course #:**

Graduate Student? (Y or N):

Supervisor's Name (if applicable): Dr. Linda Davies – School of Social Work

Others Researchers Involved: n/a

Granting Agency (if applicable): n/a

1. Briefly describe the research topic.

I wish to study what influences women's organizing practices in an urban/northern context in the province of Ontario. Particularly I wish to focus my area of study in the town of Sudbury, Ontario which is the largest urban center in Northern Ontario. Even though the literature documents quite clearly that women are predominantly active in community organizing initiatives (Naples, 1999; Hill-Collins;2001, Price-King, 1994) very little has been documented relative to the gendered nature of women's organizing in academic forums or journals. The literature which is available is often based in large urban areas particularly in the U.S.A.

My interest in community organizing as an important element of social work practice is based in the idea that women's community organizing practices are shaped by the environments in which they live and operate. Therefore my thesis will not only focus upon women as community organizers but more specifically what are the factors which influence them the most as community organizers in a relatively isolated geographic area in the province of Ontario.

2. Who will the participants be?

Having worked as a community organizer within a Community Health Care Center for several years in Northern Ontario, I have cultivated a network of colleagues who work in various fields of community organizing practice. I have opted to interview fifteen (15) women who work as community organizers; they will reflect the diversity of women working within various community organizing projects in Sudbury, Ontario. There will be Anglophone, Francophone, Native and African women who will be interviewed for the thesis.

3. How will participants be recruited? (Attach copies of all written or spoken material that will be used in recruiting subjects, such as newspaper ads, posted notices, and verbal announcements.)

Participants will be contacted by phone and\or in person given the fact that they are for the most part women with whom I've collaborated for several years. For the women whom I don't know but who have been suggested to me as possible participants for qualitative interviews, I will contact them by phone as well. This type of outreach is cogent with the nature of community organizing.

4. How will organizational/community/governmental permission be obtained (if applicable)?

Non\applicable. Women as individuals will be selected as participants and not as representatives of their employers or volunteer associations.

5. How will data be collected, i.e., what will the participants be asked to do?

The nature of the research is qualitative; participants will be asked to answer a series of open-ended questions relative to the nature of the work that they do, the factors which motivate their community involvement as well as some of the challenges they face as community organizers in Northern Ontario. Interviews will be programmed to last no more than two hours for each participant.

Once all individual interviews are completed, a focus group with a few of the participants will also be organized in order to capture the group dynamics of a heterogeneous group of community organizers. All interviews will be audio-taped for accuracy and for purposes of transcribing material.

6. Does the study pose any risks to participants? If so, please state why these are necessary and explain how you plan to deal with them.

Given the nature of the subject matter for this particular thesis, there is no risk whatsoever posed to the participants who agree to be interviewed.

7. Does the study involve deception? If so, please state why this is necessary and explain how you plan to deal with potential negative effects (e.g., by post-experimental debriefing).

Again, given the nature of the subject matter, deception is not an element in this particular interview process.

8. How will you document informed consent to participate in the study? (Attach written informed consent form. If written consent is not possible, how will you document verbal consent? If it is not possible to obtain informed consent, explain why this the case.)

Participants will be asked to sign a consent form. See attached form.

9. How will participants be informed of their right to withdraw at any time?

They will be informed of their right to withdraw at any time in the written consent form which they will be asked to sign if they agree to be interviewed.

10. How will subject/data anonymity and confidentiality be maintained?

In all written material, special codes will be attributed to the participants and while integrating findings within the context of the written thesis, names of the participants will be changed in order to protect their anonymity.

11. Please comment on any other potential ethical concerns which may arise in the course of the research. If the proposed research involves testing subjects in situations where particular problems might arise, please explain how researchers will be trained to handle matters in a sensitive and professional way.

Non/applicable.

Projet de recherche sur les femmes et leurs pratiques d'organisation communautaire à Sudbury Ontario

Formulaire de consentement

La présente entrevue permettra à l'auteure de la recherche, Mme Ginette Lafrenière d'obtenir des informations sur l'expérience et les défis que connaissent les femmes impliquées dans différentes sphères d'activités en matière d'organisation communautaire à Sudbury, Ontario. Les informations que vous allez fournir seront analysées dans le but de produire une thèse de doctorat qui tentera d'examiner les facteurs déterminants qui influencent les pratiques d'intervention communautaire des femmes à Sudbury. Toutes les données obtenues resteront strictement confidentielles et aucun nom ne sera utilisé dans le document final.

Si, au cours de l'entrevue vous ne souhaitez pas répondre à une question quelconque, passez à la question suivante. Parce que vous ne serez pas identifiée lors de l'analyse des données, nous espérons que vous vous sentirez à l'aise d'exprimer librement vos opinions et expériences.

Au cas où vous souhaiteriez poser des questions après la rencontre ou si vous voulez désister comme participante à la recherche (ce que vous pouvez faire à tout moment) vous pourriez me contacter au numéro indiqué ci-dessous.

Tout en vous remerciant d'avoir accepté de participer à cette recherche, nous vous prions de bien vouloir signer le présent formulaire pour en garantir la validité.

Ginette Lafrenière
Candidate
Ph.D. Service Social
Université McGill

(514) 487-5275

FORMULAIRE DE CONSENTEMENT

Je reconnais avoir pris connaissance de l'objet de l'entrevue et qu'en aucun moment mes propos ne seront identifiés, en foi de quoi j'accepte en toute liberté d'accorder la présente entrevue. Je suis consciente du fait que si j'ai des questions par rapport à l'entrevue ou si je décide de me désister comme participante je peux en faire part à Mme Ginette Lafrenière à n'importe quel moment et ce de façon verbale ou écrite.

Date de l'entrevue : _____ Code :_____
Nom de la personne interviewée : _____
Poste occupé :_____

Signature de la personne interviewée : _____

McGill

Research Ethics Board Office
McGill University
845 Sherbrooke Street West
James Administration Bldg., rm 429
Montreal, QC H3A 2T5

Tel: (514) 398-6831
Fax: (514) 398-4853
www.mcgill.ca/fgsr/rgo/reshum.html

Research Ethics Board II
Certificate of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Humans

Project Title: Determinant Factors Influencing Upon Women's Community organizing Experiences in Sudbury, Ontario

Applicant's Name: Ginette Lafrenière Department: Social Work

Undergraduate Student? (Y or N): N

Graduate Student? (Y or N): Y

Supervisor's Name (if applicable): Dr. L. Davies

Course # (if applicable):

This project was reviewed on Feb 18, 2002 by

1) Department Review _____
(Signature of departmental designate/date)

2) Expedited Review ✓ 3) Full Review _____

_____ _____
Signature/Date

Blaine Ditto, Ph.D.
Chair, REB II

Approval Period : Feb. 18, 2002 to Feb. 17, 2003.

REB File #: 20-0202