There's No Place Like Home: Feminist Communities, Social Citizenship and (Un)Belonging in Montreal's Long Women's Movement, 1952-1992

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Abstract

This dissertation points to the necessity of re-writing the history of feminism in Quebec and Canada. Historical accounts on the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s pay scant attention to the experiences of women outside of the French Québécois or English Canadian norms. By conducting case studies on the Quebec Native Women's Association, the Congress of Black Women of Canada, the Point de ralliement des femmes d'origine haïtienne, the Centro Donne Italiane di Montreal, and the Front de libération des femmes du Québec, the project thinks seriously about the differences between women in and near Montreal, and how these differences influenced their civic engagement. Therefore, this historical account brings to light the multiplicity of women-centred narratives in Quebec's metropolis.

This dissertation also seeks to re-define feminism. To this end, the project maintains that feminist activism does not have to take place strictly within women-only spaces. With regards to Indigenous and Black women, in particular, the dissertation highlights women's leadership roles in mixed political groups as well as, when applicable, their parallel participation in settings where women predominated. In fact, most of the women of this study, as we will see, never left mixed-gender settings and rarely conceived of self-empowerment without their male counterparts. As a result, women's anti-racist activities outside of gender-segregated spaces constitute a key component of the project. In short, the dissertation brings to light how women's various social locations shaped the strategies they adopted in their push for autonomy.

Résumé

Cette thèse affirme la nécessité de réécrire l'histoire du féminisme au Québec et au Canada. Les études des décennies 1960, 1970 et 1980 n'accordent que peu d'attention aux expériences des femmes militantes qui ne gravitaient pas au sein des groupes féministes québécois francophones ou canadiens anglophones prédominants. En réalisant des études de cas sur l'Association des femmes autochtones du Québec, du Congrès de femmes noires du Canada, du Point de ralliement des femmes d'origine haïtienne, du *Centro Donne Italiene di Montreal*, et du Front de libération des femmes du Québec, ce projet explore les différences entre les militantes montréalaises, et s'interroge sur la manière dont ces différences ont influencé leur engagement politique. Cette thèse met ainsi en lumière la diversité des récits féministes dans la métropole du Québec.

Cette thèse propose également une redéfinition du féminisme. Ainsi, cette étude montre que le militantisme féministe n'advenait pas systématiquement dans des espaces non mixtes. En s'appuyant notamment sur les expériences des femmes autochtones et noires, notre recherche souligne le rôle de leadership des femmes dans des groupes politiques mixtes et dans des groupes où les femmes prédominaient. Comme nous le verrons, la majorité de ces femmes n'ont jamais quitté les associations mixtes, en fait, elles ont généralement pensé leur émancipation de concert avec celle des hommes aux côtés desquels elles militaient. La manière dont le militantisme antiraciste s'élaborait dans ces milieux mixtes est ainsi un des aspects clefs de cette analyse. Au final, cette thèse met en lumière comment les différentes positions sociales qu'occupaient les femmes ont influencé leurs stratégies politiques d'émancipation.

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Introduction: Towards a Re-Writing of the History of Feminism in Montreal

I. Project Outline

Historical accounts on feminism in Quebec and Canada in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s pay scant attention to the experiences of women outside of the French Québécois or English Canadian norms. Little has been written on organizations such as the Quebec Native Women's Association, the Congress of Black Women of Canada, the Point de ralliement des femmes d'origine haïtienne, or the Centro Donne Italiane di Montreal. White, radical and reformist, French- and English-speaking women were not the only leaders of the women's movement. Rather, these dominant narratives and agendas were only two among many others. In order to privilege these histories that are normally erased, this dissertation focuses on the above-mentioned women's groups, consciously writing against what David Austin calls Quebec and Canada's "master-narratives of exclusion." [1] Franco- and Anglo-centric renditions erroneously bifurcate anti-racist and feminist struggles, ignore the history of women's leadership in mixed settings, prop up the notion that White women can speak for all women and, by extension, that marginalized people from various walks of life are incapable of emancipatory change on their own behalf. [2] These disempowering accounts overlook certain women's experiences and political practices. Moreover, they brush over Quebec and Canada's history of racism

[1] David Austin, "Narratives of Power: Historical Mythologies in Contemporary Québec and Canada," *Race Class* 52, 1 (2010): 19-32, 23.
[2] Agnes Calliste and George Sefa Dei, eds., *Anti-Racist Feminism*: *Critical Race and Gender Studies* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2000), 12-15.

and exclusion, making gender and Francophone subordination the only social structures taken into consideration when discussing women's activism.[3]

As we will see, Indigenous, Black, and Italian women founded their own organizations, developed their own understanding of women's activism and fostered alliances on their own terms. By doing so, they created their own political homes, sense of belonging, and validation. They also proposed concrete solutions to the structural and institutional barriers faced by their communities. More specifically, the Quebec Native Women's Association (QNWA), based in Kahnawake, a Mohawk community bordering Montreal, sought to reclaim Indian status for exogamous women who lost their "status" upon out-marriage. Far from its only concern, the QNWA was equally critical of the colonial aspects of the education and health systems as well as a proponent of self-determination. Members of the Montreal chapter of the Congress of Black Women of Canada and various Haitian women's groups tackled ethnocentric school curricula, eased the transition of newcomers to the city, participated in numerous international conferences dedicated to overcoming racial oppression, and contributed to the overseas struggle to end the Duvalier dictatorship as well as South African apartheid. Spearheaded by younger women, most of who arrived to Quebec as children, the Centro Donne Italiane di Montreal provided key services to unilingual immigrant women, thus serving as a reference point for a socially disenfranchised older generation. In other words, each group of women demonstrated specific needs. Therefore, the dissertation thinks seriously about the differences between marginalized women, and how these differences influenced their civic engagement. Most importantly, it exposes the entirely specific,

[3] Ruth Roach Pierson, "The Mainstream Women's Movement and the Politics of Difference," In *Canadian Women's Issues*. Vol. 1, eds. Ruth Roach Pierson and Marjorie Griffin Cohen (Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1993), 190.

territorial dispossession of Indigenous peoples, the material reality of racism in the lives of Black peoples, as well as the inherent artificiality of the category of immigrant woman. Southern Europeans, as White women, benefited from mainstream status within one or two generations.

Because of the salience of the national question, speaking and writing about racial inequality in Montreal proves to be a difficult task. At the crossroads of the two Canadas, Quebec's metropolis was a site of competing White settler nationalisms where French and English conceptualizations of the country collided in the province's most Anglophone jurisdiction. Montreal then, was, and remains, a contested city.[4] The tension, however, was not only the result of differing understandings but also a question of social equality. French-speaking residents systematically earned less than the English-speaking minority. They struggled to speak their language at work and on the streets, and the belief that they were colonized subjects held much sway, especially in the 1960s and 1970s. The Quebec liberation movement called into question the power of English in all social spheres and some of its proponents advocated for the province's independence from the rest of Canada. These were questions that carried over into French Quebecers', that is the descendants of the French settlers of the Americas, understandings of patriarchy.[5] In order to express its dual oppression, the Front de libération des femmes du Québec (FLF) -another main focus of this study- adopted the slogan, "No liberation of women without the liberation of Quebec! No liberation of Quebec without the liberation of women!" By calling themselves the "slaves of the slaves," moreover, these radical women utilized an

[4] For more on language in Montreal, see Marc Levine, *The Reconquest of Montreal: Language Policy and Social Change in a Bilingual City* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990).
[5] Chantal Maillé, "Réception de la théorie postcoloniale dans le féminisme québécois," *Recherches feministes* 20, 2 (2007): 91-111.

already available discourse to seek to develop a form of feminism outside of the White, North American mainstream. Leftist women read Franz Fanon, Albert Memmi, and Karl Marx, alongside Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millet, and Germaine Greer. This mishmash of influences made for a unique form of women's activism, one, however, where the place of Indigenous women, women of colour, and immigrant women was still nebulous.[6] Racism was and is a taboo topic, in a context where *la question nationale* coloured all discussions.

This dissertation then, critically interrogates the White French-speaking narrative. It does not minimize Francophone subordination nor discard the specificity of French Quebecers' feminism. Still, the project points to prominent women's groups' "politics of sameness," where hierarchies between women were left under-examined. [7] This elision of difference on the part of Franco- (and Anglo-) centric organizations exposes, in the words of philosopher Elizabeth Spelman, "feminism's inherent politics of domination."[8] By analogizing between Francophone women and Black and colonized peoples, the FLF and many of its counterparts occulted, in particular, women of colour and Indigenous women from their analyses, making, even if unwittingly, "women" synonymous with "White women."[9] In other words, by appropriating the experiences of Indigenous and Black women, the FLF rendered these same women invisible, consequently excluding them from their understanding of gender oppression. Simply put, a shared marginalization vis-à-vis broader English-speaking Canadian and North American society did not necessarily

[6] *Ibid*.
[7] Maythee Rojas, *Women of Color and Feminism* (Berkeley: Seal Press, 2009), 7.
[8] Elizabeth Spelman, *Inessential Women*: *Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 10-11.
[9] I am following here bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman*: *Black Women and Feminism* (Boston: South End Press, 1981), 8.

result in a more genuinely inclusive women's movement or more positive (or, for that matter, negative) relations between women from a range of backgrounds in Montreal. These issues will be explored more carefully in the chapters that follow. In part in response to exclusion, as well as already-established, long-standing traditions of resistance to inequality, Indigenous, Black, and Italian women put into motion their own movements. The multiplicity of women-centred narratives in Quebec's metropolis, however, is not reflected in the historiography.

With the objective of pointing to the necessity of re-writing the history of feminism in Montreal and in Canada more broadly, the project moves away from the wave metaphor. According to this ubiquitous mode of conceptualization, the first wave of feminism, starting in the late 1800s and lasting, in Quebec, until 1940 once women achieved the vote at the provincial level, focused on the acquisition of suffrage and property rights. The second wave surged in the mid-1960s and sought to call into question women's limited social roles, through, for example, access to contraception and increased workforce participation. It purportedly ended in the 1980s; amid criticism from marginalized women who asserted that heterosexual middle-class White women determined second-wave goals, ideologies and strategies. According to the authors of "Is It Time to Jump Ship? Historians Rethink the Waves Metaphor," however, "The waves metaphor highlights periods when middle-class white women were most active in the public sphere." They argue that "the multi-dimensional aspects of feminism are too often excluded" in this interpretation, where "women of colour, working-class women, women with disabilities, lesbians, and older women who engaged in activism that responded to overlapping forms of oppression, including sexism, have rarely been incorporated into

waves narratives in their own right." When marginalized women are included, as these historians remind us, their involvement is evoked to demonstrate either sisterhood or tensions between women. These women's critiques of wave-related agendas are then "used to demonstrate the race, class, and other biases of 'feminism,' presuming feminism to be always white and middle class."[10] In order to write a fuller, richer, more meaningful history, this dissertation therefore seeks to re-define what constitutes feminism in Montreal.

To this end, the project maintains that feminist activism does not have to take place strictly within women-only spaces. With regards to Indigenous and Black women, in particular, the dissertation highlights women's leadership roles in mixed spaces as well as, when applicable, their parallel participation in settings where women predominated. In other words, the project brings to light how women's various social locations shaped the strategies they adopted in their push for empowerment. The dissertation argues, following the American historian Premilla Nadasen, that, "Feminism, in its broadest sense, is a political program working to empower women, to ensure them autonomy and control over their lives in a way that does not impede the autonomy or contribute to the exploitation of other women."[11] This definition is applicable to this study in two ways. In the first place, it implies that women are bound to other women. Consequently, White women's inability to understand, for example, racism and colonization stands in the way of racialized women's emancipation and is therefore problematic regardless of these women's class background, mother tongue, or national origin. Secondly, it allows for

[10] Kathleen A. Laughlin, Julie Gallagher, Dorothy Sue Cobble, Eileen Boris, Premilla Nadasen, Stephanie Gilmore, and Leandra Zarnow, "Is It Time to Jump Ship? Historians Rethink the Waves Metaphor," *Feminist Formations* 22, 1 (2010): 76-135, 77, 82.
[11] *Ibid*., 98, 101.

analytical room to include women who did not self-identity as feminist. Historically, marginalized women have been reluctant to adopt the term, both because of its association with White, middle-class women as well as women's own prioritizing of anti-colonial and anti-racist struggles. This project suggests, however, that feminist practice existed in spaces where the label was not necessarily used.[12] In this case, feminism or women's activism is taken to mean women's leadership, community building, political organizing or any other activity used to better their lives and that of those around them.

The dissertation relies upon an extended periodization, adopting the view of the "long women's movement."[13] While important, the establishment of the Fédération des femmes du Québec in 1966, the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in 1967, and the massive, 200-woman protest against a bylaw to ban public protest in 1969 are not taken as the only starting points for the resurgence of feminism in Montreal. In this study, the Kahnawake community's resistance to the 1957 St. Lawrence Seaway Authority land expropriation, Mohawk women's role in blocking the International Bridge at Cornwall in 1968, and the establishment of the Quebec Native Women's Association in 1974 are seen as equally integral to the history of feminism in or near Montreal. The same could be said for the foundation of Negro Citizenship Association in 1952 and the Maison d'Haïti in 1972. Events such as the Port-au-Prince's First National Congress of Haitian Women, held in 1950, Concordia's Sir George Williams Affair of 1969, and Dar es Salaam's 1974 6th Pan-African Congress are also important markers for the women in the study. The Congress of Black Women of Canada's conferences, the first of which was held in 1973,

[12] *Ibid*., 103. Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens*: *Womanist Prose* (New York: Hancourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983); Verna St. Denis, "Feminism is for everybody: Aboriginal Women, Feminism, and Diversity," In *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, ed. Joyce Greene (Black Point, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing, 2007), 37-40.
[13] Laughlin, et al., "Is Is It Time to Jump Ship?," 103.

were only a few of the many parallel activities that contributed to the various women's movements in Montreal and across the country. By the late 1970s, immigrant women, especially, were claiming a space for themselves. In fact, they seemed to be the most dynamic of organizers into the 1980s and 1990s. The Centro Donne Italiane di Montreal came into being in 1978. Women from this organization and the Maison d'Haïti were well-represented at the 1982 *Femmes immigrantes à nous la parole!* conference as well as within the Collectif des femmes immigrantes du Québec. The latter was formally incorporated in 1983 and organized a number of conferences in the late 1980s and 1990s, many of which centred anti-racism. Overall, the study highlights the diverging priorities, goals, and practices of Montreal's women leaders.

An important caveat remains. What we see here is only a glimpse of the multiple strategies of resistance mobilized by Indigenous, Black, and Italian women during the time period in question. Moreover, the project puts forth a selective account on the resurgence of White Francophone feminism. The Marxist Ligue des femmes du Québec, for example, is underrepresented, though not completely absent, from this study. The dissertation conversely privileges the Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ) and the Front de libération des femmes for two interrelated reasons. Firstly, they were respectively the two most prominent reformist and radical women's groups in the city. Founded in 1966, the Fédération was instrumental in pushing the federal government to establish the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in 1967.[14] The non-sectarian, non-partisan umbrella group was also integral to the foundation of the Conseil du Statut

[14] Gail Cuthbert Brandt, et al., *Canadian Women: A History*. Third Edition (Toronto: Nelson Education, 2011), 525.

de la Femme (CSF) in 1973, a well-funded government body.[15] In short, the FFQ became a very public and powerful voice for this moderate strand of feminism. The FLF, in contrast, espoused a much more radical politics, linking French Quebecers' neo-nationalism with a push for gender equality. Despite its relatively short-lived existence, from 1969 to 1971, the FLF remained the most influential, White leftist feminist group in the city, shaping the theoretical underpinnings of many of its successors. Secondly, the Front de libération des femmes and the Fédération des femmes du Québec dominate the historiography.[16] Very few historical studies, however, seek to compare and connect the discourses mobilized by these organizations to their Indigenous, Black, or Italian counterparts. The dissertation then, asks different questions than its predecessors, calling into question the hegemony of these already-examined narratives.

II. Structure

Rather than proposing to write a history of the entire movement (or movements), the project conducts a series of case studies. Chapter 2 emphasizes Kahnawake women's role in the Red Power movement, that is, the North America-wide push for Indigenous self-determination. It looks at the Quebec Native Women's Association, as one of several groups pushing to eliminate 12(1)(b) of the *Indian Act*, where Indigenous women lost Indian status upon out-marriage. The organization not only addressed the legal inequality faced by intermarried women, but also broader structural issues, such as self-government,

[15] See, for example, FFQ, *A Women's Bureau*. Brief presented to the Honourable Robert Bourassa by the Fédération des femmes du Québec (S.l.: The Federation, November 1971); Brandt et al., *Canadian Women: A History*, 532.

[16] For an otherwise great synthesis of the current state of the feminist narrative in Quebec see Denyse Baillargeon, *Brève histoire des femmes du Québec* (Montreal: Boréal, 2012), 181-213. See also Chapter 5 of Sean Mills, *The Empire Within: Postcolonial Thought and Political Activism in Sixties Montreal* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 119-137; and Collectif Clio, *L'Histoire des femmes au Québec depuis quatre siècles* (Montreal: Quinze, 1982).

health, education, and economic development. There were, however, criticisms of this stance within the community, from both women and men. All sides of this contentious debate linked issues surrounding membership and status to land loss and the dearth of resources within Indigenous communities. Chapter 3 focuses on Montreal's long-standing, English-speaking Black community. It stresses the key leadership provided by women to the Negro Citizenship Association, the Caribbean Conference Committee, the National Black Coalition of Canada, and the 6th Pan African Congress. It also traces the roots of the Montreal chapter of the Congress of Black Women. Chapter 4 outlines the rise of White radical feminism in Montreal, by analyzing the rapport between the Front de libération des femmes du Québec and the Montreal Women's Liberation Network. The chapter places the FLF, in particular, within its broader local, national, and transnational contexts. It delineates its divergences from the FFQ. Chapter 5 analyses the Rassemblement des femmes haïtiennes and the Point de ralliement des femmes d'origine haïtienne, active since the early 1970s, in relation to Haitian Montrealers' transnational opposition to the Duvalier dictatorship as well as other sites of community engagement such as the Maison d'Haïti. The chapter also draws attention to Haitian women's contributions to the Congress of Black Women. Chapter 6 describes the establishment and the services provided by the Centro Donne Italiane di Montreal, officially founded in 1978. It links the Centre to the community's progressive groups, namely the Associazione di Cultura Popolare Italo-Quebecchese as well as immigrant women's organizing such as the 1982 *Femmes immigrantes, à nous la parole!* conference and the Collectif des femmes immigrantes du Québec. The dissertation concludes with a critical summary.

III. Historiography and Theoretical Framework

Canadian historians are beginning to tackle the so-called "second-wave." Extensive research has been conducted on reproductive rights, the battered women's movement, feminism's link with anti-Vietnam War activism,[17] and the labour movement.[18] Nancy Janovicek, Heather Howard-Bobiwash, and Sarah Nickel have undertaken essential studies on Indigenous women's organizing.[19] Much of the existent literature, however, remains political science or sociology, as well as first-hand accounts such as memoirs or anthologies.[20] Moreover, very few historical accounts, save a few exceptions, focus on the strategies of racialized women. Still, there is a notable underrepresentation of Asian, Arab, and Latin American women, lesbians, queer and

[17] See, for example, Shannon Stettner, "'We Are Forced to Declare War': Linkages between the 1970 Abortion Caravan and Women's Anti-Vietnam War Activism," *Histoire sociale/Social History* 46, 92 (2013): 423-441; Beth Palmer, "'Lonely, tragic, but legally necessary pilgrimages': Transnational Abortion Travel in the 1970s," *Canadian Historical Review* 92, 4 (2011): 637-664; Lara Campbell, "'Women United Against the War': Gender Politics, Feminism, and Vietnam Draft Resistance in Canada," In *New World Coming: The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness*, eds. Karen Dubinsky, Catherine Krull, Susan Lord, Sean Mills, and Scott Rutherford (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2009), 339-357; Angus McLaren and Arlene Tigar McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State: The Changing Practices and Politics of Contraception and Abortion in Canada, 1880-1997* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997); Erika Dyck, *Facing Eugenics: Reproduction, Sterilization, and the Politics of Choice* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

[18] Joan Sangster, "Radical Ruptures, Labor, and the Left in the Long Sixties in Canada," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 40, 1 (2010): 1-21; Meg Luxton, Feminism as a Class Act: Working-Class Feminism and the Women's Movement in Canada," *Labour/Le Travail* 48 (2001): 63-88; Pamela Sugiman, *Labour's Dilemma: The Gender Politics of Auto Workers in Canada, 1937-79* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994).

[19] See, for example, Nancy Janovicek, "'Assisting our own': Urban Migration, Self-Governance, and Native Women's Organization in Thunder Bay, Ontario, 1972-1989," *American Indian Quarterly* 27, 3 &4 (2003): 548-565; Heather Howard-Bobiwash, "Women's Class Strategies as Activism in Native Community Building in Toronto, 1950-1975," *American Indian Quarterly* 27, 3&4 (2003): 566-582; Sarah Nickel, "Homemakers, Activists, and Radical Mothers: Indigenous Feminism and Politicized Motherhood in the British Columbia Aboriginal Political Movement, 1950-1981," (In progress) (https://www.sfu.ca/history/graduate/grad-students/phd/sarah-nickel.htm).

[20] Judy Rebick, *Ten Thousand Roses: The Making of a Feminist Revolution* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2005); Michele Landsberg, *Writing the Revolution* (Toronto: Second Story Press, 2011); Francine Zuckerman, *Half the Kingdom: Seven Jewish Feminists* (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1992); Canadian Women's Educational Press, *Women Unite! An Anthology of the Canadian Women's Movement* (Toronto: Women's Educational Press, 1972); Micheline Dumont and Louise Toupin, eds. *La pensée féministe au Québec, Anthologie (1900-1985)* (Montreal: Les Éditions du remue-ménage, 2003); Micheline Dumont, *Le féminisme québécois raconté à Camille* (Montreal: Les Éditions du remue-ménage, 2008); Diane Lamoureux, *Fragments et collages: essai sur le féminisme québécois des années 70* (Montreal: Les Éditions du remue-ménage, 1986).

trans people, disabled women, and labour activists. Nevertheless, the project's focus on the above-mentioned, frequently overlooked histories constitutes a historiographical contribution. In this regard, the dissertation most resembles Vijay Agnew's *Resisting Discrimination: Women from Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean and the Women's Movement in Canada*, Judy Wu's "Rethinking Global Sisterhood. Peace Activism and Women's Orientalism," and Nancy Janovicek's *No Place To Go: Local Histories of the Battered Women's Shelter Movement*.[21] Building upon previous scholarship, the project aspires to shift Canadian women's history, in a manner mindful of Quebec's distinctiveness as well as critical of the "two founding peoples" myth.

In Montreal, the historiography on both the "first" as well as the "second-wave" tends to focus on French Catholic, English Protestant, and Ashkenazi Jewish women.[22] In

[21] Vijay Agnew, *Resisting Discrimination: Women from Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean and the Women's Movement in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); Judy Wu, "Rethinking Global Sisterhood. Peace Activism and Women's Orientalism," In *No Permanent Waves. Recasting Histories of U.S. Feminism*, ed. Nancy A. Hewitt (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 193-220; Nancy Janovicek, *No Place To Go: Local Histories of the Battered Women's Shelter Movement* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007). For a call to revisit the history of first-wave Canadian feminism see Nancy Forestell, "Mrs. Canada Goes Global: Canadian First Wave Feminism Revisited," *Atlantis* 30, 1 (2005): 7-20.

[22] Yolande Cohen, *Femmes philanthropes: catholiques, protestantes et juives dans les organisations au Québec* (Montreal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2010); Elizabeth Kirkland, "Mothering Citizens: Elite Women in Montreal, 1890-1914" (PhD Dissertation, McGill University, 2011); Andrée Lévesque, "Les midinettes de 1937: culture ouvrière, culture de genre, culture ethnique," In *1937 : Un tournant culturel*, eds. Yvan Lamonde and Denis St. Jacques (Quebec City: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2009), 71-78. See also Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993) and Magda Fahrni, "Reflections on the Place of Quebec in Historical Writing on Canada," In *Contesting Clio's Craft: New Directions and Debates in Canadian History*, eds. Michael Dawson and Christopher Dummitt (London: Institute for the Study of the Americas, 2009), 1-20. For more on the specificity of French Quebecers' feminism and its intersections with its English-speaking counterpart see: Marta Danylewycz, *Taking the Veil: An Alternative to Marriage, Motherhood, and Spinsterhood in Quebec, 1840-1920* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987), 135-139, 141; Karine Hébert, "Une organisation maternaliste au Québec: la Fédération nationale Saint-Jean Baptiste et la bataille pour le vote des femmes," *RHAF* 52, 3 (1999): 315-344; Jarrett Rudy, "Unmaking Manly Smokes: Church, State, Governance, and the First Anti-Smoking Campaigns in Montreal, 1892-1914," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 12, 1 (2001): 95-114; Thérèse Casgrain, *A Woman in a Man's World*. Translated by Joyce Marshall. Foreward by Frank R. Scott (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1972); Lucie Piché, *Femmes et changement social au Québec. L'apport de la Jeunesse ouvriere catholique feminine, 1931-66* (Quebec City: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2003), 3, 305; Andrée Lévesque, *Madeleine Parent: Activist* (Toronto: Sumach Press, 2005); Andrée Lévesque, *Red*

line with recent developments, however, this project moves away from the traditional emphasis on collaborations between Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish women's organizations. Rather, this dissertation, firstly, attempts to write Indigenous peoples and African-descended peoples into the over-arching narrative of women's history. Secondly, the dissertation contributes to the generally understudied topics of race and immigration in Quebec.[23] The periodization of the project corresponds with an era of shifting demographics. With new, less racist immigration legislation, focused on attracting professionals and French-speakers, Montreal's racial, class, and linguistic dynamic changed. Many well-educated, foreign-born women faced downward mobility and less formally educated women filled the precarious, low-paying jobs left vacant by their aging Southern European counterparts.[24] By the late 1960s and 1970s, Italians, Greeks, and Portuguese were surpassed by new arrivals from the Caribbean, especially Haiti, Southeast Asia, notably Vietnam, South America, and North Africa. The city's Black community diversified in this respect, as an increasingly number of its members were Caribbean-born. By the 1960s then, the category Francophone was multiracial where women and men from former colonies reinforced the city's French character. Still, English remained a powerful tool for social mobility in the province and, as we will see, linguistic preferences continued to shape the rapport between communities in a number of settings.

Travellers: Jeanne Corbin and her Comrades (Montreal: McGill-University Press, 2006); Suzanne Morton, *Wisdom, Justice, and Charity: Canadian Social Welfare Through The Life of Jane B. Wisdom, 1884-1975* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).

[23] Paul-André Linteau, "Les minorités ethnoculturelles dans l'historiographie québécoise," In *Le Québec et ses minorités*, ed. Beatrice Bagola (Tubingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2000), 146.

[24] Baillargeon, *Brève histoire des femmes du Québec*, 159, 186; Martin Pâquet, *Toward a Quebec Ministry of Immigration, 1945-1968* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1997).

The project then, puts forth a grounded study, firmly embedded in the Quebec context. Sean Mills, for instance, has written about the parallels between the socio-economic positions of French Quebecers and of other non-European colonized peoples, while also stressing the experiences of oppression on the part of Black Montrealers.[25] Building upon these themes, this dissertation further inscribes Quebec and Canadian history within the field of settler colonial studies where Patrick Wolfe, John Belich, among many others, maintain that, "invasion is a structure not an event."[26] According to Lorenzo Veracini, moreover, "settler colonization obscures the conditions of its own production," where national historiographies contribute to the erasure of an Indigenous sovereign presence.[27] The often-discounted legacy of slavery has been similarly expunged from historical and contemporary understandings of race and racism in Quebec and Canada.[28] By centering these histories, this dissertation represents an attempt to write an anti-racist women's history. According to Timothy Stanley, an anti-racist Canadian

[25] Mills, *The Empire Within.*

[26] See, for example, Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, 4 (2006): 387-409; Andrea Smith, "Queer Theory and Native Studies: The Heteronormativity of Settler Colonialism," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16, 1-2 (2010): 41-68; James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: the Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Angloworld* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[27] Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: a Theoretical Overview* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 13.

[28] As David Austin explains, "Slavery in the Americas, including Quebec and English Canada, had its unavoidable 'afterlife.' (…) In this afterlife, racial codes implanted in the regime of slavery operate to contort our daily human encounters and distort our sense of humanity and who is entitled to be considered fully human. (…) Yet while slavery's economic contribution to Canada was negligible compared to the use of Black slave labour in other parts of the Americas, contemporary Canada has inherited the racial codes and attitudes that slavery engendered, and certainly the fact of slavery in Canada cannot be taken for granted." See David Austin, *Fear of a Black Nation: Race, Sex, and Security in Sixties Montreal* (Toronto: Between the Lines Press, 2013), 7-8. For more on the legacy of slavery and the Eurocentric intellectual tradition in Canada, see Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (Minneopolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 91-120; "Introduction" of "*We're Rooted Here and They Can't Pull Us Up." Essays in African Canadian Women's History*, eds. Peggy Bristow, Dionne Brand, Linda Carty, Afua Cooper, Sylvia Hamilton, Adrienne Shadd (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 3-12 as well as Rinaldo Walcott, ed., *Rude: Contemporary Black Canadian Cultural Criticism* (Toronto: Insomniac Press, 2000), 7-8; Barrington Walker, "Jamaicans and the Making of Modern Canada," In *Jamaica in the Canadian Experience: A Multiculturalizing Presence*, eds. Carl James and Andrea Davis (Black Point, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing, 2012), 23-34.

history would be "post-colonial" and "multi-centric." It would "take seriously the human consequences of racism, including their effects on members of dominant groups"; as well as use sources in languages other than English or French.[29] Consequently, the project sheds light on how some women continued to prop up settler society structures, whereas others were excluded, literally, from its borders or granted unequal access to state and societal resources in other social, cultural, and economic ways.[30] Its emphasis on coalitions between marginalized women, the inclusion of Indigenous peoples in Black communities' anti-racism, and the solutions proposed by women's groups hints at another possible historical narrative.[31]

Indeed, a number of historical studies explore women's precarious place within the settler project, from its inception to the late 20th century.[32] As the "mothers of the race," for instance, English- and French-Canadian women were subjected to a paternalism of a specific kind. More specifically, Carolyn Strange, Tamara Myers,

[29] Stanley, Timothy, "Why I Killed Canadian History: Towards an Anti-Racist History in Canada," *Social History* 65 (2000): 79-103.
[30] Katie Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity: The Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002); Adele Perry, "White Women, Race, and Immigration to British Columbia," In *Sisters or Strangers? Immigrant, Ethnic, and Racialized Women in Canadian History*, eds. Marlene Epp, Franca Iacovetta, and Frances Swyripa (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 49, 51.
[31] I am also indebted to the non-published ideas that I have assimilated over the years via youtube videos. See, for example, Henry Yu, "Dr. Henry Yu, Reconciling Injustices in a Pluralistic Canada," YouTube video, 12:00, posted by "The SFU Centre for Dialogue," 31 January 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z8dHCR25GKk or "Panel 1: Roundtable on Settler Colonialism: Solidarities, Territorialities and Embodiments." YouTube video, 1:13:18, posted by "Island Video," 19 July 2013, (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqAWR3Ax5g8). The second video was a panel at the 2013 Canadian Political Science Association Annual Meeting, held in Victoria, British Columbia.
[32] See, for example, Cecilia Morgan, "Turning Strangers into Sisters? Missionaries and Colonization in Upper Canada," In *Sisters or Strangers? Immigrant, Ethnic, and Racialized Women in Canadian History*, eds. Marlene Epp, Franca Iacovetta, and Frances Swyripa (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 23-48; Mary-Ellen Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-1950* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1998); Joan Sangster, "Native Women, Sexuality, and the Law," In *In The Days of Our Grandmothers: A Reader in Aboriginal Women's History in Canada*, eds. Mary-Ellen Kelm and Lorna Townsend (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 301-335; Sarah Carter, *The Importance of Being Monogamous: Marriage and Nation-Building in Western Canada to 1915* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2008).

Andrée Lévesque, among others, underline the policing of women and youth's behavior during periods of social change. By adopting the logic of protection, social reformers and religious leaders, women and men, exerted control over young women, guaranteeing their future suitability for motherhood and, by extension, the well-being of the national race.[33] In Quebec, however, women negotiated the "revenge of the cradle ideology." Denyse Baillargeon's *Un Québec en mal d'enfants: la médicalisation de la maternité, 1910-1970*, for example, highlights the strength of nationalist ideology in promoting an extremely high birth rate as well as measures against infant mortality. Both national projects, in the name of French-Canadian survival, targeted women, at the time excluded from the political community by nationalists who feared legal equality would undermine their role as mothers. By paying close attention to class and White ethnicity, Baillargeon stresses the socio-economic power exercised by those in the medical profession, whether male doctors, oftentimes ardent nationalists, or female nurses of the middle- and upper-classes.[34] In other words, Quebec's minority position played an integral role in shaping gender ideology and relations.

Women of colour and immigrant women also served as symbols, as well as actively participated, in diasporic projects. For example, Frances Swyripa's and Midge Ayukawa's respective studies on Ukrainian and Japanese women demonstrate the integral

[33] Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1865-1925* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008, 1991); Tamara Myers, *Caught: Montreal's Modern Girls and the Law* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006); Carolyn Strange, *Toronto's Girl Problem: the Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995); Andrée Lévesque, *Making the Breaking the Rules: Women in Quebec, 1919-1939* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1994).
[34] Denyse Baillargeon, *Un Québec en mal d'enfants: la médicalisation de la maternité, 1910-1970* (Montreal: Les Éditions du remue-ménage, 2004), 25-26.

role marriage and motherhood played in cultural transmission.[35] Whereas Ukrainian-Canadians, as Swyripa's research illustrates, were able to adopt a mythology in line with, and informed by, mainstream society after a longer stay in the country, Karen Flynn's study sheds light on how both immigration officials and Canadian colleagues impeded the social mobility of Black Caribbean nurses from the 1950s to the 1980s.[36] By concentrating on the change over time, especially regarding access to resources, forms of community mobilization alongside discourses on race (ex. Anglo conformity to multiculturalism/interculturalism[37]) and gender, the project strives to shed light on the biases embedded in state and social practices in order to understand women activists' priorities.[38] While place of birth, language skills, and country of origin will be taken into consideration, the dissertation seeks to step out of the paradigm of integration as well as the conflation of race and immigration to instead focus on notions of citizenship and (un)belonging. Overall, the project adopts a similar approach to Canadian history as the editors of the 2004 edited collection, *Sisters or Strangers?*, who maintain "that the evolution of a national story –if such indeed exists- revolves very much around the interaction between and negotiation over privilege and power among people with varied backgrounds, histories, and experiences based on group identification."[39]

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[35] Midge Ayukawa, "Japanese Pioneer Women: Fighting Racism and Rearing the Next Generation," In *Sisters or Strangers? Immigrant, Ethnic, and Racialized Women in Canadian History*, eds. Marlene Epp, Franca Iacovetta, and Frances Swyripa (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 233-247.

[36] Karen Flynn, "Experience and Identity: Black Immigrant Nurses to Canada, 1950-1980," In *Sisters or Strangers? Immigrant, Ethnic, and Racialized Women in Canadian History*, eds. Marlene Epp, Franca Iacovetta, and Frances Swyripa (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 381-398. See also Karen Flynn, *Moving beyond Borders: a History of Black Canadian and Caribbean Women in the Diaspora* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011).

[37] The conclusion outlines the highly critical reception of multiculturalism and interculturalism.

[38] In this regard, I take my inspiration from the following manuscripts: Barrington Walker, *Race on Trial: Black Defendants in Ontario's Criminal Courts, 1858-1958* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2010); Franca Iacovetta, *Gatekeepers: Reshaping Immigrant Lives in Cold War* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2006).

[39] Marlene Epp, Franca Iacovetta, and Frances Swyripa, eds., *Sisters or Strangers? Immigrant, Ethnic, and Racialized Women in Canadian History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 8.

In short, this dissertation examines the history of women's civic engagement in Montreal, conceptualized as the site of two competing White settler nationalisms. These nationalisms were not on equal footing, did not carry the same weight, wield the same power nor achieve anywhere near the same recognition. Still, their basic tenets-the dispossession of Indigenous peoples, the marginalization of people of colour, and the eventual integration of European immigrants- remained striking similar.[40] This historical account consequently theorizes Quebec as a subordinated settler society. Whereas language, in many ways, was akin to race, especially in the 1960s, when militants and intellectuals adopted an anti-colonial rhetoric as a means to articulate the idea of a colonized French-Canadian people, recent works highlight Quebec's status as a colonized-colonizing society.[41] Indeed, as historian Franca Iacovetta recounts, "Francophone Quebeckers...quite rightly object to the assumption that they are part of the privileged Canadian white majority." Yet when discussing race in Canada one could very well ask "what about Quebec?" as the province is more racially heterogeneous than

[40] For informative and thought provoking Canadian critical race scholarship, see Patricia Monture, "Tinkering with the Indian Act Won't Solve Our Problems: Why We Must End Colonialism," *Herizons* 15, 4 (2002): 18-21; Mary Ellen Turpel, "Patriarchy and Paternalism: The Legacy of the Canadian State for First Nations Women," *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* (1993): 174-192; Esmeralda Thornhill, "Focus on Black Women!" *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* 1 (1985): 153-162; Bonita Lawrence and Enakshi Dua, "Decolonizing Antiracism," *Social Justice* (2005): 120-143; Himani Bannerji, *The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism, and Gender* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2000); Sunera Thobani, *Exalted subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007); Beenash Jafri, "Privilege versus Complicity: People of Colour and Settler Colonialism," http://www.ideas-idees.ca/blog/privilege-vs-complicity-people-colour-and-settler-colonialism. First published on March 21st, 2012. Sherene Razack, Malinda Smith, and Sunera Thobani, eds., *States of Race: Critical Race Feminism for the 21st Century* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2010). For good work on whiteness in the American and Canadian contexts, see Jennifer Guglielmo, *Living the Revolution: Italian Women's Resistance and Radicalism in New York City, 1880-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010) and Joan Sangster, "The Polish 'Dionnes': Gender, Ethnicity, and Immigrant Workers in Post-Second World War Canada," *Canadian Historical Review* 88, 3 (2007): 469-500.

[41] David Meren, "An Atmosphere of Libération: The Role of Decolonization in the France-Quebec Rapprochement of the 1960s," *Canadian Historical Review* 92, 2 (2011): 263-294; Austin, *Fear of a Black Nation*; Darryl Leroux, "Commemorating Quebec: Nation, Race, and Memory" (PhD Dissertation, Carleton University Ottawa, 2010); Sean Mills, "Quebec, Haiti, and the Deportation Crisis of 1974," *Canadian Historical Review* 94, 3 (2013): 405-435.

generally assumed, not to mention the deplorable situation of First Nations in the French-speaking province, like elsewhere in the country.[42] In line with the work of other social scientists, the dissertation consciously adopts the perspective of "layers of colonialism" or "internal colonialism." The idea here is not to "privilege one form of domination," as sociologists Daiva Stasiulis and Nira Yuval-Davis contend, but rather underscore "the inherent complexity of the social relations" in all settler societies, in this case Quebec.[43]

The project then, thinks seriously about the construction of the Quebec and Canadian nations. As American historian Thomas Bender contends, "To historicize the nation is to relate its dominant narrative, its national narrative, to other narratives that refer to both smaller histories and larger ones." Following this call for alternative ways to understand a country's or nation's past, this dissertation emphasizes subaltern and supra-national histories.[44] To this end, the study relies on the insights provided by immigration history, in that, it sheds light on the heterogeneity of communities, whether foreign-born or not, the porous nature of "ethnic" boundaries, cultural hybridity, generational differences, agency, "multiple identities" and the influence of the urban landscape on social relations. Gender relations, as well as how women contributed to the betterment of their communities, will be the subject of particular attention.[45] Similar to the work of

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[42] Franca Iacovetta, "Gendering Trans/National Historiographies: Feminists Rewriting Canadian History," *Journal of Women's History* 19, 1 (2007): 206-213.

[43] Daiva Stasiulis and Nira Yuval-Davis, eds., *Unsettling Settler Societies: Articulations of Gender, Race, Ethnicity, and Class* (London: Sage, 1995), 5.

[44] Thomas Bender, ed., *Rethinking American History in a Global Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), vii.

[45] See, for example, Lisa Rose Mar, *Brokering Belonging: Chinese in Canada's Exclusion Era, 1998-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Jordan Stanger-Ross, *Staying Italian: Urban Change and Ethnic Life in Postwar Toronto and Philadelphia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); Royden Loewen and Gerald Friesen, *Immigrants in Prairie Cities: Ethnic Diversity in 20th Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009); John Zucchi, *A History of Ethnic Enclaves in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 2007); Kamala Elizabeth Nayar, *The Sikh Diaspora in Vancouver: Three Generations amid Tradition, Modernity, and Multiculturalism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004); Etan Diamond, *And I Will Dwell in their Midst: Orthodox Jews in Suburbia* (Chapel

David Austin, Sean Mills, David Meren and Scott Rutherford, the dissertation also analyzes the influence of global politics on local organizing, political thought and community development. It explicitly incorporates Quebec and Canada's ties with the so-called Global South into a domestic history, putting "the colony" and the "metropole" into the same analytical frame. Whereas Canadian historians have taken this approach, whether explicitly or implicitly, vis-à-vis Indigenous peoples, they are increasingly applying these ideas to other social groups, especially with regards to Caribbean migrants.[46] Drawing upon the insights of scholars working predominately in women and gender's studies departments, the project highlights the importance of unequal global power relations and Canada's neocolonial role abroad in shaping gender relations domestically.[47] Therefore, the dissertation consciously combines the community-based approach with close attention to transnational processes. Rather than simply incorporating these perspectives, the project argues that they are integral to understanding the social dynamic in Montreal.

In short, the project is part of Canadian history's "transnational turn" where historians aim to cast the country, to quote Tina Loo, "as but one circuit in larger,

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Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Franca Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992); John Zucchi, *Italians in Toronto: Development of a National Identity, 1875-1935* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988).

[46] See, for example, Toby Morantz, *The White Man's Gonna Getcha: The Colonial Challenge to the Cree in Quebec* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002); David Austin, "All Roads Led to Montreal: Black Power, the Caribbean, and the Black Radical Tradition in Canada," *Journal of African American History* 92, 4 New Black Power Studies: National, International, and Transnational Perspectives (2007), 516-539; Scott Rutherford, "Canada's Other Red Scare: The Anicinabe Park Occupation and Indigenous Decolonization," In *The Hidden 1970s*, ed. Dan Berger (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 77-94. Both Mills and Meren were cited previously.

[47] See, for example, Alissa Trotz, "Going Global? Transnationality, Women/Gender Studies and Lessons from the Caribbean," *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies* 1 (2007): 1-18; Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Mohanty, eds., *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Charmaine Crawford, "Sending Love in a Barrel: The Making of Transnational Caribbean Families in Canada," *Canadian Woman Studies* 22, 3 (2003): 104-109.

transnational networks of power."[48] It further contributes to the notion that transnational feminism, to paraphrase American historian Jennifer Guglielmo, "did not originate with upper-class white Anglo-Saxon Protestant women."[49] Building upon a long-standing emphasis on Canada's relationship with the British and French Empires, twentieth century studies take a closer look at global inequities, considering the role of a First World society in a polarized world. Like Laura Madokoro, in her study of Chinese refugees in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, the project explicitly approaches these questions from the perspective of settler colonialism.[50] The dissertation also adheres to a feminist interpretation of transnational processes. With an emphasis on high politics, an arena of power where women are typically under-represented, Canadian international relations scholarship tends to lack a gendered perspective.[51] In fact, feminist scholars of international relations (IR) in general lament the lack of gender-based analyses within their discipline, which, in the words of political theorist Annick Wibben, "has been one of the last fields to open up to feminism." Despite their best efforts, "IR remains a male-dominated field." They attribute the invisibility of women in international relations, as with political history more generally, to, as Wibben explains, "the bias

[48] Tina Loo, "Missed Connections: Why Canadian Environmental History Could Use More of the World and Vice Versa," *Canadian Historical Review* 95, 4 (2014): 621-627.
[49] Jennifer Guglielmo, "Transnational Feminism's Radical Past: Lessons from Italian Immigrant Women Anarchists in Industrializing America," *Journal of Women's History* 22, 1 (2010): 10-33.
[50] See, for example, Tamara Myers, "Local Action and Global Imagining: Youth, International Development, and the Walkathon Phenomenon in Sixties' and Seventies' Canada," *Diplomatic History* 38, 3 (2014): 282-293; Ruth Compton Brouwer, "When Missions Became Development: Ironies of 'NGOization' in Mainstream Canadian Churches in the 1960s," *Canadian Historical Review* 91, 4 (2010): 661-693; Laura Madokoro, "Unwanted Refugees: Chinese Migration and the Making of a Global Humanitarian Agenda, 1949-1989" (PhD Dissertation, University of British Columbia, 2012).
[51] Cris Corrin, *Feminist Perspectives on Politics* (Edinburgh: Pearson Education Limited, 1999); Jan Jindy Pettman, *Worlding Women: A Feminist International Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1996); Philip Buckner, ed., *Canada and the End of Empire* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005); Robert Bothwell, *Alliance and Illusion. Canada and the World* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007); David Meren, *With Friends Like These: Entangled Nationalisms and the Canada-Quebec-France Triangle, 1944-1970* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2012).

generated by political theory," that is, the emphasis placed on the public, on states and on competition for power.[52] Following the calls for an alternative approach by Akira Iriye, as well as Cynthia Enloe, the dissertation seeks to "go beyond an examination of state-to-state relations to seek to understand international relations as involving society-to-society, culture-to-culture, even people-to-people interactions."[53] In the Canadian context, Ruth Compton Brouwer's work on women in overseas missions provides insights into this form of analysis.[54] The project therefore contributes to Canadian as well as transnational feminist historiography.

IV. Sources

Primary sources are abundant for the period in question. Although the project makes good use of the Canadian Women's Movement Archives Collection, located at the University of Ottawa, the vast majority of the material was, significantly, found elsewhere. I searched the databases of Library and Archives Canada (LAC) and the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BAnQ) for other associational newsletters and reports, finding, for example, the published documents of the Montreal Italian Women's Centre, the Quebec Native Women's Association, and the Collectif des femmes immigrantes du Québec. Once I was able to identify the names of prominent community leaders, I then searched for any report or article they had authored. This

[52] Annick Wibben, "Feminist International Relations: Old Debates and New Directions," *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 10, 2 (2004): 97-115.
[53] Akira Iriye, "Internationalizing International History," In *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*, ed. Thomas Bender (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 49; Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).
[54] Ruth Compton Brouwer, *New Women for God: Canadian Presbyterian Women and India Missions, 1876-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); *Modern Women Modernizing Men: The Changing Missions of Three Professional Women in Asia and Africa, 1902-69* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

approach proved immensely useful in obtaining an all-encompassing view of their public personas. The 16 volume Dorothy Wills Fonds, at LAC, proved immensely useful in this regard. The fonds also contained material on the Congress of Black Women and the National Black Coalition of Canada. In order to get at many of the issues addressed throughout the project, however, I read a considerable proportion of archival material against the grain. More specifically, I turned to a substantial amount of sources, especially community newspapers, authored predominately by men. For example, I went through *UHURU*, *Contrast*, *Village News*, *Nouvelle Optique*, *Collectif Paroles*, *Il Cittadino Canadese*, *Quaderni Culturali*, and *Il Lavoratore*. I also read all the publications of the National Indian Brotherhood and the Indians of Quebec Association. Finally, I combed through the Fédération des femmes du Québec's and the Front de libération des femmes du Québec's written material, with an eye to questions of race, immigration, and indigeneity. I also searched, though less systematically, other feminist publications, such as *Les Têtes de Pioche*, *La Vie en Rose*, and *La Gazette des femmes*. The dissertation is organized around these sources, but readers will also notice oral histories, publications, reports, newsletters, and conference proceedings from other sources.

V. On Positionality

Feminist scholars have stressed to the importance of positionality in shaping feminist politics. In all cases but one, I am a community "outsider." If I evoke my family background here, however, it is not to put forth a tokenized White ethnicity. On the contrary, the fact that my family could be perceived as, and enjoy the benefits of other White Canadians within one or two generations speaks to some of the larger issues of this

dissertation, and the place of Southern European migrants in Canadian and Québécois society. Therefore, the content of the project, by virtue of my "outsider" status and the long-standing relationship between feminist scholarship and colonialism, raises significant ethical questions.[55] The Centro Donne Italiane di Montreal offered to set up a focus group with Italian-speaking women, providing a concrete example of the benefits of insider status and conversely the tenuousness of outsider-written histories. I am also originally from Ottawa. I decided to undertake my master's studies at the Université de Montréal and regularly present at the Congrès de l'Institut d'histoire de l'Amérique Française. While I certainly carry all advantages and sensibilities of a native English-speaker, I tried to assimilate how today's Francophone historians understand Quebec history. My decision to work in part out French-speaking and bilingual spaces hopefully led to a nuanced study, closely attuned to and embedded in the Quebec context. By speaking at the Congrès de l'IHAF, moreover, I attempted to hold my research accountable to a domestic audience. Indeed, Francophones rightfully point to the dominance of English and Anglophone perspectives at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association.[56] Although I maintain a level of discomfort regarding some of the themes I discuss, as an English-speaker, in this dissertation, I found that the academic structures exist to assist outsiders in writing a culturally sensitive Quebec history, as well as various forums to criticize those who ignore key literatures, events, and issues.

[55] See, for example, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed books, 1999); J. Naki Motapanyane, "Insider/Outsider: A Feminist Introspective on Epistemology and Transnational Research," *Atlantis* 34, 2 (2010): 96-103; Adrienne Rich, "Towards a Politics of Location," In *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: a Reader*, eds. Reina Lewis and Sara Mills (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, Ltd., 2003), 29-42.

[56] Franca Iacovetta, "Towards a More Humane Academy? Some Observations from a Canadian Feminist Historian," *Journal of Women's History* 18, 1 (2006): 141-146; Roach Pierson, "The Mainstream Women's Movement and the Politics of Difference," 202-203.

Chapter 2: Guardians of the Nation: Kahnawake Women's Activism

On Montreal's south shore, the Kahnawake Mohawk community has a long-standing, worldwide reputation for assertiveness and militancy.[1] During the 1960s and 1970s, however, political organizing took on new, revitalized forms. Now the majority, Indigenous youth, in particular, adopted the stance that the status quo was unacceptable. By taking organizations in a new direction, Red Power proponents, women and men, created links across national lines as well as spearheaded a cultural renaissance.[2] In this context, *Kahnawakero:non* activism took on a paradoxical character, where, on one hand, it was localized and nationalistic and, on the other hand, it assumed Canadian and Québécois dimensions. For this reason, Kahnawake (also known as Caughnawaga) was simultaneously at the heart of a revitalized Haudenosaunee (also known as the Iroquois or the Six Nations) nationalism, as well as the base for the Indians of Quebec Association (IQA) and the Quebec Native Women's Association (QNWA). Although First Nations leaders by and large encouraged equality through self-determination, Red Power ideology was by no means monolithic and divisions existed between political groups. After Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's 1969 White Paper, which threatened to eliminate special status for First Nations peoples, Indigenous leaders across the country were especially on edge. Indeed, a significant rupture occurred between organizations such as Indian Rights for Indian Women and the QNWA -the latter seeking the elimination of section 12(1)(b) of the *Indian Act* where women lost Indian status upon out-marriage- and men (along with

[1] Gerald Taiaiake Alfred, *Heeding the Voices of Our Ancestors: Kahnawake Mohawk Politics and the Rise of Native Nationalism* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1995), 1; Daniel Rueck, "Enclosing the Mohawk Commons: A History of Use-Rights, Landownership, and Boundary-Making in Kahnawa:ke Mohawk Territory" (PhD Dissertation, McGill University, 2012), 305-307.
[2] Harold Cardinal, *The Unjust Society* (Vancouver & Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 1969, 1999), 91-92.

some women) who wanted to maintain the article within the legislation, fearing an erosion of an important basis for autonomy.

The legal and social consequences of exogamy then, were complex and inherently linked to broader questions of collective survival. On this small municipality of approximately eight thousand inhabitants, with a land base of just over twelve thousand acres, intermarriage was an emotional issue, one that could threaten its very existence. More specifically, Kahnawake's limited resources were constantly strained, even more so given its proximity to Montreal. Not only did the community experience the unwanted presence of bridges, railroads, or canals that came with the city's rapid economic growth in the 19th century, but it also on the losing end of the metropolis' demographic expansion.[3] Some Euro-Canadians, for instance, took advantage of cheap rent to reside on Mohawk land. The community eventually lost this territory to these settlers. In fact, since the Conquest, an estimated 50,000 acres were conceded by the Catholic Church, which "'sold' land that it neither had the authority nor the sanction to sell."[4] Conversely, many *Kahnawakero:non* had to leave the reserve to seek employment, going as far as the Prairies, California, or New York.[5] Both the geographical location of the community, as well as its residents' contact with the outside world, led to higher intermarriage rates than those found in isolated reserves. In fact, intermarriage was a highly sensitive and debated question in areas where communities were closer to Euro-Canadian-dominated centres. In a context of land shortages, moreover, the number and ethnic make-up of each

[3] Daniel Rueck, "When Bridges Become Barriers: Montreal and Kahnawake Mohawk Territory," In *Metropolitan Natures: Environmental Histories of Montreal*, eds. Michèle Dagenais and Stéphane Castonguay (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), 229.
[4] Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham: Durham University Press, 2014), 54; Rueck, "When Bridges Become Barriers," 229.
[5] Rueck, "When Bridges Become Barriers," 230-233.

community's members were profoundly significant. Montreal and Kahnawake were therefore inexorably linked, where the cultural hegemony of the former threatened to annihilate the latter.[6]

Revealing the patriarchal, intimate effects of White settler colonialism, the 12(1)(b) clause stipulated that Indigenous women who married outside the community would not only lose their Indian status but were also forced to acquire their husbands' band or national ("tribal") identity. The penalties for stepping outside these boundaries were numerous, extending, in the words of Kathleen Jamieson, Six Nations legal scholar, from "marriage to grave." Intermarried women faced involuntary enfranchisement, lost the right to own property and forfeited their inheritance. They could no longer take part in band business, and were prevented from returning to live with their families even when in need. They were also refused burial on the territory of their ancestors and the children of these partnerships were not recognized as Indians under the law. In contrast, Euro-Canadian women who married into the community benefited from the above-mentioned privileges.[7] The overrepresentation of White men led *Kahnawakero:non* to tacitly support sexist discrimination. Conversely, the presence of White women was condoned - even if, in the words of anthropologist Audra Simpson, it "may have been profoundly aggravating to Indian women, who had to leave upon out-marriage" - precisely because they did not pose the same threat as their male counterparts, who were "potential landowners, band

[6] Stéphane Castonguay and Michèle Dagenais use the notion of "cultural hegemony" when assessing Montreal's relationship with its hinterland. They include Kahnawake in their analysis. Stéphane Castonguay and Michèle Dagenais, eds., *Metropolitan Natures: Environmental Histories of Montreal* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), 14.

[7] Kathleen Jamieson, *Indian Women and the Law in Canada: Citizens Minus*. Study Sponsored by the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Indian Rights for Indian Women (Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services Canada, 1978), 1.

councillors, and voters."[8] Still, the end results proved exclusionary for exogamous women, some of who contested their marginalization in the 1960s up until the amendment in 1985. Therefore, this chapter contributes to, as well as attempts to move away from, the over-emphasis in post-1945 Indigenous women's history on the campaign to eliminate article 12(1)(b), by examining the activist trajectories of Kahnawake women such as Mary Two-Axe Earley and Kahn-Tineta Horn.[9]

I. Women and Red Power

In Canada like elsewhere, colonialism was a gendered process, a phenomenon that had contemporary ramifications. Up until French and English settlement, Haudenosaunee women were at the centre of their matrilineal, matrifocal communities. "Mother" was the highest term in the lineage in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and, as historian Jan Noel explains, "Names, titles, longhouses, and most of their contents were transmitted through the maternal line.[10] Women were also "owners' and "guardians of the land" and maternalism and motherhood were "central to an Aboriginal woman's authority and status."[11] Further, the two sexes' roles were complementary and the boundaries between the public and private were highly and openly porous. This should not be mistaken, however, for perfect equality between the sexes. Women were normally excluded from negotiating treaties with other Indigenous peoples or European settlers and

[8] Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*, 60.
[9] Nancy Janovicek, *No Place To Go: Local Histories of the Battered Women's Shelter Movement* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), 22.
[10] Jan Noel, "Power Mothering: The Haudenosaunee Model," In "*Until our Hearts are on the Ground": Aboriginal Mothering, Oppressing, Resistance and Rebirth*, eds. D. Memee Lavell-Harvard and Jeannette Corbiere Lavell (Toronto: Demeter Press, 2006), 76-81.
[11] Verna St. Denis, "Feminism is for everybody: Aboriginal Women, Feminism, and Diversity," In *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, ed. Joyce Greene (Black Point, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing, 2007), 38; Rueck, "When Bridges Become Barriers," 239.

council affairs largely remained "the business of men."[12] Yet they were instrumental at all echelons on society, from politics, to diplomacy, to food distribution. Haudenosaunee women then, wielded considerable political, economic, and familial power. The shift in gender relations was not solely the product of internal sexism but rather can be traced to the arrival of the Europeans, men and women.[13] Because "cultural replication" was essential to imperial projects, as historian Sylvia Van Kirk argues, Indigenous women, despite high rates of intermarriage with French men, would have never been accepted as the "founding mothers" of the colony. The rapport between Natives and Newcomers was consequently transformed with the arrival of women, the latter deemed necessary to ensure the demographic strength and cultural success of New France.[14] Race and gender were therefore intertwined, with Indigenous women on the losing end of process.

Although First Nations, both men and women, had a long history of resistance, the Red Power movement can be traced more precisely to the years after the Second World War.[15] A wave of assertiveness undoubtedly passed over Indigenous peoples following their return to second-class status after active participation on the battlefield, yet women were further excluded from the polity after the 1951 revisions to the *Indian Act*.[16] Indian

[12] Elisabeth Tooker, "Women in Iroquois Society," In *Extending the Rafters: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Iroquoian Studies*, eds. Michael K. Foster, Jack Campisi, and Marianne Mithum (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 113.
[13] Noel, "Power Mothering: The Haudenosaunee Model," 76-81.
[14] Sylvia Van Kirk, "'Marrying-in to Marrying-Out': Changing Patterns of Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal Marriage in Colonial Canada," *Frontiers: a Journal of Women's Studies* 23, 3 (2002): 1-11.
[15] Mark Cronlund Anderson and Carmen Robertson, *Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2011), 137.
[16] After a few years delay, the federal government amended the *Indian Act* in 1951. On one hand, as Kathleen Jamieson explains, the revisions were positive. There was "an easing of laws on intoxicants, the prohibition on Indian ceremonies and dances were omitted, and Indian women were for the first time given the right to vote in band elections." But on the other hand, Aboriginal women faced more barriers, because "the male line of descent was further emphasized as the major criterion for inclusion." Moreover, "the sections dealing with estates and inheritance were also amended and adversely affected intermarried women." First Nations women now faced involuntary enfranchisement, entirely against their will and generally contrary to the wishes of First Nations as a whole. As historian John Tobias observes, the most

agents and community leaders increasingly applied article 12(1)(b) after the revisions, making non-status women painfully aware of its existence to a greater degree than in previous years.[17] Another event further politicized Kahnawake Mohawks in particular, which, according to historian Lawrence Hauptmann, led "directly to the rise of Red Power militancy."[18] In 1957, the St. Lawrence Seaway was built on Haudenosaunee territory despite vehement opposition. Not only did the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority expropriate 1260 acres of riverfront land to build a canal, but the company's actions also cut through an "important site of economic and cultural activity." As Audra Simpson explains, "Expertise and bravery on the River was a distinctly Mohawk experience –one that Mohawks identified with and that was also affirmed by outside society." When the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority ignored the community's wishes, and the federal government forcefully confiscated their land, the territory's residents completely lost their faith in Euro-Canadian forms of capital and governance. They also realized they were defenceless in times of contradicting interests. A harbinger of the forceful anti-colonial politics to come, the Band of Caughnawaga Indians railed against the government's actions: 'We Indians are the primordial inhabitants placed here by the Great Spirit and universally recognized as the only true Citizens of North America. Humanity blushes at

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coercive aspects were removed in 1951, but the underlining assimilative function remained the same. See Jamieson, *Indian Women and the Law in Canada: Citizens Minus*, 59-60, 63; John L. Tobias, "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation: An Outline History of Canada's Indian Policy," In *Sweet Promises: a Reader in Indian-White Relations*, ed. J.R. Miller (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 139-40

[17] This was the narrative of Évelyn O'Bomawain from Odanak. *Artisans de notre histoire: Évelyn O'Bomsawin,* DVD. Directed by Pierre Lacombe. Montréal: Ciné Fête, 2002.

[18] Laurence M. Hauptman, *The Iroquois Struggle for Survival: World War II to Red Power* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986), 123.

the events of this period of Colonial History and Dictatorship, and Usurpation."[19] In other words, "a modern nationalist consciousness" was formed.[20]

While in many respects, younger, formally-educated people led the charge in the 1960s and 1970s; these leaders' political identities were shaped by their family histories and built off long-standing forms of resistance.[21] Kahn-Tineta Horn followed this trajectory. Despite, or perhaps because of, being told by teachers that she belonged to a "dying race" as a youngster, Horn, a graduate of Sir George Williams University, was an assertive Mohawk sovereigntist.[22] In the early 1960s, moreover, the young woman was a member of the National Indian Council, the precursor to the National Indian Brotherhood, and, later, became a prominent, if controversial, Red Power figure.[23] As was typical of her cohort, however, Horn consistently situated herself in relation to her family lineage, which was, in her case, a Chief of the Longhouse's daughter. In fact, Joe (Assenaientor) Horn played an active role opposing the 1957 St. Lawrence Seaway Authority land expropriation.[24] Indeed, the Longhouse movement, which, significantly, afforded a large and powerful place to women, represented one of the most important challenges, as well

[19] Cited in Bryan Palmer, *Canada's 1960s: the Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 397.
[20] Audra Simpson, "To the Reserve and Back Again: Kahnawake Mohawk Narratives of Home, Self, and Nation" (PhD Dissertation, McGill University, 2003), 83-86.
[21] Harold Cardinal, for example, managed to successfully combine, in the words of George Manuel, "a traditional Indian knowledge with higher academic learning, and the strength and vigour of youth." George Manuel and Michael Posluns, *The Fourth World: an Indian Reality*. Foreword by Vine Deloris Jr. (Don Mills, Ontario: Callier-MacMillan Canada, 1974), xvi.
[22] Kahente Horn-Miller, "Otiyaner: The 'Women's Path' Through Colonialism," *Atlantis* 29, 2 (2005): 57-68, 61; Peter Gzowski, "How Kahn-Tineta Horn became an Indian," *Maclean's Magazine*, 16 May 1964. In *Iroquois Women: An Anthology*, ed. Wm. Guy Spitall (Ohswekan, Ontario: Iroqrafts, 1990), 175-181.
[23] Myra Rutherdale and Jim Miller, "'It's Our Country': First Nations' Participation in the Indian Pavilion at Expo '67," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 17, 2 (2006): 148-173, 156.
[24] Gretchen M. Bataille and Laurie Lisa, eds., *Native American Women: A Biographical Dictionary* (New York: Garland, 1993), 144-145.

as source of internal divisions, to Euro-Canadian incursions throughout the 20th century.[25] For political scientist Gerald Taiaiake Alfred, the definitive turn to Longhouse ideology dates back to 1926, when Kahnawake's Paul Diabo was arrested in Philadelphia as an illegal alien. In response to this threat to livelihoods and notions of sovereignty, Haudenosaunee leaders evoked the Jay Treaty of 1794, the latter recognizing the Iroquois Confederacy's existence as nations and guaranteed their peoples' right to travel freely between the two territories.[26] In 1957, after the St. Lawrence Seaway betrayal by the Canadian government, Longhouse "traditionalism" was further entrenched in Kahnawake, as were "basic and consistent assertions of independent nationhood."[27] Therefore, Red Power thinking had deeply entrenched roots in Mohawk communities, whose people were among the period's most militant and impassioned leaders.[28]

In Kahnawake, especially, women appeared very willing to enter the broader political discussion on behalf of their people. The location of the community bred a unique type of assertiveness. According to Alfred, Quebec, itself undergoing a renaissance in the 1960s, served as "an instigator of conflictual processes that increased the intensity of the Mohawks' nationalist assertions."[29] In 1965, for example, Kahn-Tineta Horn refuted the notion that French-Canadians were a colonized people at the public hearings on the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. She instead named them "the first invading race." "This would be more appropriate," as Horn argued, "and then the English could be the second invading race." By participating in the

[25] Olive Patricia Dickason, *A Concise History of Canada's First Nations* (Toronto: Oxford University, 2006), 343; Geoffrey York and Loreen Pindera, *People of the Pines: The Warriors and the Legacy of Oka* (Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, Ltd., 1991), 164.
[26] Alfred, *Heeding the Voices of Our Ancestors*, 58-59.
[27] *Ibid*., 67.
[28] Palmer, *Canada's 1960s*, 398.
[29] Alfred, *Heeding the Voices of Our Ancestors*, 17.

Preliminary Hearings, the Kahnawake resident advanced perspectives that were, in her words, "suppressed, suppressed in the history books, suppressed everywhere." Although she participated in the public debate, her viewpoints were neither Canadian nor Québécois. As she asserted, "I am not a citizen of Canada. I am a private citizen of the six nations Iroquois Confederacy." Thus, the Red Power leader advanced an Indigenous national narrative and history. Referring to the Confederacy, she reminded her audience that, "We still follow the treaties and we still follow our constitution of our nation, which was developed in the year 900 A.D., and we still follow a constitution which is one thousand years old and the United Nations follows that constitution because they adopted the principles of our constitution in the year 1950. Now, we are a separate sovereign nation (…) [30] For *Kahnawakero:non* then, the scale was land, and the territory Haudenosaunee, that is, the area between Quebec, Ontario, and New York State.[31]

In the broader Canadian context, to paraphrase anthropologist Sally Weaver, the issue of Francophone special rights was not unrelated to Indigenous claims to self-determination.[32] At the provincial level, however, the power imbalance was apparent. As evidenced by the numerous articles printed in *Akwesasne Notes*, First Nations communities across the province were concerned about the violation of traditional hunting and fishing rights.[33] For example, Kahn-Tineta Horn traveled to New York to seek funds in order assist a Sept-Îles community. After the RCMP and provincial game

[30] Canada, Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, "Submission of Miss Kahn-Tineta Horn," *Transcripts of Public Hearings*, 1 December 1965, 4316-4345.
[31] Alfred, *Heeding the Voices of Our Ancestors*, 18-19.
[32] Sally Weaver, *Making Canadian Indian Policy: The Hidden Agenda, 1968-1970* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 14.
[33] In one instance, a man from a community south of Val D'Or was taken to court for killing a moose out of season, whereas in his view, he was living according to his cultural norms, established well before the presence of French settlers. Boyce Richardson, "Quebec Indians: Political Footballs?" *Montreal Star*, Reprinted in *Akwesasne Notes*, July 1969, 10.

wardens tried to stop its inhabitants from netting salmon, 28 people were arrested upon their refusal to cease this way of life.[34] These sorts of infringements were over and above the broader questions regarding territorial boundaries, unsettled land claims, and resource extraction. Describing the paradoxical situation at a press conference, Harold Cardinal, Albertan Cree and National Indian Brotherhood president, asserted that the provincial government's "understanding of holding a minority position has not led to a better deal for Quebec Indians."[35] With the rise of a more assertive, territorial-based Francophone nationalism in 1960s and 70s, the provincial government aimed to increase its presence within Indigenous communities. In the words of Martin Papillon, "Quebec and Aboriginal nationalisms rapidly collided in this context."[36]

In response to changes at the provincial level, First Nations communities founded the Indians of Quebec Association (IQA) in 1965 when, to quote *Our Land, Our People, our Future*, "the province's native population became increasingly aware of the need to form a common front to handle negotiations with the provincial government."[37] Though based far away from the northern Cree in Kahnawake, the IQA was a key interlocutor between the provincial government and Indigenous groups once the Robert Bourassa administration launched the James Bay hydroelectric project in 1971. These communities were galvanized by what Cree Chief Billie Diamond termed a "land grab" in *Akwesasne Notes*, one that threatened, "to ruin and degrade the Indian people."[38] Speaking to its understanding of indigeneity, the Indians of Quebec Association, which probably had

[34] "Miss Horn Seeks Funds for Fishing Battle," *Akwesasne Notes*, July 1969, 15.
[35] "Unjust Society's author's views: Indian Leader says they mostly fear Quebec," *Montreal Gazette*. Reprinted in *Akwesasne Notes*, April 1970, 45.
[36] Papillon, "Aboriginal Peoples and Quebec: Competing or Coexisting Nationalisms?," 114.
[37] Indians of Quebec Association, *Our Land, Our People, our Future* (Caughnawaga: Indians of Quebec Association, 1974), 1.
[38] "Hydro Quebec Accused of a Land Grab," *The Montreal Star*, 4 May 1971, Reprinted in the April 1971 edition of *Akwesasne Notes*, 2.

women members, though the percentage of which remains unknown, argued that Indigenous peoples held special rights because they were the "original inhabitants" of the land, predating "any claim by the French and the English." "The Indian and Inuit People," as President Andrew Delisle reminded readers, "have never surrendered, ceded, or relinquished their lands- and never will." This assertion to indigeneity differentiated First Nations from all other citizens, immigrants included. Moreover, IQA's understanding of politics was distinctly intergenerational and territorial. As the report stated very clearly, "Our history and our allegiance is to this Land-and to no other. Today we still live in this land that belonged to our forefathers-that still belongs to us-and we will pass this Land on to our children and our children yet unborn."[39] Related to the rise of Francophone neo-nationalism, as well as consultations at the federal level in the lead up to the White Paper, *Kahnawakero:non* mobilized around the inter-national Indigenous identity, as part of and at the head of pan-Indian organizations.[40]

More specifically, the Indians of Quebec Association was an affiliate of the National Indian Brotherhood, the precursor to the Assembly of First Nations. In the aftermath of Pierre Trudeau's White Paper, published in 1969, provincial and territorial organizations came together under the fledgling organization.[41] Shocked and betrayed by its heavy-handedness, First Nations men and women outright rejected the White Paper, that is, the termination of the legal distinction between Indigenous and non-Indigenous

[39] Indians of Quebec Association, *Our Land, Our People, our Future* (Caughnawaga: Indians of Quebec Association, 1974), 5.
[40] For Red Power proponent George Manuel, describing the lead up to the White Paper, "The greatest single value that the meetings of the National Indian Advisory Council offered was that the Indian leadership from all across Canada got to know one another, and to discover where our common interest lay," a trend that, as we will see, carried over into women's activism. Manuel and Posluns, *The Fourth World*, 165.
[41] Cardinal, *The Unjust Society*, 94.

peoples, the repeal the *Indian Act*, and the subjection of reserves to provincial laws.[42] When addressing Canadian students, Kahn-Tineta Horn, for instance, expressed her outrage at the Liberal programme, proclaiming: "Why don't you all go back where you came from. We were doing fine before you came. We own the land; we're your landlords. And the rent is due."[43] On the national level, Harold Cardinal, the NIB's president, was perhaps the most well known advocate, as one of the authors of *Citizens Plus*, known as the "Red Paper."[44] Cardinal also wrote *The Unjust Society* in 1969, a Red Power classic offering the Canadian public a critical view past the "buckskin curtain" dividing Indigenous and Euro-Canadian societies. The book, more of a semi-autobiographical political tract, offered a three-pronged solution to the issues facing First Nation communities: "the development of a strong Indian leadership, the implementation of the total spectrum of education, and the creation of a strong economic base."[45] These three goals along with the Red Paper served as a counter-point to the assimilationist politics of the era, or an Indigenous version of Trudeau's "Just Society." By assuming control of community institutions and taking them in a new direction, Red Power proponents therefore created links across national lines as well as spearheaded a cultural and political renaissance**.**

Whereas *Kahnawakero:non* always resisted Euro-Canadian encroachment, the internationalist and anti-colonial rhetoric of the 1960s allowed them to inscribe their experiences within a larger narrative. In other words, activists may have looked to the

[42] Dickason, *A Concise History of Canada's First Nations*, 377.
[43] Palmer, *Canada's 1960s*, 401.
[44] Dickason, *A Concise History of Canada's First Nations*, 379; Indian Chiefs of Alberta, *Citizens Plus*. A Presentation by the Indian Chiefs of Alberta to Right Honourable P.E. Trudeau, Prime Minister and Government of Canada (Edmonton, Alberta: Indian Association of Alberta, 1970).
[45] Cardinal, *The Unjust Society*, 1, 56.

traditions of their ancestors, but they were also profoundly anchored in the present and willing to take a more confrontational stance, fitting for the times.[46] The issues, however, remained more or less the same. In December of 1968, for example, hundreds of Mohawk people, from both Akwesasne and Kahnawake, blocked the International Bridge at Cornwall in order to protest duties levied on items worth over five dollars. Like the 1929 debacle, the customs were an affront to *Akwesasnero:non* nationhood, as they reinforced the role of two foreign governments in the frontier community. In response to the blockade, led primarily by women and teenagers, the RCMP arrested 41 people, including Kahn-Tineta Horn.[47] The Red power leader, by this time a well-known spokeswoman, was charged with concealing an "offensive weapon." Although she was later acquitted, the young woman used the opportunity to promote the cause. During the trial coverage, the defendants' lawyer referenced the Jay Treaty, in front of both a White and Indigenous audience. Indeed, Six Nations chiefs, clan mothers and family members as well as representatives from Cree, Blackfeet, Micmac nations were in attendance.[48] However, Euro-Canadian media made other references to Kahn-Tineta Horn, commenting on her "pretty, mini-skirted," "attractive," "curvaceous," and "beautiful" appearance. While Horn herself professed negative feelings towards "women's liberation," as reported in *Akwesasne Notes*, the former fashion model, despite strong political views, was frequently dubbed an "Indian Princess."[49] In other words, the dichotomous image of Indigenous womanhood –princess or squaw- was alive and well.[50]

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[46] *Ibid*., 400.
[47] Palmer, *Canada's 1960s*, 401.
[48] Eleanor Dumas, "Decisions Reserved by Judge in Blockade Trial of Indians," *Watertown Daily Times*, 27 March 1960. Reprinted in *Akwesasne Notes*, April 1969, 2; "Indians, English Customs Appear in Blockade Trial," *Akwesasne Notes*, April 1969, 2.
[49] Peter Gzowski, "Portrait of a Beautiful Segregationist," *Maclean's Magazine*, 2 May 1964. In *Iroquois Women: An Anthology*, ed. Wm. Guy Spitall (Ohswekan, Ontario: Iroqrafts, 1990), 172; "Mohawk Blazes

Kahn-Tineta Horn, however, managed to enter the public debate in a manner that contradicted the notion that Indigenous women were princesses, squaws, or victims. In an interview with *MacLean's Magazine*, Horn asserted an oppositional identity, claiming that Mohawk women were superior to White women: "I'm sorry if this upsets some people…I just happen to be able to judge the women I meet in the world –in New York, on reserves, in television, magazines, businesses –and the women of my reserve, for example, impress me as being mentally superior and physically as having fewer aches and pains and more energy. I just happen to believe that Indian women have a higher standard of intelligence than other women."[51] The Haudenosaunee leader's motivations were context-specific, and coming out of a particular historical moment. As Kahn-Tineta Horn stated in the same interview, "The only kind of integration we can accept is an integration that means freedom to live, breathe, move, develop our culture within the framework of the whole community. We can't accept integration if it means that all Indians become white, or all whites can become Indians."[52] Therefore, Horn put forth a discourse of group persistence where Indigenous peoples sought equality vis-à-vis non-Indigenous citizens. Rather than viewing these demands as part of larger dynamic, however, the federal government turned a deaf ear to community leaders who wanted "to re-write the *Indian Act* as they see fit." Moreover, it looked fearfully south where, as

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Trail," *The Globe and Mail*, 20 May 1960. Reprinted in *Awesasne Notes*, May 1969, 6; "Militant Indians Seek Red Power in Canada," *The Flint Journal*, 16 July 1969, 14. Reprinted in *Akwesasne Notes*, June 1969; "'I believe in Apartheid,' says spokeswoman," *The Gazette*, 4 June 1971. Reprinted in *Akwesasne Notes*, June 1971, 41.

[50] Victoria Freeman, "Attitudes toward 'Miscegenation' in Canada, the United States, New Zealand, and Australia, 1860-1914," In *Finding a Way to the Heart: Feminist Writings on Aboriginal and Women's History in Canada*, eds. Robin Jarvis Brownlie and Valerie Korinek (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2012), 209.

[51] Peter Gzowski, "Portrait of a Beautiful Segregationist," *Maclean's Magazine*, 2 May 1964. In *Iroquois Women: An Anthology*, ed. Wm. Guy Spitall (Ohswekan, Ontario: Iroqrafts, 1990), 172.

[52] *Ibid*., 173.

reported in *Akwesasne Notes*, "Some Ottawa politicians who see what Black Power has done in the US are worried." Pointing to both the strength of the Red Power movement in the 1960s and early 1970s, as well as Horn's personality, the same article reminded its readers that, "If Ottawa doesn't accede, some fear a new crop of Indian militants might emerge that will make Kahn-Tineta Horn look like a Girl Scout."[53]

II. Gendered Citizenship

In parallel to these developments, the Liberal government in Ottawa set up the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW) in 1967. After years of lobbying by the Committee for Women's Equality, the socio-economic status of Canadian women finally commanded the country's attention.[54] In total, Indigenous women presented nine briefs, detailing, for the first time, "the extent of the discrimination" they faced.[55] In 1968, Mary Two-Axe Earley, on the part of thirty other Mohawk women, and encouraged by the Fédération des femmes du Québec's Thérèse Casgrain, made the consequences of article 12(1)(b) known to broader Canadian society.[56] Through the RCSW, Indigenous communities were able to stake a claim on women's rights, fostering a more public voice and reaching out to non-Native activists. For example, McGill University students hosted a teach-in on Indigenous women's issues shortly after Two-Axe Earley's submission, and community leaders became more familiar with their Euro-Canadian counterparts once

[53] "Militant Indians Seek Red Power in Canada," *The Flint Journal*, 6 July 1969, 14. Reprinted in *Akwesasne Notes*, June 1969.
[54] Joan Sangster, "Words of Experience/Experiencing Words: Reading Working Women's Letters to Canada's Royal Commission on the Status of Women," In *Through Feminist Eyes: Essays on Canadian Women's History* (Edmonton: Athabasca Press, 2011), 359.
[55] Kathleen Jamieson, "Multiple Jeopardy: The Evolution of a Native Women's Movement," *Atlantis: a Women's Studies Journal* 4, 2 (1979): 157-178, 164.
[56] Mary Two-Axe Earley, "A Brief to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women," (s.l: s.n., 1968).

feminist-inspired gatherings flourished across the country.[57] As Alice Steinhauer, reporting on a meeting she attended in 1967 with other women from the Voice of Alberta Native Women's Society, stated, "When the convention finished we realized that even white women had their problems, and here I used to think they didn't."[58] These comments were made at the 1971 First National Native Women's Conference, exemplifying the extent and diversity of women's organizing in Canada.

Born in Kahnawake in 1911, Mary Two-Axe Earley was one of the foremost defenders of non-status people, becoming, in the words of political scientist Judith Aks, "a national symbol for the plight of Indigenous women."[59] Two-Axe Earley, a Mohawk who married an Irish-American in 1938, moved to Brooklyn then, once her husband passed away, attempted to return to her birthplace, but was blocked by the *Indian Act*'s provisions.[60] The woman activist's own experiences, as well as those of her friends, led her to challenge the discriminatory legislation. Thus, the issue of legislative sexism was most important to those whose lives were directly affected by it.[61] In 1969, Two-Axe Earley co-founded Equal Rights for Indian Women, the first organization dedicated to the repeal of 12(1)(b). Then in 1973, the National Organization of Indian Rights for Indian Women (IRIW), of which Two-Axe Earley was the eastern vice-president, was

[57] "Women Go to War on Indian Laws," *Montreal Star*, 3 February 1970. Reprinted in *Akwesasne Notes*, April 1970, 47.
[58] *Report of the First National Native Women's Conference*. McDonald Hotel, Edmonton, Alberta, March 22-23, 1971 (Edmonton: N.P., 1971), 21.
[59] Judith Aks, *Women's Rights in Native in North America: Legal Mobilization in the United States and Canada* (New York: LFB Scholarly Publishing, 2004), 73.
[60] Simpson, "To the Reserve and Back Again," 97.
[61] Joyce Green, "Interview with Colleen Glen: A Metis Feminist in Indian Rights for Indian Women, 1973-1979," In *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, ed. Joyce Greene (Black Point, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing, 2007), 234.

established in Edmonton.[62] Pointing to the inequalities embedded in state practices, the IRIW had to raise money through bake sales in order to participate in legislative change. In contrast, the National Indian Brotherhood received at least a modicum of funding from the federal government.[63] The legal argument, however, enabled Mary Two-Axe Earley to foster ties with Euro-Canadian women's groups. In fact, since the late 1960s, the Mohawk woman had close ties to the Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ) and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.[64] Still, as Barbara Freeman explains, "the few relevant recommendations made (about Native women during the RCSW) were integrated into other chapters which primarily concerned White women."[65] Legal inequality then, was far from the only challenge facing Indigenous women.

Although overlapping with the RCSW and the FFQ, Indigenous women's organizing took on a distinct character, evolving, in the words of Kathleen Jamieson, "as a separate phenomenon."[66] The proceedings of the First Alberta Native Women's Conference, the precursor to the Native Women's Association of Canada, provide ample evidence of this reality. As Mary Ann Lavallée, the keynote speaker at the 1968 Edmonton gathering, and author of a RCSW brief, stated, "Of all the people in this vast country, no one has been more downtrodden, has been more overlooked and by-passed, has been more maligned than the Indian woman who is continuously classed as an object

[62] Mary Two-Axe Earley, "Indian Rights for Indian Women," In *Women, Feminism, and Development*, eds. Huguette Dagenais and Denise Piché (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University, 1994), 430.
[63] Joyce Green, "Introduction: Indigenous Feminism: From Symposium to Book," In *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, ed. Joyce Green (Black Point, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing, 2007), 28.
[64] In an interview with the author, Ghislaine Patry-Buisson, former FFQ president, confirmed that Mary Two-Axe Earley had ties with the FFQ from the late 1960s onwards. For the NAC, see Mary Jo Nadeau, "The Making and Unmaking of a 'Parliament of Women': Nation, Race and the Politics of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (1972-1992)" (PhD Dissertation, York University, 2005), 249.
[65] Barbara Freeman, "Same/Difference: The Media, Equal Rights, and Aboriginal Women in Canada, 1968," *Canadian Journal of Women's Studies* 18, 1 (1998): 87-115, 103.
[66] Jamieson, "Multiple Jeopardy: The Evolution of a Native Women's Movement," 157-178.

of scorn by modern society, who is contemptuously referred to as 'squaw,' and who is considered 'easy to get' by white men." This was not the "whole story," however. As Lavallée continued, "We known that the Indian woman is kind and gentle. We know that Indian woman is brave and courageous –she has to be to survive and keep her sanity. We know that Indian woman is capable of great pride, wisdom, and unswerving loyalty to her man and to her people. But in today's fast modern world these qualities are not enough." Therefore, Lavallée and her counterparts proposed a reinvigorated sense of cultural pride and political action in order to move forward, referring to the renaissance inspiring communities across the country. The 1968 gathering, for example, was a "totally native endeavour." Delegates discussed matters relating to poverty, education, housing, and self-government, in addition to women's issues, like sexism in the workplace or domestic abuse.[67] By the late 1960s then, Indigenous organizing extended beyond, significantly, issues that could be construed as strictly women's or legal concerns.

This multi-front activism carried over to the 1971 First National Native Women's Conference, convened in the same city. The themes were similar to those of the previous gathering, except this time, attendees came from every province and territory to discuss the possibly of founding a national women's organization.[68] Indeed, the event was momentous, reinforcing affective ties between women. As Alice Steinhauer, the founder of the Voice of Alberta Women's Society, stated, "It really makes me feel wonderful to see so many women from all different parts of Canada. I never thought this would ever

[67] *Report of the First Alberta Native Women's Conference*. Theme: "Past, Present, and Future." Mayfair Hotel, Edmonton, Alberta. March 12-15, 1968 (Edmonton: N.P., 1968).
[68] The planning committee was interprovincial, even if Albertans and, to a lesser extent, British Columbians were over-represented. See *Report of the First National Native Women's Conference*. MacDonald Hotel, Edmonton, Alberta. March 22- 23, 1971 (Edmonton: N.P., 1971), i, ii, iii.

come true…but ideas like this do become realities."[69] Quebec's delegate, Eileen Marquis from Kahnawake, was very much in favour of a pan-Canadian umbrella group, "as it would be a stronger voice in solving the native people's problems across the country." She referred to the Equal Rights for Indian Women, remarking that "they would be very interested" in forming a special committee to address the issue nationally. At this time, the group numbered 140 members, all dealing with the negative consequences of exogamy.[70] Marquis also reported that her counterparts were especially concerned with the discrimination faced by children in the school system, economic development and the accompanying fear of "white intruders."[71] Along the same lines, she commented on the increasing presence of White women or, as she put it, "eventually there will be more 'white squaws' than Indians on the reserves."[72] In the wake of the White Paper, Marquis evoked her community's fear of "being transferred over to the provincial government." In the same breadth, this representative mentioned that "the Indians in the northern part of Quebec speak French and we cannot communicate with each other."[73] Perhaps for this reason, the Mohawk woman was the only woman from the province on the conference's planning committee, hinting at the marginalization of French-speaking women from pan-Canadian associations and the difficulty, at least initially, of organizing at the provincial level.[74]

The First National Native Women's Conference was a mixed space, that is, the gathering was open to men. Various politicians participated in the opening addresses and

[69] *Ibid*., 21.
[70] *Ibid*., 41.
[71] *Ibid*., 16.
[72] *Ibid*., 16.
[73] *Ibid*., 41.
[74] *Ibid*., ii.

Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau sent a telegram (ironically), wishing attendees "a stimulating and productive conference."[75] However, the largest platform was given to George Manuel, the president of the National Indian Brotherhood at the time. During the banquet, Manuel affirmed, somewhat paternalistically, the need to create an Indigenous women's organization, stating: "They say 'behind every great man is a woman.' I am glad that the women have decided to come from behind us 'great' men and become 'great' themselves, because I think that the native women in Canada, whether they are Métis or Indian or Eskimo, have been exposed to the hardships of life to a greater degree than any other people in Canada, including our men."[76] In other words, Indigenous women did not operate in opposition to their male counterparts, as evidenced by the presence of Manuel. Instead, they were primarily concerned with overcoming the paternalism of the federal government. As Rose Yellowfeet put it, "The way I see it, for years Indian Affairs were our Great White Fathers. They did all the planning; they did everything for us…We were never given the privilege of doing things for ourselves…"[77] There was still a sense that Indigenous women had to "catch-up" to their male counterparts, or, in the words of First National Native Women's Conference attendee Flora Mike from Saskatchewan, "We, too, must be organized provincially and nationally so that we too will enjoy the same recognition." Even though women partook in NIB gatherings, for example, a women's organization would enable women to create a partnership, with the goal, as Mike said, "to take one step forward and walk beside our men."[78] In short, women leaders organized across national lines by the late 1960s, in

[75] *Ibid*., 9.
[76] *Ibid*., Appendix III, i.
[77] *Ibid*., 7.
[78] *Ibid*., 30.

order to discuss socio-economic disparities facing their communities as well as reclaim their place within the polity.

Women initially turned to the Canadian state to rectify the *Indian Act*'s discrepancies. In 1970, "as Indian and women's consciousness rapidly expanded," as Kathleen Jamieson explains, "Jeanette Lavell, from Wikwemikong, Ontario, decided to contest section 12(1)(b)," "on the grounds that it discriminated against women on the basis of race and sex and thus contravened the *Canadian Bill of Rights*."[79] Although the push to eliminate section 12(1)(b) was always conceived as a battle against the federal government and not in opposition to other Indigenous groups, as the Yellowfeet's and Mike's comments indicated, the turn to legislative recourse on the part of some women still resulted in a political rupture between Red Power leaders. For Harold Cardinal, if the *Bill of Rights* was to reign supreme over the *Indian Act*, "that decision would wipe out the Indian Act and remove whatever legal basis we had for our treaties." In this view, the *Indian Act*, even if paternalistic, at the least recognized the special status of Indigenous peoples within the Canadian colonial framework. Another concern expressed on the part of male leaders concerned the question of property rights because Indigenous men (and women) were fearful that White men, through marriage, would be able to gain ownership of Indian land. The Indian Association of Alberta, joined shortly thereafter by the Indians of Quebec Association, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians and eventually the National Indian Brotherhood, challenged Lavell. Cardinal called the emotional fallout, degree of internal dissension, and external reprobation, from the feminist movement and traditional White supporters, among others, "one hell of a mess to get into," one which

[79] Jamieson, "Multiple Jeopardy: The Evolution of a Native Women's Movement," 166.

"the government was extremely happy to see unfold."[80] Despite male disapproval, however, Six Nations' Yvonne Bédard followed Lavell's lead, but ultimately in 1973 the Supreme Court ruled against the two non-status women, foreclosing any possibility of legal redress and maintaining women's "colonial disempowerment."[81] Thus in 1975, Mary Two-Axe Earley and sixty other women from Kahnawake attempted to expose the *Indian Act*'s gender-based discrimination on the world stage, attending the International Women's Year UN World Conference on Women in Mexico City.[82]

The Kahnawake attendees managed to attract international attention to the discrimination they faced at home, even if the United Nations conference was criticized for not paying enough attention to racism, imperialism, and colonialism and Indigenous delegates experienced difficulty getting their voices heard within official delegations. Furthermore, several women, including participants from Cuba and Mexico, made statements of support in order to condemn the plight of Native Americans more broadly.[83] Significantly, Indigenous women had a divergent "global politics," to borrow Shirley Lightfoot's term, than their White counterparts.[84] In the FFQ's *Bulletin*, Ghislaine Patry-Buisson, the Fédération's president at the time, portrayed the dual tendencies present at

[80] Harold Cardinal, "Indian Women and the Indian Act," In *Two Nations, Many Cultures: Ethnic Groups in Canada*, ed. Jean Leonard Elliot (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall of Canada, Limited, 1979), 44-50. It is also important to note that the NIB's study team proposed alternative solutions. As Cardinal outlines, "In a non-Indian-Indian marriage, the couple would not be allowed to remain on the reserve while married, but the Indian spouse would be permitted to return to the reserve if the non-Indian spouse died, or if they were divorced." In the case of a "inter-tribal marriages": "the new provisions would provide equality and a free choice: both the man and the woman would retain their tribal memberships, and the children would have the option of choosing which tribe to belong to when they reached the age of twenty."

[81] Bonita Lawrence and Kim Anderson, "Introduction to 'Indigenous Women: The State of our Nations,'" *Atlantis* 29, 2 (2005): 1-8, 2.

[82] For the attention Canada's mistreatment of Indigenous populations garnered, see, for example: James Wilson, *Canada's Indians* (London: Minority Rights Group. First published, August 1974; new edition, March 1977, revised edition, March 1982).

[83] "Native American Women Denied Voice At International Women's Year Conference," *Akwesasne Notes*, Early Winter 1975, 33.

[84] For more on this concept see, Sheryl Lightfoot, "Indigenous Global Politics" (PhD Dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2009), 66.

the gathering where women from the "Global North" prioritized access to abortion, equal pay for equal work, state-funded day care, in contrast to their "Southern" and, in particular, Latin American counterparts who insisted on discussing literacy, agricultural work, and American imperialism. In light of these divergences, Patry-Buisson recounted that, "Un bon nombre de femmes de pays mieux nanties ressentaient un profonde malaise. Nous étions gênées. Le silence des Canadiennes ressemblait peut-être à certaine décence. Nous avons tout de même attiré l'attention des congressistes sur le cas des Indiennes mariées à des non-Indiens et qui pour cette raison sont chassées de la réserve de Caughnawaga." [85] In fact, Ghislaine Patry-Buisson introduced Two-Axe Earley in Mexico, and described the incredibly supportive response on the part of Latin American delegates to her speech.[86] By speaking independently then, Kahnawake Mohawks not only called into question, even if indirectly, the "global feminism" of White Canadians and Quebecers but also the homogenizing tenets of the nation-state. In other words, Mohawk women spoke for themselves on the international stage. The latter, as Allan Downey demonstrates in his research on the *Iroquois Nationals* lacrosse team, was an inherently subversive act.[87]

Through international engagement, Red Power proponents offered an alternative conception of citizenship, bringing to the world stage the culmination of the ideas and actions being taken on the ground.[88] The political vision espoused by some leaders, at least in the case of George Manuel, a one-time NIB president, was an empowering, even

[85] Ghislaine Patry-Buisson, "Mexico: La grande rencontre des discriminées et des sur-discriminées," *Bulletin de la FFQ*, November 1975, 4.
[86] Interview with Ghislaine-Patry Buisson.
[87] For more on this concept see Allan Downey's analysis of the Iroquois Nationals lacrosse team and their decision to travel internationally on a Haudenosaunee passport. "Engendering Nationality: Haudenosaunee Tradition, Sport and the Lines of Gender," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 23, 1 (2012): 319-354.
[88] Lightfoot, "Indigenous Global Politics," 66.

if debilitated, version of the "Fourth World," as per the title of his book.[89] In this regard, Indigenous notions of sovereignty resembled Black Power, an internationalist ideology embraced by African descended peoples across North America.[90] In *Akwesasne Notes*, journalists frequently claimed that, "Black and Indigenous peoples shared a common history of exploitation in North America."[91] As we will see in Chapter 3, *Uhruru*, a Montreal-based Black Power newspaper, criticized the unjust treatment of Japanese, First Nations, and Black Canadians.[92] In this age of decolonization, moreover, both peoples were inspired by ideas emanating from Tanzania. In fact, a Tanzanian diplomat, evoking the notion of the "Third World," told George Manuel that "When Native peoples come into their own, on the basis of their own cultures and traditions that will be the Fourth World," and Dorothy Wills, a prominent member of the English-speaking Black community, was a proponent of Julius Nyerere's African Socialism, a philosophy emphasizing familyhood and communalism.[93] Nyerere conceived *Ujamaa* as a postcolonial development strategy, as path to social equity, distributive justice, and self-reliance.[94] In some cases, these rhetorical linkages translated into tangible connections. For example, the Congress of Black Women of Canada reached out to Indigenous women in 1974 and, in the early 1980s, Wills led workshops with Indigenous and Black youth

[89] *Ibid*., 5-6, 11.
[90] According to Harold Cardinal, "There have been sporadic indications of the growth of a red powerfaction in Canada, paralleling to a degree the rise of Black power in the United States." Cardinal, *The Unjust Society*, 30.
[91] Scott Rutherford, "Canada's Other Red Scare: Rights, Decolonization, and Indigenous Political Protest in the Global Sixties" (PhD Dissertation, Queen's University, 2011), 113. See, for example, "Indian Rebirth," *The Black Panther Party*, 25 May 1969. Reprinted in *Awesasne Notes*, July 1969, 38.
[92] "Canadian Liberalism: Fact or Fiction?," *Expression*, Winter 1968, Special Conference Issue, 3-6.
[93] Manuel, *The Fourth World*, 236.
[94] Bonny Ibhawoh and J.I. Dibua, "Deconstructing Ujamaa : The Legacy of Julius Nyerere in the Quest for Social and Economic Development in Africa." *African Association of Political Science* 8,1 (2003) : 59-83.

across Canada and in Kahnawake.[95] Similarly, Abenaki Évelyn O'Bomsawin, a future Quebec Native Women's Association president, recalled leaving Odanak to work in a factory near Montreal during World War II. Speaking about her experiences with discrimination, she mentioned the support networks to which she belonged alongside other racialized women, especially Black women.[96] Shared notions of community control and social locations then, led to cross-cultural solidarities; because Indigenous peoples, like African-Canadians lived in "enclaves" within an already-established, colonial nation-state, independence could not be achieved in the traditional sense, by pushing out the colonizers or taking control of the territory's most important institutions. Therefore, Indigenous and Pan Africanist definitions of self-determination –though not identical – shared similar ideological underpinnings, especially in the 1970s.

When in Mexico City, however, the band council served the women with eviction notices. The order was eventually withdrawn once Two-Axe Earley used the Mexico conference to attract national and international attention to their plight.[97] In response to their request, the Fédération des femmes du Québec resolved to lend its support to non-status women. In a gesture of "solidarity," the FFQ pressured the various levels of government to amend the *Indian Act*. To this end, members sent the resolutions to the National Action Committee on the Status of Women as well as the Ministry of Indian

[95] Jennifer Mills, "Conferencing as a Site for the Mobilization of Black Feminist Identities in the Congress of Black Women of Canada," *Journal of Black Studies* (2015): 1-17, 15; Gilbert Daye, Letter to Dorothy Wills, September 18th, 1978. Found in LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 7, File: 7-27: "Fantastic Fort-Scenic" Lake Fletcher, Nova Scotia, presentation to Black and Native Students of Dalhousie University October 9th, 1978; "Memo". Found in LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 4, File: Kahanawake- Preparation and delivery of a Special Care Certificate Program for the Mohawks, 1984-1988.

[96] *Artisans de notre histoire: Évelyn O'Bomsawin,* DVD. Directed by Pierre Lacombe. Montréal: Ciné Fête, 2002.

[97] "Mary Two-Axe Earley –Footprints," http://www.ammsa.com/content/mary-two-axe-earley-footprints. Accessed on 10 December 2015.

Affairs.[98] Indeed, the Fédération's dedication to reformist, anti-discrimination measures at the state level opened up room for contact between Indigenous and non-Indigenous women.[99] Moreover, the FFQ provided non-status women with a powerful political network, fostering a basis for strategic linkages. In a documentary, Évelyn O'Bomsawin, the Quebec Native Women's Associations's president from 1977-1983, recounted how the FFQ's president, Sheila Finestone, made a series of phone calls to successfully halt the forced eviction of a non-status woman from Pointe-Bleue.[100] Thus, in 1978, the QNWA, established in 1974, officially became affiliated with the FFQ.[101] Relations seemed warm. In a letter to the Fédération, for instance, Marthe Gil-Dufour from Pointe-Bleue, remarked that she was "touched" by the welcome she received at the 1980 General Assembly, thanking the FFQ for its support. Gil-Dufour hoped to see an Indigenous woman preside over the organization, writing "j'ai la ferme conviction que la femme Amérindienne doit aussi avoir sa place au soleil." With the sign off "Autochtonement votre," Marthe Gil-Dufour's letter indicated the simultaneously tenuous, conditional yet genuine cross-cultural linkages between some Indigenous and Euro-Canadian women.[102] However, the Quebec Native Women's Association, unlike the FFQ, which has never had an Indigenous president, inscribed the debate over membership into the larger question of self-determination. There were a number of significant differences between the two organizations, especially vis-à-vis the state. The ideological underpinnings of the Quebec Native Women's Association will be further explored in the next section.

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[98] "Dossier Congres: Les résolutions présentées en Assemblée Générale," *Bulletin de la FFQ*, September 1975, 19.
[99] See, for example, Sheila Finestone, "Une journée à la Commission des droits à la personne," *Bulletin de la FFQ*, April-May 1978, 8-13.
[100] *Artisans de notre histoire: Évelyn O'Bomsawin,* DVD. Directed by Pierre Lacombe. Montréal: Ciné Fête, 2002.
[101] "Associations," *Bulletin de la FFQ*, June 1978, 39.
[102] "Lettre. Pointe-Bleue, le 15 mai 1980," *Bulletin de la FFQ*, July 1980, 5.

Although Mary Two-Axe Earley's resistance against the *Indian Act* could be interpreted as gendered anti-colonialism, some members of the community, both men and women, saw non-status women's actions as a direct threat to self-determination.[103] Case in point, Kahn-Tineta Horn's views on Mohawk sovereignty extended to article 12(1)(b), where she vehemently opposed the elimination of this clause.[104] During discussions on marriage, Horn expressed concern over the availability of housing in the community, as survival was linked to living conditions. On this point, Eileen Marquis, the editor of *Kahnawake News* and Quebec's delegate to the First National Native Women's Conference agreed with her.[105] Pointing to the similar issues motivating malestream and women's activism, the National Indian Brotherhood declared the management and quality of housing on reserves "an unwarranted national disgrace."[106] The statistics did not lie. By the 1970s, First Nations communities across the country needed at least 15,000 new homes. Out of the existing lodgings, there were 31 percent with running water, 24 percent with indoor toilets, and 25 percent with telephones. This situation contrasted with 98 percent of houses with electricity; 97.4 percent with running water; 96.1 percent with indoor toilets; 93.3 percent with indoor baths and 94.3 percent with telephones in Euro-Canada.[107] There were, to say the least, a range of issues at play and diversity of perspectives professed by Indigenous women.[108] As George Manuel wrote in his seminal

[103] Lawrence and Anderson, "Introduction to 'Indigenous Women: The State of our Nations," 2.
[104] Anderson and Robertson, *Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers*, 211; "'I believe in Apartheid' says spokeswoman," *The Gazette*, June 4 1971. Reprinted in *Akwesasne Notes*, June 1971, 41.
[105] "Kahn-Tineta Wants her Sister Evicted," *Globe and Mail*, 31 August 1971. Reprinted in *Akwesasne Notes*, September 1971, 38.
[106] NIB, *Declaration on Indian Housing Policy Paper* (Ottawa: National Indian Brotherhood, 1974), 8, 1.
[107] NIB, *Statement on Economic Development of Indian Communities*. Prepared for the Western-Federal-Provincial Conference on Economic Opportunities, 24-25 July 1973, Calgary, Alberta (Ottawa: National Indian Brotherhood, 1973), 4-7.
[108] Greene, "Taking Account of Aboriginal Feminism," 28. For example, a group of treaty women from Alberta activity opposed any changes to the *Indian Act.*

book, *The Fourth World*, "We cannot accept a position where the only safeguards we have had can be struck down by a court that has no authority to put something better in its place." Manuel acknowledged the matrilineal tradition of many First Nations. Still, the one-time president of the NIB believed that it was the responsibility of Indigenous communities to develop their own "immigration policy."[109] In short, opposition to amending the *Indian Act* was initially the consensus within the ranks of major, male-dominated organizations, the latter fearing the erosion of local control and self-sustainability.[110]

III. The Quebec Native Women's Association

Some First Nations women's organizations also advocated for self-determination, yet within a framework where non-status women were included in the political project.[111] The Association des Femmes Autochtones du Québec/Quebec Native Women's Association (QNWA), a multilingual organization established in 1974, was a case in point. As a branch of the Canadian Native Women's Association, the QNWA was active on all levels- local, regional, and provincial. It also worked in conjunction with Equal Rights for Indian Women, demonstrating the continuities within this form of women's activism.[112] The Association was unique on many fronts. In the first place, it was an autonomous organization, open only to women, because, according to one of its reports,

[109] Manuel, *The Fourth World*, 241.
[110] The extent to which Indigenous organizations were male-dominated remains to be seen. There may have been women in the rank-in-file. More research needs to be conducted on this question.
[111] Aks, *Women's Rights in Native North America*, 24; Jo-Anne Fiske, "Political Status of Native Indian Women: Contradictory Implications of Canadian State Policy," In *In the Days of Our Grandmothers: a Reader in Aboriginal Women's History in Canada*, eds. Mary-Ellen Kelm and Lorna Townsend (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 353.
[112] L'AFAQ, *Rapport final de la recherche socioculturelle présenté aux groupes l'AFAQ et DEFI* (N.P, Mars 1982).

"les besoins considérés comme primordiaux par les hommes et par les femmes sont très différentes."[113] Its membership consisted of activists both with and without status, First Nations and Métis and from all First Nations communities in Quebec. Mary Two-Axe Earley, for example, belonged to the organization.[114] In order to maximize participation, the association coordinated regular elections, ensuring that its echelons were representative of the province's population. In this regard, if the president was a status Indian, the vice-president would either not have status, or identify as Métis or Inuit, and vice-versa. And if the president favoured English, the vice-president would prefer French or the reverse.[115] In some cases, one woman would speak English, another would speak French, and the third an Indigenous language when travelling to communities across the province.[116] The diversity within its ranks, as well as the political experience on the part of its leadership, allowed the organization to focus on a wide range of issues. To this day, the QNWA is based in Kahnawake, underlining the integral role the community played in pan-Indigenous organizing and advocacy work.

More specifically, the Quebec Native Women's Association lobbied the federal government to eliminate section 12(1)(b), as well as tackled disparities relating to education, health, economic development, and social services. In the first place, the QNWA focused on public education matters, vis-à-vis the *Indian Act* in particular. In general, however, Margaret Pichovich, the organization's first president, realized through her work with the Alliance Laurentienne des Métis and Equal Rights for Indian Women

[113] Thérèse Lagacé, *Historique de l'Association des Femmes Autochtones du Québec, 1974-1980* (Quebec City: A.F.A.Q., 1980), 3.
[114] *Ibid*., 2, 10.
[115] *Ibid*., 6.
[116] Judy Rebick, *Ten Thousand Roses: The Making of a Feminist Revolution* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2005), 110.

that Indigenous women in Quebec, especially those, presumably, who favoured French, were under-represented and woefully uninformed with regards to the activities of the various organizations across the country.[117] In order to overcome the lack of available information, specifically on judicial questions, the Quebec Native Women's Association spearheaded a study in 1976, entitled *Réveille-toi Femme Autochtone/Wake Up Native Woman!* The project coordinators interviewed 369 women and 66 men, from every community in the province, finding that there was a "very real" lack of information regarding the consequences of the *Indian Act*. Among the people who were better informed, 90 percent disagreed with many of the legislation's provisions. In attempt to publicize the results, the QNWA sent the report to both the National Indian Brotherhood, who found the document extremely "constructive" and "useful," as well as the Conseil du statut de la femme, highlighting the important, and hitherto unaccomplished, groundwork undertaken by the women's group.[118]

Though far from its only concern, the tensions stemming from exogamy were tackled at each of the Quebec Native Women's Association's annual meetings.[119] In 1976, for example, the QNWA declared its support of Cecilia Charles from Kahnawake, facing eviction as a non-status woman. In fact, in an attempt to halt forced removals, the Quebec Native Women's Association once again teamed up with the Fédération des femmes du Québec.[120] There were, however, substantial differences between the two organizations. For instance, the Quebec Native Women's Association –not unlike the Congress of Black Women, as we will see in the next chapter, -exhibited extreme mistrust

[117] Lagacé, *Historique de l'Association des Femmes Autochtones du Québec*, 2.
[118] *Ibid.*, 56.
[119] *Ibid.*, 57.
[120] *Ibid*., 58.

towards social services. In 1977, the QNWA conducted a study on out-adoption, submitting a report to the provincial government two years later. Therein, they described how Indigenous children were placed among White families in very large numbers, with little consideration for their cultural identity.[121] In this context, child services, according to historian Karen Dubinsky, were perceived as another "instrument of colonization" by the 1960s, where *Akwesasne Notes*, for example, referred to the tendency as "social genocide."[122] In response to this situation, the QNWA recommended that the money otherwise given to foster families be given to birth mothers. Moreover, the organization proposed that all efforts should be geared towards finding Indigenous adoptive families as well as training social workers to find culturally appropriate, alternative solutions to the dubious factors that led to intergroup adoption.[123] In one case, a woman from Mantouane signed away custody of her sick child, though she could read neither English nor French.[124] Significantly, the Quebec Native Women's Associations sought to remain in close contact with the Ministries of Justice and Social Affairs on this dossier.[125] Thus, the QNWQ, as the best positioned to tackle the complex questions facing Indigenous women, put forth a highly critical analysis of the racial biases embedded in state structures, over and above the *Indian Act*.

[121] Randi Cull, "Aboriginal Mothering under the State's Gaze," In *"Until our Hearts are on the Ground": Aboriginal Mothering, Oppression, Resistance and Rebirth*, eds. D. Memee Lavell-Harvard and Jeannette Corbiere Lavell (Toronto: Demeter Press, 2006), 144-146; L'AFAQ, *Primauté de l'intérêt de l'enfant*: *adoption.* Mémoire déposé à la Commission parlementaire permanente de la justice sur la réforme du droit de la famille (S.l., L'Association, 1979).
[122] Karen Dubinsky, *Babies without Borders: Adoption and Migration across the Americas* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 79; "The Latest in the 'Social Genocide' Field. Adoption of Indians Children by White Families," *Akwesasne Notes*, Early Autumn, 1972, 31.
[123] L'AFAQ, *Primauté de l'intérêt de l'enfant*: *adoption.*
[124] Lagacé, *Historique de l'Association des Femmes Autochtones du Québec*, 87.
[125] L'AFAQ, *Primauté de l'intérêt de l'enfant*: *adoption.*

The Quebec Native Women's Association conducted a study on health care matters, in partnership with Equal Rights for Indian Women. Though disparities in medical care between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Quebecers were most pronounced in the northern part of the province, even on the periphery of Montreal, incidents of poor service and racism were noted. In one instance, a nurse refused to assist an allophone patient, claiming a language barrier. After waiting eight hours, the woman's husband finally approached the hospital staffer, only to get the response: "Comment voulez-vous qu'on la soigne, on ne sait même pas ce qu'elle veut dire!" Indeed, the lack of medical personnel on the reserves, in particular, and the serious communication problems stemming from cultural and linguistic differences were criticized on many occasions. Near Quebec City, an elderly woman even lost her sight because she thought the medication she was given was for her eyes instead of her ears. Clearly, the doctor never took the time to explain to the Montagnais-speaker the contrary. This type of discrimination, here overt but in other cases probably more subtle, led the authors of one report to Canadian health minister to remind their readership that "the Aboriginal people is, unfortunately, not contagious!" stressing the importance of training and hiring of Indigenous medical staff.[126] On a similar note, the QNWA emphasized the immediate need to abolish involuntary sterilization, pointing to Indigenous and White women's divergent experiences with contraception and the health care system more generally.[127] In short, the medical establishment was racialized as well as gendered.

The Quebec Native Women's Association published a ground-breaking report on the socio-economic challenges facing Indigenous communities across the province, again

[126] L'AFAQ, *Mémoire présenté le 20 aout 1980 au ministère de la santé et du bien être Canada* (Montreal: L'Association, 1980), 1, 5, 10.
[127] Lagacé, *Historique de l'Association des Femmes Autochtones du Québec*, 75.

in conjunction with the Equal Rights for Indian Women. In January of 1979, the QNWA put together a committee, consisting of six women most of who were from the metropolitan Montreal area. In order to cut down on transportation costs, Kahnawake's Mary Two Axe-Earley, Gail Stacey-Moore, Josie Cohen, and Pearl Jacobs, as well as Évelyn O'Bomsawin, at the time living in Boucherville for employment purposes, and Nicole O'Bomsawin from Odanak, were made responsible for conceptualizing the project.[128] To this end, they met with Kathleen Jamieson, the author of *Indian Women and the Law in Canada: Citizens Minus*, published in 1978. From here, the team hired 45 women, ranging from 21 to 70 years old with a wide range of education levels, on a volunteer basis to collect and analyse the necessary data. The only qualification was to speak the appropriate local language, rather than belong to one of the two organizations. The study's goals were two-fold: on one hand, activists sought to determine the effects of women's loss of status and, on the other hand, the QNWA, in particular, took the opportunity to gather valuable information on women's cultural, economic, and social situation. The turnout was impressive. 1451 people filled out the questionnaire, 683 of which were non-status. But the results were worrisome, indicating the extent to which Indigenous peoples benefited from a significantly lower living standard than other Canadians and Quebecers. In the Cree, Montagnais, and Naskapis communities, for example, the housing crisis was striking, with 18 people living under one roof not unusual. As the report indicated, precisely because of the overall poor conditions and lack of job opportunities, a growing number of people decided to leave their homes to settle in bigger cities, namely Montreal and Quebec City. The issue of Indigenous people living

[128] *Artisans de notre histoire: Évelyn O'Bomsawin,* DVD. Directed by Pierre Lacombe. Montreal: Ciné Fête, 2002.

off the reserve only became more pressing by the 1980s, changing the focuses of women's activism.[129] Although both status and non-status women moved to urban centres, the latter left in larger numbers.[130]

The reasons behind out-migration were complex and linked to broader socio-economic problems. Women's loss of status only compounded existing structural issues, all the more pressing for those living in the "South," that is, closer to Euro-American cities, areas where, in the words of the QNWA's authors, "assimilation" was more advanced.[131] In the *Rapport final*, published in 1982, the Quebec Native Women's Association and the Equal Rights for Indian Women described the alienation women experienced in urban centres. Although they were excluded from band activities or associations, women frequently, in fact, returned to visit relatives and friends, highlighting the involuntary nature of living away from their communities. Out of the people surveyed by the two organizations, the vast majority listed family reasons, far above economic, as the reason why they wanted to return home. According to the QNWA and the IRIW, the exodus from the reserves was tied to the *Indian Act*, the latter threatening cultural survival. According to these two groups, mothers were best suited to ensure that children grew up in a culturally appropriate manner, thus the fact that some women were pushed off the reserves increased the odds of cultural "dilution." Following this logic, the discrimination embedded in article 12(1)(b), as outlined in the report, put the "the future of the Indian nation" at risk. The report also pointed to the role White

[129] See, for example, Nancy Janovicek, "'Assisting our own': Urban Migration, Self-Governance, and Native Women's Organization in Thunder Bay, Ontario, 1972-1989," *American Indian Quarterly* 27, 3 &4 (2003): 548-565; Heather Howard-Bobiwash, "Women's Class Strategies as Activism in Native Community Building in Toronto, 1950-1975," *American Indian Quarterly* 27, 3&4 (2003): 566-582.
[130] L'AFAQ, *Rapport final de la recherche socioculturelle présenté aux groupes l'AFAQ et DEFI* (N.P, Mars 1982).
[131] *Ibid*.

women played in this regard. Whereas in the past non-Indian women were assimilated to Indigenous cultures once they married into the community, these days, with intermarriage on the rise, the children born into these unions had very little chance of being raised "à la manière indienne." Indeed, the women surveyed agreed with this analysis, where 66 percent thought women were primarily responsible for cultural transmission. Most respondents also underlined the importance of the father in teaching young people, especially "traditional" activities such as hunting and fishing. Whatever one's perspective, "culture," as the report maintained, was, in many cases, non-status women's only link to their home communities, as they were excluded from other activities.[132]

As part of its dedication to cultural continuity, the Quebec Native Women's Association stressed the need for community control over education. In a number of briefs, the organization outlined how Indigenous youth were ill served by the French and English school sectors, exhibiting a high dropout rate. Schools serving First Nations in rural areas, moreover, were often located far from the child's primary residence, forcing young people to board with White families for long stretches of time. After returning home, youngsters demonstrated difficulty speaking their mother tongues, reinforcing cultural alienation and the accompanying generational gap.[133] In fact, in the early 1980s, only 24 percent of the Mohawk women surveyed by the QNWA spoke the language with their parents. The Abenakis, Huron, and Attikameks used nearly exclusively French, and 65 percent of Algonquians spoke English in family settings.[134] Perhaps unsurprisingly then, an essential component of self-government was complete command over education. According to Red Power leaders, students were torn between the community's values and

[132] *Ibid*.
[133] Lagacé, *Historique de l'Association des Femmes Autochtones du Québec,* 67.
[134] L'AFAQ, *Rapport final de la recherche socioculturelle présenté aux groupes l'AFAQ et DEFI.*

the educational material presented in a Euro-Canadian education system. Textbooks made scant mention to Indigenous issues, hence subtly or, in some cases, explicitly encouraging assimilation.[135] The National Indian Brotherhood, for example, asked the federal government to "transfer to local Bands the authority and the funds which are allotted for [First Nations schooling]."[136] For this umbrella organization, education, free of White biases, was seen as the key to the future.[137] With these goals in mind, the *Kahnawakero:non*, for instance, established the Kahnawake Survival School in 1978 where youngsters were provided with a specific political education. Mohawk was taught and the student council was based on the principles of the Longhouse and the Iroquois Confederacy.[138] Today, there are five community schools in Kahnawake, from daycare to secondary.[139] The Quebec Native Women's Association, while behind these initiatives, reminded the provincial government that women were oftentimes excluded from training programmes, if they lived away from the reserve or had lost status. These issues were all the more pressing, given the high percentage of single women heading families and the discrimination they faced on the job market.[140] For the QNWA, access to education and employment schemes were a necessity.

[135] NIB, *The Strategy for Socio-Economic Development of Indian People: National Report* (Ottawa: National Indian Brotherhood, 1977), 24; Walter Deiter and Walter Currie, *Presentation to Senate Committee on Poverty* (Winnipeg: National Indian Brotherhood, 1970), 11.
[136] NIB, *Indian Control of Indian Education*. Policy Paper presented to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Ottawa: National Indian Brotherhood, 1972), 6.
[137] Manuel, *The Fourth World*, 249, 251.
[138] York and Pindera, *People of the Pines*, 118.
[139] Tiffany Ryan, "Community Control of Education : How the Mohawk Community of Kahnawake is Reclaiming Their Schools" (M.A. Thesis, Concordia University, 2005), 52.
[140] L'AFAQ, *Mémoire*. Assemblée Nationale. Commission permanente de la présidence du conseil, de la constitution et des affaires intergouvernementales (S.1. L'Association, 1983).

The Quebec Native Women's Association also paid close attention to the relationship between colonization, mental health, and conjugal violence.[141] In order to overcome these challenges and break the cycle of violence, the Quebec Native Women's Association proposed two solutions. In the first place, the concept of "community healing" was developed and discussed by Indigenous women across the country. This internally-oriented, therapeutic approach was based on raising awareness, putting into place education programmes, and establishing an open dialogue concerning conjugal violence and the psychological and sexual abuse suffered by children, now adults, in residential schools.[142] As "caretakers of the nation," women were perceived to be well-situated to lead in this regard, due to their supposedly innate nurturing abilities.[143] In fact, as women's scholar Jo-Anne Fiske points out, the Native Women's Association and its affiliates purposefully put forth an "essentialist femininity as the foundation if not the essence of the nation." In response to "two antagonistic discourses: that of the state and that of their own male leadership," the organization's members set out to "construct a gendered identity distinct from non-Aboriginal femaleness," hence relying upon maternalism, or as we saw earlier, "culture."[144] Secondly, the women's organization stressed the necessity of self-determination, viewed as essential to "la revalorisation de l'estime de soi et de l'identité autochtone nécessaire à la reconquête de la paix sociale et

[141] Clotilde Pelletier, assistée par Claude Laurin, *États des lieux: Violence et santé mentale chez les Autochtones du Québec*. Recherche préparée pour l'Association des femmes autochtones du Québec. Ministère des Affaires culturelles du Québec: Centre de recherche et d'analyse en sciences humaines (Montreal: L'Association, May 1993), 1-2, 23, 35.
[142] Jo-Anne Fiske, "Spirited Subjects and Wounded Souls: Political Representations of an Im/moral Frontier," In *Contact Zones: Aboriginal and Settler Women in Canada's Colonial Past*, eds. Myra Rutherdale and Katie Pinkles (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005), 102.
[143] The terminology "caretakers of the nation" was used by Verna St. Denis in "Feminism is for everybody: Aboriginal Women, Feminism, and Diversity," 38.
[144] Jo-Anne Fiske, "The Womb is to the Nation as the Heart to the Body: Ethnopolitical Discourses of the Canadian Indigenous Women's Movement," *Studies in Political Economy* 51 (1996): 65-95, 74.

familiale."[145] Moreover, the relative lack of influence wielded by Indigenous women within their own communities was understood as operating within the colonial context, notably the negative effects of the *Indian Act*. As we have seen, many Indigenous communities were matrilineal and matrifocal before European conquest. Women in important political positions were the norm within Haudenosaunee societies.

Significantly, the Quebec Native Women's Association entered discussions with the provincial government on this basis. In a 1983 *mémoire*, the QNWA evoked the power women held in pre-colonial First Nations societies, reminding its readership that it was only with colonization that Indigenous women lost political sway within their own communities. Once the church and the government "imposed its conceptions of male superiority," women were doubly undermined. Their success in this regard explained women's current predicament or as the QNWA eloquently put it, "Maintenant que le reste du monde s'est rangé au point du vue des indiens du XVIIIe siècle, il est tristement ironique de constater que les indiens d'aujourd'hui semblent s'accrocher au système absurde qui leur a été imposé." The organization argued, again combining discourses and tactics, that intermarried women were the only "minority group" excluded from the existing Canadian and Québécois human rights legislation. Not only did the QNWA group firmly refute the notion that involuntary enfranchisement was somehow "emancipatory," but the QNWA also criticized the *Indian Act*, specifically its racializing elements. More specifically, the women's group condemned the act's inability to take into consideration the unique cultures and customs of each Indigenous nation, as absurd as trying to bring "African" and "Nordic" peoples under one form of governance. By its

[145] Pelletier, assistée par Laurin, *États des lieux: Violence et santé mentale chez les Autochtones du Québec*, 74.

very existence then, the law could eventually lead to the "genocide" of First Nations societies. Despite its inherent flaws, however, the *Indian Act*'s clauses on exogamy provoked profound feeling of rejection, as these women were excluded "from their own nations." In other words, for the QNWA, the battle to eliminate article 12(1)(b) was part of a larger quest for self-determination as well as a concurrent fight for national inclusion into Indigenous communities, "the original owners of these lands."[146]

While the Quebec Native Women's Association put forth a highly politicized understanding of indigeneity, the organization tailored its message to a White Francophone audience, illustrating the distinct discursive terrain operating in the province. In a the same 1983 *mémoire*, the QNWA relied upon a message of intercultural understanding, stating that

> C'est avec le même respect qui nous avons pour vous, les non-indiens francophones qui défendez avec autant d'aptitude, de verve, et de volonté, la culture qui vous est propre, que nous avons l'intention de défendre la notre avec la même ouverture d'esprit qui est la votre à l'endroit des groups minoritaires de cette partie de nos terres.
>
> Nous vous savons capables même si nos langues nous séparent,…que nos objectifs nous unissent. La défense de nos cultures respectives et de leur respect par les groupes, qui nous entourent, soient-ils majoritaires, pas plus que vous, nous n'avons l'intention d'être assimilés, que nos cultures soient dénaturées, que nous soyons contraints à abandonner aussi bien nos langues que nos coutumes.[147]

The Quebec Native Women's Association therefore appealed to the provincial government by using its own logic and language. Even if the organization gratefully acknowledged René Lévesque's decision in October of 1980 to recognize non-status women as Indians, the QNWA still offered a critical view of state structures within the

[146] L'AFAQ, *Mémoire*. Assemblée Nationale. Commission permanente de la présidence du conseil, de la constitution et des affaires intergouvernementales (S.1. L'Association, 1983).
[147] *Ibid*.

province and the rest of the country in this and many other briefs. The Parti Québécois' move to recognition, though important, arguably carried largely symbolic rather than practical implications.[148] Shedding light on the dual nature of settler colonialism in the province, the women's group argued for both federal and provincial changes. In particular, the QNWA recommended that Parliament and the Assemblée Nationale, namely fishing, hunting, and Hydro-Québec, offer funds to help ease the transition of reinstated women and their children back to reserve life, and, of course, that Ottawa amend the *Indian Act*.[149]

After a long battle, the federal government decided to eliminate article 12(1)(b) for an estimated 16,000 women and 40,000 of their descendants. After many years of frustration, Two-Axe Earley was the first woman to regain her Indian status. Euro-Canadian women played a small role in this victory. There were also friendships across the "buckskin curtain," for example between Madeleine Parent and Mary Two-Axe Earley.[150] The most impactful event arguably occurred at the international level, however, when Maliseet Sandra Lovelace from New Brunswick went to the United Nations, arguing that Section 12(1)(b) was in violation of Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The latter "protects the rights of minority groups to enjoy their culture, practise their traditions, and use their language in community with others from their group." In 1981, the UN ruled against Canada and in favour of Lovelace,

[148] This is my analysis and not the words used by the QNWA. In a formal statement issued October 11th 1980, the PQ government stated that it would recognize intermarried Aboriginal women, that it encouraged bands to do the same, and that it had its own policies toward Native communities. However, the statement, though perhaps not representative, made no mention of any other social justice measures. This statement was included as an annex to the 1983 brief. In the brief, for example, the Quebec Native Women's Associations outlined the numerous shortcomings present in the social services, health, and education sectors. See L'AFAQ, *Mémoire*. Assemblée Nationale. Commission permanente de la présidence du conseil, de la constitution et des affaires intergouvernementales (S.1. L'Association, 1983).
[149] *Ibid*.
[150] Rebick, *Ten Thousand Roses: The Making of a Feminist Revolution*, 108, 110.

thereby forcing the federal government to change in the *Indian Act* in 1985. In order to bring the legislation in line with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Ottawa enacted Bill C-31, or a Bill to Amend the Indian Act.[151] However, in Kahnawake, the incorporation of "C-31s," a derogatory term according to Évelyn O'Bomsawin, who reminds us that she was born Abenaki, was read in terms of the broader discussion on group boundaries, diminishing land base, and limited resources.[152] For these reasons, the painful divisions surrounding membership continued into the 1980s when the community consented to the Moratorium of Mixed Marriage in 1981 and the Mohawk Law on Membership in 1984. Reinstatement "was far from automatic" due to these pre-emptive measures, based, on large part, on blood quantum. New members descended from non-status women had to have at least 50 percent Mohawk blood to be welcomed back into the community.[153] Kahnawake society therefore continued to reflect the ethnicization present in Euro-Canada.[154]

Under the new legislation then, Indigenous communities (backed by the Canadian state) could enact membership rules to protect collective rights, yet sometimes to the detriment of non-status women and their descendants.[155] The latter provoked a response from the Quebec Native Women's Association, unhappy with the legislation's shortcomings. Again, the issues were complex and centred on competing claims of what or who could guarantee cultural continuity. For instance, in a brief on behalf of the QNWA, Gail Stacey-Moore, the director of the Native Women's Shelter of Montreal,

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[151] Aks, *Women's Rights in Native North America*, 79.
[152] *Artisans de notre histoire: Évelyn O'Bomsawin,* DVD. Directed by Pierre Lacombe. Montreal: Ciné Fête, 2002; Simpson, "To the Reserve and Back Again," 99-100.
[153] *Ibid*., 22-24.
[154] Horn-Miller, "Otiyaner: The 'Women's Path' Through Colonialism," 63.
[155] Fiske, "Spirited Subjects and Wounded Souls: Political Representations of an Im/moral Frontier," 80-81.

stressed that the "*Indian Act* continues to discriminate against us and our children," reminding the readership that "in countless speeches, representations, policy statements and court cases, Aboriginal people have emphasized that their rights, be they legal, political, social, economic, cultural, or other, must be recognized and maintained not only for themselves, but also for their children and their children's children." Because recently reinstated women could not pass on band membership to their children or ensure their inheritance, they argued that the membership and well being of future generations was at risk. In contrast, "our brothers," as Stacey-Moore explained, "who married non-Indian women before the coming into force of Bill C-31, are able to transmit band membership to their children." This sort of gender-based, legal discrimination contravened both Section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, especially articles 2 and 7. Nevertheless, Stacey-Moore, a non-status woman from Kahnawake, acknowledged some bands' fear of a "takeover," proposing "that right of non-Native spouses be limited to residency with his family only and did include the right to vote on any matter or the right to possess land." Once again, the Quebec Native Women's Association called upon the federal government to rectify a historical injustice. Or in the words of Gail Stacey-Moore, "The imposition of a narrow definition for the determination of Indian status (and the Federal responsibility which goes with it) is nothing more than a continuation of the old policy of 'termination' by which the simple solution for getting rid of the 'Indian problem' was to redefine the 'Indian' out of existence. This is unacceptable."[156]

[156] Gail Stacey-Moore, *Amendments Proposed to The New Indian Act by Quebec Women's Association*. Women and the Law. International Perspectives. Eight Biennial Conference of the National Association of Women and the Law. February 1988, Montreal, Quebec (Ottawa: National Association of Women and the

Stated otherwise, since colonialism persisted so did sexism. Gender equality, in this case, did not transform colonial relations.[157] Although the Native Women's Association of Canada conducted extensive advocacy work in order to assist those who wished to apply for Indian status, the organization maintained a critical perspective, arguing that the *Indian Act* "remains an oppressive piece of legislation and only further entrenches discrimination and, in fact, threatens our future generations."[158] With Bill C-31, Kahnawake residents, women especially, were forced to make unattractive adaptations to the "colonial scene."[159] Perhaps unsurprisingly then, gender conflicts were exacerbated once reinstated women and their children returned home.[160] The tensions resulting from discriminatory legislation may have even discouraged women from residing in the community.[161] Once again, the *Indian Act* encouraged the removal of Indigenous women from their cultures.[162] Though clearly imperfect, the revisions constituted a victory for some First Nations women and they perhaps would not have had the same success without the support of Euro-Canadian feminists. When interviewed by Judy Rebick, however, Gail Stacey-Moore underlined the importance of political links between women of diverse origins, but also the significant differences in life experiences

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Law, 1989). As Stacey Moore stated at the beginning of her talk, "The paper I am about to present is part of a brief on the implementation of Bill C-31, an Act to amend the Indian Act."

[157] St. Denis, "Feminism is for everybody: Aboriginal Women, Feminism, and Diversity," 43.

[158] "Native Women's Association of Canada," *Canadian Women's Studies* 10, 2-3 (1989): 133-135.

[159] Simpson, *To the Reserve and Back Again*, 227.

[160] Jo-Anne Fiske, "Political Status of Native Indian Women: Contradictory Implications of Canadian State Policy," In *In the Days of Our Grandmothers: a Reader in Aboriginal Women's History in Canada*, eds. Mary-Ellen Kelm and Lorna Townsend (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 346.

[161] *Ibid*., 351.

[162] Van Kirk, "Marrying-in to Marrying-Out': Changing Patterns of Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal Marriage in Colonial Canada," 5.

as well as White women's racism, rendering a deep and genuine relationship difficult.[163] Although the Fédération des femmes du Québec, for example, lobbied on behalf of the Quebec Native Women's Association, the organization arguably de-contextualized Indigenous women's struggles, by ignoring the larger, namely settler colonial, structures at play. As this chapter has hopefully demonstrated, membership questions cannot be separated from issues surrounding territorial dispossession and a dearth of resources. To this day, membership remains an explosive issue and a question inherently linked to community survival.

[163] Rebick, *Ten Thousand Roses: The Making of a Feminist Revolution*, 110-111.

Chapter 3: Searching for Zion: Diasporic Feminism in English-Speaking Black Montreal

Like their Indigenous counterparts, Black Montrealers underwent a political transformation during the time period in question. As David Austin points out in his article, "All Roads Led to Montreal," Canada had its own version of Black Power, which "like so many social movements around the world in the 1960s and 1970s, drew inspiration from African American struggles against economic and racial oppression, but nonetheless native to Canada."[1] Building off of decades, even centuries, of resistance to White supremacy, the Montreal community's civic engagement was intrinsically transnational, drawing inspiration from the intertwined ideologies of Pan-Africanism and Black Power. During this time of heightened contestation, Black Montrealers continued to assert their membership in the global community, making links with other Black collectivities in the United States, Caribbean, and Africa. Diaspora politics were also the lens through which Black peoples worldwide chose to assert their cultural specificity. While Marcus Garvey, known as the "Black Moses," arguably provided the first impetus towards the idealized return to Africa in the form of "Black Zionism," in the early 20th century, the sentiment crystallized in W.E.B. Du Bois' concept of "double-consciousness," defined as the unhappy synthesis of racially particularistic thinking within the framework of a nation-state, with a diasporic way of seeing the ways in which African-descended peoples everywhere were subjected to racism.[2] Traces of this thinking can be found in the leadership practices of Black women in Montreal, many of whom

[1] David Austin, "All Roads Led to Montreal: Black Power, the Caribbean, and the Black Radical Tradition in Canada," *Journal of African American History* 92, 4 New Black Power Studies: National, International, and Transnational Perspectives (2007): 516-539.

[2] Stéphane Dufoix, *La dispersion: une histoire des usages du mot Diaspora* (Paris: Éditions Amsterdam, 2011), 249, 259-260; Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousnes*s (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 127.

lived, in art historian Charmaine Nelson's words, a "doubly diasporized" life. With cultural origins in the Caribbean, and a life in Canada, they negotiated "two former sites of empire."[3]

As we will see, the Pan-Africanist and Black Power discourses expressed by African-descended women, though equally passionate as men's, at times demonstrated the difficulty women experienced in carving out a place for themselves. By taking on leadership positions within the movement, however, they refused to view their contribution to the Black struggle solely in terms of revolutionary motherhood. Starting off within the Caribbean Conference Committee and the Negro Citizenship Association, Anne Cools and Dorothy Wills, for example, also became involved in the Congress of Black Women. Well into the 1970s, Wills, in particular, played an integral role within the National Black Coalition of Canada and at the 6th Pan African Congress, held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. In other words, women leaders never left mixed gender settings. In fact, Black women were involved in multiple political groups during this period, from Black women's organizations, to male-dominated Black groups, to multiracial, women-only settings.[4] Although their organizing drew motivation from the common struggles of African-descended peoples across the continent, even the world, Black women's actions came directly out of the Montreal context, where the discrimination they faced in the housing, taxi, employment, and educational sectors informed their anti-racist discourses. They were internationalists with a strong presence on the local scene. Therefore, this

[3] Charmaine Nelson, ed., *Ebony Roots, Northern Soil: Perspectives on Blackness in Canada* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 17.
[4] Becky Thompson, "Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave Feminism," In *No Permanent Waves. Recasting Histories of U.S. Feminism*, ed. Nancy A. Hewitt (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 40-41.

chapter hopes to contribute to the burgeoning scholarship on the diasporic conceptions of the Canadian, Québécois, and Montreal Black women's experiences.[5]

I. Laying the Foundation

According to the historian Dorothy Williams, the author of *The Road to Now: a History of Blacks in Montreal*, "To understand black women and their history we cannot only compare them to other women -they must be placed in the context of their families, their black sisterhood and especially their communities." While the historical record has been relatively silent with regards to the contributions of Black Montrealers and African Canadian women more generally, African-descended women have deep roots in Quebec and an equally long-standing reputation for resistance to economic inequality and racial oppression.[6] For instance, Marie-Joseph Angélique was a rebellious slave woman, vocal in her hostility to servitude. She was later accused, tortured, and hung for setting fire to Montreal.[7] Despite a long-standing presence, a veritable community only formed in the city by the end of the 19th century. Black Montrealers historically settled in the St. Antoine district, where they worked, socialized, and created a vibrant neighbourhood

[5] See, for example, Andrea Davis, "A Feminist Exploration in African Canadian Literature," In *Multiple Lenses: Voices from the Diaspora Located in Canada*, ed. David Divine (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 250, 260; Charmaine Crawford, "Sending Love in a Barrel: The Making of Transnational Caribbean Families in Canada," *Canadian Women's Studies* 22, 3, 4 (2003), 104-109; Notisha Massaquoi and Njoki Nathani Wane, eds., *Theorizing Empowerment: Canadian Perspective on Black Feminist Thought* (Toronto: Inanna Publications and Education, 2007), 6; Njoki Nathani Wane, Katherine Deliovsky, Erika Lawson, eds., *Back to The Drawing Board: African Canadian Feminisms*. (Toronto: Sumach Press, 2002), 15. There have also been notable contributions from Jenny Burman and James W. St. G. Walker. See, for example, *Transnational Yearnings: Tourism, Migration, and the Diasporic City* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010) and "Black Confrontation in Sixties Halifax," In *Debating Dissent: Canada and the Sixties*, eds. Lara Campbell, Dominique Clément, and Gregory S. Kealey (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 173-191.

[6] Dorothy Williams, *The Road to Now: a History of Black in Montreal* (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1997), 13-14.

[7] Afua Cooper, *The Hanging of Angélique: The Untold Story of Canadian Slavery and the Burning Down of Old Montréal* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 2006), 7.

culture. The collectivity was consistently heterogeneous, with members from a range of national provenances. The first Black men in the city were often from the United States and worked for the Canadian Pacific Railroad. Later, West Indian migrants increasingly came to fill these positions, bringing their families with them. Racial discrimination shaped the lives of these Montreal residents, from the workforce to the immigration system.[8]

Women were often at the forefront of opposition. For instance, the Coloured Women's Club of Montreal (CWC), founded by the wives of American and Canadian porters, was dedicated to the well-being of Montreal's Black collectivity "in every possible way" since its inception in 1902, providing moral guidance, emotional support, and a sense of belonging. The CWC's many philanthropic activities included offering scholarships to students, warm clothing to recent arrivals from the Caribbean, lobbying the government for less racist immigration laws and helping the unemployed.[9] The Coloured Women's Club's membership was frequently involved in more than one organisation, extending its energies to the Union Congregational Church and the Negro Community Centre, founded in 1907 and 1927 respectively. All three organizations played a vigorous role in defending the rights of African Canadians. As historian Sarah-Jane Mathieu puts it, railway porters and their wives "became the vanguard of local, national and international organizations dedicated to the interests of blacks in Canada."[10] In fact, the collectivity's institutional network as a whole during this period could not have existed without the strong and commanding presence of women, who were the bulk

[8] Williams, *The Road to Now*, 38-40.
[9] See the Coloured Women's Club of Montreal's website http://colouredwomensclub.tripod.com.
[10] Sarah-Jane Mathieu, *North of the Colour Line: Migration and Black Resistance in Canada*, 1870-1955 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 145-146.

of the volunteers and served as staff members. Organizational involvement combined with working for wages afforded women a central role in the community.[11] Founded in reaction to the racially-exclusionary, White suffragette groups, the CWC's focus on the socio-economic issues facing the Black community created the framework for African Canadian women's political experience and social involvement.[12]

Given the history of Black activism in Montreal it should not be surprising that Pan Africanism took root in this Canadian city. As Leo Bertley, community leader and educator, explains in his work on the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), Montreal was a key site for Garveyism, a Black Nationalist ideology spearheaded by its Jamaican namesake and UNIA founder, Marcus Garvey. One of the major institutions of the city's Black community in the first half of the twentieth century, Montreal's UNIA was one of fifteen divisions in Canada (1, 200 worldwide).[13] The UNIA, as Sarah-Jane Mathieu explains, "married political activism and entertainment." The Sunday afternoon sessions attracted men, women and children, "too often excluded from other social venues."[14] Espousing a philosophy based on the primacy of race, the UNIA was also committed to gender equality because "no race can rise higher than its women." According to historian Dorothy Williams, women were the "backbone" of the Montreal branch, playing key roles at the executive and organizational levels. With the involvement of both men and women, who were predominately of working-class Caribbean origin, the Association aimed to educate the community in the history of

[11] Linda Carty, "African Canadian Women and the State: 'Labour Only, Please," In *'We're Rooted Here and They Can't Pull Us Up: Essays in African Canadian Women's History*, eds. Peggy Bristow, et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1994), 205.
[12] Williams, *The Road to Now*, 50-52.
[13] Leo Bertley, "The Universal Negro Improvement Association of Montreal, 1917-1979" (PhD Dissertation, Concordia University, 1980), 5-7.
[14] Mathieu, *North of the Color Line*, 156.

African-descended peoples around the world as well as promote Black unity.[15] Women, in particular, lectured on the value of strong work ethics, temperance, racial uplift, self-sufficiency, and education.[16] Although the Association declined in influence by the second-half of the twentieth-century, the UNIA received a momentary boost in the winter of 1969-70 when the February Eleventh Defence Committee used UNIA headquarters to garner support for the arrestees of the Sir George Williams Affair.[17]

While coming out of decades of resistance to inequality, Montreal's Black community's activism in the late 1960s and 1970s was indicative of a change in self-conception. As stated in the February 1971 edition of the *Black Scholar*, an American magazine with a continent-wide readership, Pan-Africanism was re-emerging as "the dominant political thrust of Africans in this country."[18] The same could perhaps be said for Black Montrealers. One such African Canadian was Dorothy Wills, well-known for her work within the Negro Citizenship Association, and later for the National Black Coalition and the Congress of Black Women. A teacher by profession, Wills dedicated her free time to the community, becoming heavily involved in the global Pan-Africanist movement, even adopting the name Abike after a visit to Africa in 1971.[19] Born in Dominica on 13 March 1933, this community leader immigrated to Canada in the early 1950s to attend Mount Saint Vincent University. She then made her way to McGill University to complete a degree in social work, before obtaining a doctorate in the philosophy of education. In Montreal, she settled down to raise a family and work at

[15] Williams, *The Road to Now*, 60.
[16] Mathieu, *North of the Color Line*, 158.
[17] Bertley, "The Universal Negro Improvement Association of Montreal," 110-111.
[18] "Introduction," *The Black Scholar*, February 1971, 1.
[19] Library and Archives Canada (LAC), Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 5, File 5-1: National Black Coalition of Canada "The National Black Awards of Canada" 1976 Forward by Abike (Dorothy Willis), Extract "Dorothy Wills: The Persistent Apostle of Identity, Unity, Liberation."

Vanier College.[20] With the *Black Scholar* on her bookshelf, alongside the works of the major Black Nationalist and anti-colonial thinkers of the day, Dorothy Wills' intellectual endeavours and political persuasions, as we will see, were indicative of the rejuvenated political consciousness and organisational tactics of the period.[21]

Like the community as a whole, Dorothy Wills' activism did not start in the 1970s. Rather, the community leader's quest for equality can be traced back to her work within the Negro Citizenship Association, starting in the 1950s. As its name would indicate, the Association was a civil rights organisation, promoting anti-discrimination legislation. Founded in 1952, the group consisted of 400 members, born in Canada, the United States, the West Indies, and Africa. The organisation's motto, "Dedicated to the Principles of Good Citizenship," was interpreted as pushing Canadian society to uphold at home the objectives they supported on the world stage, outlined in, for example, the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.[22] Two prominent battles waged by the organisation's members included the integration of the taxi industry in 1960 and an amendment to the Hotels Act in 1963, making it illegal to refuse service to a customer because of his or her race.[23] As for Dorothy Wills, her gender did not seem to impede involvement in this civil rights group. Not only was she vice-president and chairman of the board, but also she took an assertive, public role. In reference to a sit-in

[20] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 1, File 1-1: Dorothy Wills: Curriculum vitae, biographical information, and professional associations, "Curriculum Vitae."
[21] The *Black Scholar* took up the entirety of volumes 11 and 12 of the Dorothy Wills Fonds. See MG 31 H179 Volumes 11, 12. Further indicative of the intellectual influences on this community leader, in a paper Wills gave to the Alliance of Africans in Quebec, she cited Albert Memmi, W.E.B. DuBois, Aimé Césaire, and Patrice Lumumba. See LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volumes 1, File 1-8: File of personal correspondence titled "The Struggle and Me" 1981-1983. Dorothy Wills, "Black Identity" Presented to: The Alliance of Africans in Quebec; Holiday Inn Hotel (420 Sherbrook Street West); Date: 25 May 1979.
[22] Richard E. Leslie, "The Negro Citizenship Association Inc. Philosophy and Objectives," *Expression*, February 1965, 3-6.
[23] LAC, *Some Missing Pages: The Black Community in the History of Quebec and Canada. Primary and Secondary Source Materials* (Government of Quebec: Ministry of Education, 1985), 164.

demonstration in response to segregation within the Diamond and LaSalle Taxi companies, Wills described a run-in with law enforcement: "I was quite visibly pregnant at the time, and when a policeman said to me 'Lady, in your condition you ought to be home,' my immediate and spontaneous reply to him was 'If I cannot help create a better world in which to deposit what I am carrying, I may as well not have it, so I don't care what you think, say or do.'"[24] Thus in protest, this community leader found validation, especially since the Negro Citizenship Association served as a bastion of moral support for Montreal's Black community. It was a place where, in the words of Wills, one could "seek relief from some of the frustrations of this society, due to discrimination, by learning more about our past grandeur."[25]

As hinted by Wills' allusion to Pan-Africanist thinking, the Negro Citizenship Association was a progenitor for the varieties of nationalism expressed in the late 1960s and 1970s. Montreal's African Canadian leadership was increasingly frustrated by the mid-1960s, especially with regards to the Quebec government's failure to implement a "full programme of Human Rights Legislation."[26] After being pushed several years for anti-discrimination measures in housing and employment, the legislative lacuna was perceived as hypocritical given the goals of the Quiet Revolution, an era of "widespread social and economic reform."[27] Employing a language of citizenship appropriate for the time, dissenters equated this oversight with the "humiliating situation as existed in the

[24] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 5, File 5-2: National Black Coalition of Canada – Dorothy Wills' address to the NBCC 1982, 1984, "Response to an Award Given by the National Black Coalition of Canada."
[25] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds MG 31 H179 Volume 8, File 8-2: States, Roy W. Tribute by Dorothy Wills at the Memorial Service, Union United Church. Montreal 14 December 1980, "Tribute to Roy Wellington States."
[26] R.E.I, "Editorial," *Expression*, January 1966, 3-5.
[27] Lara Campbell and Dominique Clément, "Introduction: Time, Age, Myth: Towards a History of the Sixties," In *Debating Dissent: Canada and the Sixties*, eds. Lara Campbell, Dominique Clément, and Gregory S. Kealey (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 13.

United States," Canada's foil in matters of race, "prior to the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Bill."[28] Referring to Expo '67, a member of the Association commented during the years leading up to the Exposition on how visitors would receive better treatment than some of the city's hosts who "because of their racial origin will be denied the right to rent apartments of their choice, while many of their guests will have no problem in renting the same apartments..."[29] Referring to these everyday displays of segregation, there was the belief that discrimination towards Black Montrealers was not taken seriously, or portrayed as "insignificant." The organisation's newsletter, *Expression*, raised the question concerning the role of the government in protecting in its citizens, or more specifically, extending protection to those the law in its current form overlooked.[30] In light of the federal and provincial authorities' apathetic response to the community's push for legal equality, however, it would have been unsurprising when the Negro Citizenship Association turned to alternative forms of activism, becoming a member of the National Black Coalition, an umbrella organisation which was, as will be discussed, more nationalistic in outlook.[31]

Another possible explanation for the political shift among some Black Montrealers could be attributed to demographic changes related to immigration patterns. Although racial restrictions were eased in the 1950s to allow for domestic servants, many of whom were from the Caribbean, Canadian immigration law did not fully liberalize until 1967, opening the door to those from the so-called Third World, provided they met

[28] Karen Dubinsky used the term "foil" with regards to Canada's relationship to the United States in matters of race and racism in *Babies without Borders: Adoption and Migration across the Americas* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 79.
[29] R.E.I., "Editorial." *Expression*, February 1965, 7-9.
[30] "Editorial," *Expression*, July 1967, 3-4.
[31] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 4, File 4-18: National Black Coalition Umoja-Black Dialogue, newsletter edited by Clarence Bayne and Dorothy Wills, "Organisations Represented in the National Black Coalition," *Umoja: Black Dialogue*, 20 October 1969, 1.

the selection criteria. In addition to skilled workers, there were significant numbers of students coming to Montreal from the Caribbean during this period. According to historian Sean Mills, West Indian youth came to the city to pursue university studies, often returning home to pursue political careers. They "introduced anti-colonial ideas into Black Montreal, at first upsetting many established members of the community, but ultimately changing the way in which the community conceived of itself and understood its relation to the rest of Quebec society and the world at large." Signalling the rise of new English-speaking Black intelligentsia, a group called the Caribbean Conference Committee on West Indian Affairs (CCC) convened in the mid-1960s.[32] Further contributing to the heady atmosphere of the time was the Montreal-chapter of the Caribbean-based, New World Group. Working alongside the CCC, this group of academics, which included the economists Lloyd Best and Kari Polanyi Levitt, published the *New Work Quarterly*, a renowned economic, social, and cultural journal.[33] The anti-colonial ideologies espoused by these two groups further laid the intellectual groundwork for resistance to racial domination in Montreal throughout the late 1960s and 1970s.

With the aim of building bridges between the Caribbean and Montreal, the Caribbean Conference Committee invited a range of speakers, including the historian, anti-colonial thinker and author of *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint l'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, C.L.R. James. By leading study sessions and giving a series of public lectures in 1966, the Trinidadian Marxist's presence had a remarkable impact on the young activists, in particular Tim Hector, Robert Hill, Franklyn Roberts, Anne Cools, and Alfie Roberts, the CCC's core. James would return to Montreal for the Congress of

[32] Sean Mills, *The Empire Within: Postcolonial Thought and Political Activism in Sixties Montreal* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 97-98.
[33] Austin, "All Roads Led to Montreal," 520.

Black Writers in 1968, another galvanizing event for Quebec's Black community.[34] By then, however, a political shift had taken place. As David Austin outlines, more Canadian-born men and women had taken the helm of the community leadership and many members were in Montreal to stay, looking away from Caribbean politics to focus on the well-being of African-descended peoples in Canada. Moreover, Black Montrealers increasingly felt the influence of the American Black Power movement. In addition to C.L.R. James and Walter Rodney, notable figures of the U.S. struggle were in attendance at the conference, officially entitled, "The Congress of Black Writers: Toward the Second Emancipation, the Dynamics of Black Liberation." The star-studded line up even included the charismatic Stokely Carmichael. The speakers at Congress consistently addressed the mixed audience as "brothers" and the iconic Miriam Makeba, the wife Carmichael at the time, never spoke.[35] Women were reportedly ignored then, despite the integral role they played on the organizing committee.[36]

In short, a new kind assertiveness permeated Montreal's Black community, a forcefulness that by no means passed over women. After years of frustration, some community members, especially students, were willing to take a confrontational stance. Thus, when a professor at Sir George Williams University (now Concordia University) was accused of systematically marking down Black students, younger community members resorted to civil disobedience. For two weeks in February 1969, a multiracial group of approximately 200 hundred students, including 30 women, occupied the

[34] Alfie Roberts, *A View for Freedom: Alfie Roberts Speaks on the Caribbean, Cricket, Montreal, and C.L.R. James*. Introduction by David Austin, afterward by Robert Hill (Montreal: Alfie Roberts Institute, 2005), 71-72.
[35] Austin, "All Road Led to Montreal," 521, 523.
[36] According to the conference proceedings, 11 out of 30 people on the organizing committee were women. "Congress of Black Writers. Towards the Second Emancipation. The Dynamics of Black Liberation." Students Union and Leacock Building, McGill University, Montreal, Canada. 11-14 October 1968.

university's Computer Centre, the nerve centre of the educational establishment. Later known as the Sir George Williams Affair (SGWA), the arrests that followed a mysterious and damaging fire attracted national and international attention, exposing the racism entrenched in Canadian society. The trial of the students in question, which led to the imprisonment of Rosie Douglas and Anne Cools, for eighteen and four months respectively, was biased from the beginning.[37] Not only had Montrealers been bombarded with media coverage for weeks, focused nearly exclusively on the 48 Black protestors, but also the jury consisted entirely of White men. Calling upon the principles of fairness and justice, Juanita Westmoreland, the Sorbonne-educated lawyer and former French-language liaison for the Negro Citizenship Association,[38] denounced the all-White panel as inconsistent with one of the cornerstones of the Anglo-Saxon criminal justice system, that is, trial by one's peers. This racial bias was explained by Westmoreland in *UHURU*, a recently-founded community newspaper:

> Only persons who have a common experience can fully understand and appreciate the issues in a particular situation. This principle has been tested and has endured throughout the ages.
>
> No one can say that the fact that all of the 10 accused are Black is a coincidence. We maintain that they cannot have a fair trial unless there are also Black people on the panel from which their jury will be chosen.[39]

The Sir George Williams Affair appeared to shake the community to the core precisely because it was representative of something much larger, beyond one incident of

[37] Marcel Martel, "'Riot at Sir George Williams: Giving Meaning to Student Dissent," In *Debating Dissent: Canada and the Sixties*, eds. Lara Campbell, Dominique Clément, and Gregory S. Kealey (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 97.
[38] Richard E. Leslie, "The Negro Citizenship Association Inc. Philosophy and Objectives," *Expression*, February 1965, 3-6.
[39] "Canadian Justice in Operation," *UHURU*, 2 February 1970, 1.

prejudice to encompass racial biases in key Canadian institutions. Thus the events represented a "turning point," altering the leadership's understanding of race relations.[40] In an editorial published in *Expression*, for instance, the authors drew parallels between Sir George Williams University and Canada, where the former was the microcosm of the latter. Referring to the country's role in the "underground railroad," and the university's reputation for welcoming immigrant students, the authors wrote, "both enjoy the reputation for fair-play and humanity in their relationships with all groups; both are respected as successful models of a multiracial society." But hidden underneath the surface have been "the covert and often unconscious acts of racism of which Canadians are guilty," from jurors to university administrators. Whereas the racism in the United States was overt, the same phenomenon in Canada was subtler, yet equally insidious. What was worse was the mythology surrounding the benevolence of race relations, maintained "with traditional Canadian self-righteousness." As the authors concluded, the country was "riddled with paradoxes and contradictions," as "the champion of equality for all races" internationally and rhetorically, while simultaneously overlooking "in silence the unequal treatment of its non-white peoples" at home, namely the Japanese, Indigenous, and Black peoples.[41] These types of articles multiplied after the Sir George Williams Affair, signalling the reinforcement of a Black consciousness and an ongoing unwillingness to submit to, or ignore, the structural barriers present in Canadian society.[42]

In a statement to the March 1970 edition of *Time Magazine*, Dorothy Wills defended the seemingly violent actions of the young students, without condoning them.

[40] Martel, "'Riot at Sir George Williams: Giving Meaning to Student Dissent," 109-110.
[41] "Canadian Liberalism: Fact or Fiction?," *Expression*, Winter 1968, Special Conference Issue, 3-6.
[42] For an understanding of a Montreal Black collective consciousness, see Austin, "All Roads Led to Montreal," 535. As will be discussed, those involved in defending the students founded *UHURU*, a community newspaper espousing Black Power.

She attested to the "peace-loving" nature of Black people, writing that "regardless of the fierceness of their pride, will not maim or destroy unless pushed to do so in utter desperation." "History can attest to this," she continued, "and despite the outlook I am not convinced that a leopard can change his spots overnight."[43] Despite the more assertive turn in Black activism, then, pacifism remained the norm. For many people, Black liberation simply meant "group persistence" in a multi-racial society, where "no one colour group or ethnic group will have more power or prestige than another and in which equality of rights will be guaranteed."[44] Since these ideals were contradicted during the events surrounding the Sir George Williams Affair, however, a faction of the community mobilized to protect its own. The February 11th Defence Committee was established to defend the criminalized students, as was *UHURU* (Swahili for freedom). The latter started off as a communication bulletin, but soon after become a newspaper that espoused internationalist Black Power.[45] In a letter addressed "Dear Brothers," Stokely and Miriam Carmichael congratulated the publication, as they found it "attempts to deal concretely with the problems our brothers face in Canada and simultaneously continues to deal with an over-all ideology for the Black world."[46] Women played an integral role. Yvonne Greer was one of the managing editors, Brenda Dash was the advertising manager, Betty Howard and Glenda Edwards were responsible for local and out-of-town circulation, and Yvonne Strachan dealt with subscriptions.[47] There were certain ideological underpinnings in common between this segment of the collectivity

[43] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 7, File 7-19: Addresses by Dorothy Willis delivered to Black Graduations and Community Dinners (1968-1975), Dorothy Wills, "Statement to Time Magazine." March 1970.
[44] St. Clair Drake, "The Black Diaspora in Pan-African Perspective," *The Black Scholar*, September 1975, 2-13.
[45] Mills, *The Empire Within*, 112.
[46] Stokely and Miriam Carmichael, "Letters," *UHURU*, 2 February 1970, 2.
[47] "Framework," *UHURU*, 8 December 1969, 4.

and the proponents of the more reformist, National Black Coalition of Canada.[48] Both embraced Pan-Africanism, Black Unity regardless of place of birth or geographical location, and were thoroughly implicated in the "Negro-to-Black Conversion" experience.[49]

In other words, there were multiple divisions between African-descended Montrealers, and yet similar experiences with racial prejudice served as a basis for civic engagement. So did Pan-Africanism, an anti-colonial ideology fitting for this era of decolonization, and ongoing discrimination in North America. More specifically, the concept of "internal colonialism" was implicit in Pan African thought, considered the "highest form of Black Power" by Stokeley Carmichael.[50] But as discussed in Sean Mills' nuanced study, the notion of empire was complex in Montreal and Black Montrealers were aware of the distinctions amongst Canadians. Though the journalists of *UHURU* maintained that the community was the object of discrimination at the hands of both the English and the French, they nonetheless recognized the similar forces operating against French Quebecers. French-Canadians, for example, experienced difficulty getting hired by Anglo-Saxon-controlled businesses, as did African-Canadians.[51] Feelings of solidarity went both ways. Throughout the Sir George Williams Affair, many French-speaking leftists came out in support of the students, including the Union générale des étudiants du Québec (UGEQ).[52] In the pages of *UHURU*, there was also favourable mention of the Red Power movement; additional proof of Canada's failure to work towards a "Just

[48] Austin, "All Roads Led to Montreal," 521.
[49] See, for example, LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 4, File 4-20: National Coalition of Canada *Habari Kijiji* (*Village News*) Newsletter edited by Dorothy Wills, William E. Cross Junior, "The Negro-to-Black Conversion Experience" reprinted in the June 1975 edition of *Village News*.
[50] See, for example, the book Carmichael co-authored. Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 2-6.
[51] Mills, *The Empire Within*, 115.
[52] *Ibid*., 107; Martel, "'Riot at Sir George Williams: Giving Meaning to Student Dissent," 103.

Society."[53] For Rosie Douglas, Canada's record with regard to the extermination of the Indigenous population and the oppression of Black peoples was put into the larger perspective of Anglo-Saxon imperialism. In the same article, Douglas examined the role of Canadian businesses and in the 20th century Caribbean, painting their workings as neo-colonial. As we will see in chapter 5, Haitian Montrealers put forth a strikingly similar critique. Rosie Douglas commented on the presence of Canadian troops in Jamaica, there supposedly to "acclimatize themselves to tropical conditions for the United Nations." The revolt against racial discrimination at Sir George Williams University, a bourgeois institution with links to the military and corporate elite, thereby took on multiple meanings for anti-colonial activists such as Douglas, who would eventually return to his native Dominica.[54]

While internationalist, the collectivity's discourses on gender equality, belonging, and citizenship were grounded in its everyday experiences in Montreal. In a 1968 episode of *Tirez au clair*, for example, Jacques Keable hosted a roundtable with members of Montreal's growing and diverse Black community. During the discussion, participants, who included the Haitian-born Vivian Barbot, a future Fédération des femmes du Québec president, expressed a wide-range of opinions. As Anglophones and Francophones, native-born and recent arrivals, men and women, Black Montrealers experienced 1960s and 70s Montreal in a multitude of ways. Nevertheless, there was a noticeable consensus regarding the presence of discrimination in the housing sector, the workforce, and immigration law where Italians with low levels of formal schooling were chosen over well-educated Caribbean migrants. Likewise, French- and English-speakers voiced their

[53] Asher, "Red Nationalism on the Rise," *UHURU*, 2 March 1970, 7.
[54] Rosie Douglas, "Canadian Racism and Sir George," *UHURU*, 2 February 1970, 4-5.

anger at being refused service in downtown restaurants. Speaking to the racialized nature of gender relations, moreover, one Haitian-born man expressed his exasperation regarding the suspicious looks White women directed toward him on the subway, later drawing parallels between American-style segregation and its Canadian counterpart. The same person believed that the Québécois expression "travailler comme un nègre"[55] should be "banished," and, after some deliberation between invitees, another man, speaking French with an Anglophone accent, reminded the audience that this overt reference to the time of slavery was the "same thing" as the "speak white" slur directed towards Francophone Quebecers.[56] The past then, weighed heavily on the present, for the Black as well as Indigenous descendants of enslaved peoples.[57] Indeed, as David Austin argues in *Fear of a Black Nation*, "contemporary Canada has inherited the racial codes and attitudes that slavery engendered, and certainly the fact of slavery in Canada cannot be taken for granted."[58]

Similar sentiments were echoed in the writing of Anne Cools, the Barbados-born member of the Caribbean Conference Committee and one of the two SGWA "political prisoners." In an essay, Cools denounced the sexism and racism embedded in the economic and political systems, without denying the oppression of her male counterparts. She wrote: "Black women, the slaves of the slaves, can have no peace, no rest until they have evolved new social structures within which men can be Men, women can be

[55] As David Austin explains, this expression is "used to convey how hard one has worked on a given day." See ""Narratives of Power: Historical Mythologies in Contemporary Québec and Canada," *Race Class* 52, 1 (2010): 19-32, 24.
[56] "Vivian Barbot et la discrimination raciale," *Archives de Radio-Canada*, video, 40:32, 25 July 1968. http://archives.radio-canada.ca/sports/immigration/clips/15820/.
[57] Brett Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slaveries in New France* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).
[58] David Austin, *Fear of a Black Nation: Race, Sex, and Security in Sixties Montreal* (Toronto: Between the Lines Press, 2013), 7.

Women, and their children, freethinking creative human beings." Although an avid contributor to the discussions of the CCC, Anne Cools followed the same trajectory as many women involved with the 1960s Left. As David Austin explains, after experiencing the "stifling constraints of participating in groups that were largely controlled by men," Cools became an active feminist, working within the Black community, as well as multiracial settings.[59] For example, Anne Cools, Marlene Dixon, an American professor at McGill who will come up again in the next chapter, and others submitted a brief to the Indochinese Women's Conference, on behalf of the Montreal International Collective. Therein, the authors lauded Montreal as the most important site of revolutionary struggle in North America, and asserted Black peoples' right to self-determination.[60] The young women also participated in the Wages for Housework Campaign with Selma James, the wife of C.L.R. James. At the Montreal Feminist Symposium in 1973, for instance, Cools not only spearheaded the conference but also successfully presented the final resolution on salaries for homemakers. Significantly, White Francophone feminists were absent, as the McGill-hosted gathering was unilingual. Language then, in part shaped relations between feminists of all backgrounds.[61] Indicative of the pervasive whiteness within this

[59] David Austin, "An Embarrassment of Omissions, or Rewriting the Sixties: The Case of the Caribbean Conference Committee, Canada, and the Global New Left," In *New World Coming: The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness*, eds. Karen Dubinsky, Catherine Krull, Susan Lord, Sean Mills and Scott Rutherford (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2009), 368-370.

[60] Simon Fraser University Archives, Women's Movement Collection, F-166, File 2: Indochinese Women Conference, The Montreal International Collective, "Memorandum to the Interim Work Committee," 19 December 1970. The signers of the memo were Anne Cools, Marlene Dixon, Estelle Dorais, Susan Dubrofsky, Vickie Tabachnik, and Eileen Nixon.

[61] David Austin, "An Embarrassment of Omissions, or Rewriting the Sixties: The Case of the Caribbean Conference Committee, Canada, and the Global New Left," 370; For more on Anne Cools' role in the International Wages for Housework Campaign, see Louise Toupin, *Le salaire au travail ménager. Chronique d'une lutte féministe internationale (1972-1977)* (Montreal: Les Éditions du remue-ménage, 2014), 143-145. Also, in the words of Akua Benjamin, a Trinidadian-Torontonian: "Anne Cools came to one of these meetings, and she blasted the men. She challenged us women in the room as to why we were not talking. In those days, I just sat quietly in the back of the room. I would sit there and sweat. I was afraid to speak, afraid that I would get shut down. Anne cursed the men out, saying, 'fucking' this and 'fucking'

women's movement, however, Cools was the only, or one of the few, Black women in attendance at the latter event.[62] All of these instances bring to light the strong international component to Cools' activism, perhaps due to the intertwining influences of Black Power and Pan-Africanism.

Comparable to the United States then, where Black people had achieved legal parity after a long civil rights movement, African Canadians lagged behind in socio-economic equity. Still at a disadvantage in virtually every sphere of society, from the workforce to the education system, Black Montrealers were consequently conceiving alternative understandings of their oppression. Thus, some turned to the ideals of Black Power, since the concept of "internal colonialism," as some activists argued, better described their oppression, rather than a liberal understanding of prejudice where only individuals were held responsible.[63] Meanwhile, in Africa and the Caribbean, formal independence had been achieved for many countries, yet the economic domination of these newly-established states persisted, leading to new patterns of colonialism, or neo-colonialism. According to political scientist Robert Williams II, the "inherent ills" of global capitalism and racialism negatively impacting African-descended peoples around the world served to join the North American and Third World struggles together. The most obvious manifestation did not occur in the 1960s, but instead in 1974 with the 6th Pan-African Congress (6th PAC), held in Tanzania. Every continent was represented at the 6th PAC, from South America to Europe. The event "marked the beginning of

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that. We had never heard a woman talk like that. She really empowered me. After that I thought, 'I'm going to raise my voice.'" Quoted from *Judy Rebick, Ten Thousand Roses: the Making of a Feminist Revolution* (Toronto: Penguin Books, 2005), 9-10.

[62] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 2, File 2-14: Cools, Anne, Canada's First Black Senator: clippings file 1984, "Ann Cools: Close-Up with Charles Harding: 'Jail is torment'," *The Nation*, Sunday, 24 March 1974, 8.

[63] Carmichael and Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America*, 2-6.

revolutionary Pan-Africanism," a movement with strong echoes in Montreal, for both women and men.[64]

II. Black Women's Diaspora Activism

Building on their previous linkages with the Caribbean, the Montreal Black community continued to inscribe its activism in an anti-colonial, yet more specifically Afro-centric framework by the early 1970s. Women were key contributors in this shift, with a vested interest in forming alliances with Black Diasporas all over the world. On the occasion of an African Liberation Day rally in 1972, Dorothy Wills, going by her adopted name Abike, called on her "brothers and sisters" to help Africa to become "truly free and independent, because in so doing we are helping ourselves." She outlined the difficulties faced by the new African countries subjected to the Western-controlled market, and the challenges of being African-descended in Canada, a country where Blacks were "constantly crushed, hurt, brutalized, and dehumanized." International Black unity was one answer to overcoming this oppression, or, in the words of Wills, a means to reclaim a sense of self, to "do what needs to be done in order to realize my full potential and be a real person." For this community leader then, like the other Pan-Africanists of her time, the presence of the White power structure at home and ongoing economic domination abroad contributed to a far-reaching notion of "our brother's keeper."[65] By no means looking past local socio-economic barriers, the everyday tactics

[64] Robert Williams II, "From Anti-colonialism to Anti-apartheid: African American Political Organisations and African Liberation, 1957-93," In *African Americans in Global Affairs: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Michael Clemons (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2010), 69.
[65] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 7, File 7-9: Afrikan Liberation Day Message Delivered by "Abike" Dorothy Wills, Abike, "Statement to the Rally of the African Liberation Day, 12 May 1972," Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 7, File 7-9: Afrikan Liberation Day Message

behind the amelioration of Black peoples' lives employed by community leaders were on the contrary now embedded in a larger, collective quest for equality, where a weak regional community would hinder the global Pan-African movement.[66]

In Montreal, a city with a relatively small Black population, the internationalist rhetoric offered by Pan-Africanism resonated strongly, serving as a morale-boosting vocabulary to confront the challenges of daily life in a minority situation. The image of an African motherland, even if romanticized, fuelled the activism of many Black Montrealers, but especially those of West Indian origin. In fact, North American-based activists born in the Caribbean, from Marcus Garvey to Stokely Carmichael, were over-represented in the Pan-Africanist movement.[67] The autobiography of Rosemary Brown, the Jamaican-born politician who passed through Montreal before moving to Vancouver, offers insights into why this might be the case: they were exposed to anti-colonialism from an early age. Their migration to Canada or the United States, often to further their schooling in the case of the middle-classes, led to reconfiguration of their political beliefs, this time with a lived understanding of an international Black community and the difficulties of being in a majority White society for the first time. Brown, for instance, referred to her grandmother as the "first-and most political person" she had "ever known." She also discussed getting a single room at Royal Victoria College because no other resident accepted to bunk with her and the rejection she experienced at the hands of

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Delivered by "Abike" Dorothy Wills; Carmichael and Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America*, 9.

[66] Charles V. Hamilton, "Pan-Africanism and the Black Struggle in the U.S," *Black Scholar*, March 1971, 10-15.

[67] St. Clair Drake, "The Black Diaspora in Pan-African Perspective," *Black Scholar*, September 1975, 2-13.

White Anglophone and Francophone landladies.[68] When describing how she dealt with prejudice, however, Brown stated that,

> Unlike Black Americans and Black Canadians, I did not become a member of a racial minority group until I was an adult with a formed sense of myself. By then, it was too late to imprint on me the term 'inferior.' I knew that all the things that we were told Blacks could not do, all the jobs that were closed to us in this country, were in fact being done ably, competently and sometimes in a superior way by Blacks at home and in other parts of the world.[69]

Like many their Garveyite predecessors then, assertive 1970s Pan-Africanists adhered to the notion of a "Black international."[70] Not only did West Indians continue to play an integral role in this re-conceptualization of nationhood, but also so did women.

As a member of the Negro Citizenship Association, Dorothy Wills continued to frame resistance in terms of unequal access to socio-economic resources. For this activist, however, Pan-Africanism was now the answer to the second-class citizenship status faced by Black peoples in Canada:

> Do you have any idea the psychological implications for you and I if we were to live to see the liberation of Afrika? Can you imagine what dual Citizenship would mean to you and I and all Black people? It would mean that we would have an alternative available to us –that we would no longer be doomed to a life sentence of white domination –but we would have the choice of going back home where we originated –indeed where human life originated.[71]

Rosemary Brown later became the first Black woman to be elected to political office in 1972. Yet, as evidenced by the articles in *UHURU*, African Canadians perceived the

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[68] Rosemary Brown, *Being Brown: A Very Public Life* (Toronto: Random House, 1989), 11, 25, 30,
[69] *Ibid*., 32.
[70] For more on the Black international see, Michael West, William Martin, and Fanon Che Wilkins, eds., *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International since the Age of Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).
[71] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 7, File 7-9: Afrikan Liberation Day Message Delivered by "Abike" Dorothy Wills **"**Address for African Liberation Day, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Saturday Morning –26 May 1973."

electoral system to be out of reach.[72] Since Black leaders understood the structural barriers they faced as part of a larger dynamic, as we have seen with the CCC and the SGWA, the activism they professed was organized accordingly. Furthermore, because local community organising- leading to transnational connections- lay in the informal sphere, women could wield more influence. Indeed, feminist scholars refute the notion that women are less political than men, by pointing to women's participation outside the parameters of the formal political process.[73] The same could be said for African Canadian women's activism in Montreal. This reality had the perhaps unintended consequence of allowing a space for women on the international stage, in the capacities of "unofficial" diplomacy.

For instance, Dorothy Wills was a delegate to the 1974 Sixth Pan-African Congress, monumentally held on African soil, in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Moreover, Amy Jacques Garvey was an international sponsor and Brenda Paris from Montreal and Augustine Inguitia from Toronto were on the North America Executive committee.[74] This gathering of African-descended peoples from all over the world was also the first time women's issues were addressed at a PAC. Delegates from a range of countries and organisations resolved, "to give [their] total support to the political struggles for equality undertaken by Black women" as well as "tackle the problems of the oppression of women

[72] Dawn P. Williams, "Rosemary Brown," In *Black Success and Black Excellence in Canada: A Contemporary Directory* (Toronto: D.P. Williams and Associates, 2002), 87; For examples of mistrust in the political system, see Larry Clark, "Letters," *UHURU*, 15 September 1969, 2 or T.E. Merry, "The Political System and Minority Groups," *Contrast*, 31 March 1969, 14.

[73] Cris Corrin, *Feminist Perspectives on Politics* (Edinburgh: Pearson Education Limited, 1999), x; For more on a feminist approach to studying international relations, see Annick Wibben, "Feminist International Relations: Old Debates and New Directions," *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 10, 2 (2004): 97-114.

[74] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 6, File 6-16 : Sixth Pan Afrikan Congress, Dar es Salaam 1974, Dorothy Willis represented the National Black Coalition of Canada: travel materials. "Letter from the Sixth Pan African Congress, North American Region Secretariat. 10 April 1974." See left side margin.

thoroughly and profoundly." In spite of these noble claims, women's voices were still marginalised, since very few of the published documents included, or were authored, by women. It was not until the 7th Pan African Congress convened in Kampala, Uganda in 1994 that feminist demands were explicitly placed on the agenda.[75] Nevertheless, Dorothy Wills commented extremely positively on her experience in Dar es Salaam, where as guests of the Tanzanian government, African Canadians "were extended the hand of brotherhood, and treated like long lost relatives." She described the Congress as "edifying, gratifying, intellectually stimulating, and emotionally satisfying" in the National Black Coalition of Canada newsletter she edited, *Village News* (also known by its Swahili name, *Habari Kijiji*).[76] In August of the same year, during a speech Wills gave in Nova Scotia and later re-published in *Contrast*, the Black newspaper with the largest circulation in Canada, she reported that "it was beyond description to see, assembled in Nkrumah Hall, Blacks from around the world seeking a solution to problems which we all face."[77]

As evidenced by Montreal's delegation to the 6th Pan-African Congress and the foundation of the National Black Coalition of Canada in 1973, an umbrella group linking, for example, the Guyana Association of Toronto and the Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, African Canadian leaders fostered a diasporic nation-building process, establishing autonomous institutions as well as Afro-centric values. In

[75] Zaline Makini Roy-Campbell, "Pan-African Women Organising for the Future: The Formation of the Pan African Women's Liberation Organisation and Beyond," *African Journal of Political Science New Series* 1, 1 (1996): 45-57, 47.
[76] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 4, File 4-20: National Coalition of Canada *Habari Kijiji* (*Village News*) Newsletter edited by Dorothy Wills, "The Sixth Pan African Congress," *Village News*, September 1974.
[77] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 7, File 7-12: "Black Cultural Development," Keynote Address given by Dorothy Willis, Halifax, Nova Scotia. August 1974, Dorothy Wills, "Black Cultural Development" Keynote Address, Halifax 1974.

Dorothy Wills' African Liberation Day speeches, for instance, Julius Nyerere's African socialism, or *Ujamaa* was held up as a foil to North American "individualistic" and "materialistic" society."[78] The radically anti-colonial ideology based on the extended family was conceived as a method of doing away with Western, capitalistic ways of thinking. By encouraging Black peoples across the world to embrace each other as brothers and sisters, the family to which they belonged to extended "beyond the tribe, the community, the nation, or even the continent."[79] When reporting on the adhesion of the NBCC to the "Committee of Many," the brainchild of the Elders of the Black Community conference in Chicago, Dorothy Wills encouraged this logic, because, she like her counterparts, was looking for, in her words, "a sense of belonging...which is so lacking in our huge impersonal metropolitan cities."[80] Pan Africanist ideology was therefore not only an idiom of critique and resistance, but also served as a means to bring together on positive terms a culturally disparate Canadian, Montreal, and global Black community.

Similarly, the Black Value System permeated the rhetoric of the community leadership, serving as an ideological basis for autonomy. During a "think in" on Black culture, Dorothy Wills pointed to the role these Afro-centric principles- unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith- could serve in encouraging the next generation to participate in the struggle. One way to advance intergenerational solidarity and pride was to create a

[78] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 7, File 7-9: Afrikan Liberation Day Message Delivered by "Abike" Dorothy Wills, "Statement to the Rally of the African Liberation Day, May 12, 1972 by Abike; Julius K. Nyerere, "African Socialism: *Ujamaa* in Practice," *Black Scholar*, February 1971, 7.
[79] Julius K. Nyerere, "African Socialism: *Ujamaa* in Practice," *Black Scholar*, February 1971, 7. Julius Nyerere was Tanzania's first president and the visionary behind *ujamaa*.
[80] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 4, File 4-20: National Coalition of Canada *Habari Kijiji* (*Village News*) Newsletter edited by Dorothy Wills, "The NBCC as an Extended Family," *Village News*, March 1974.

parallel school system, presented by Wills in Pan-Africanist fashion, as a means to restore "our former grandeur."[81] Relying upon her capacities as a teacher, and perhaps her experience at the 1973 Educators for Africa Workshop as well,[82] Wills and the Quebec Board of Black Educators promoted parallel educational initiatives such as the Dacosta-Hall Summer Programme in order to offset the racist presumptions of White teachers in day schools. By learning in an Afro-centric milieu, according to some leaders, Black identity could be positively reinforced.[83] Because like other racialized communities, Montrealers of African descent were systematically channelled into the vocational-technical stream and consistently portrayed as invisible to the Canadian social fabric through an ethnocentric curriculum.[84] Or as the Dorothy Wills stressed during a presentation to the Protestant School Board of Montreal, "White Canadians tend to see all Blacks as immigrants anyway, and treat us as such whether we just stepped off an Air Canada Flight from the Caribbean or claim to be fifth generation Canadian."[85] In other words, the predominant perception of African Canadians as exotic Others led to an

[81] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 4, File 4-20: National Coalition of Canada *Habari Kijiji* (*Village News*) Newsletter edited by Dorothy Wills, "Quebec Board of Black Educators Workshop," *Village News*, April 1975.
[82] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 1, File 1-1: Dorothy Wills: Curriculum vitae, biographical information, and professional associations, "Curriculum Vitae."
[83] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 7, File 7-11: "Problems Facing Black Women in North American Society" Address given by Dorothy Willis to the "Think In" on Black Culture August 26-31, 1974, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, "Think In" on Black Culture August 26-31 1974: Address on the Problems Facing Black Women in North American Society by Abike (Dorothy Wills)." For the QBBE see Williams, *The Road to Now*, 125.
[84] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 1, File 1-22: The Black Community Work Group in Education, "Final Report on the Aspirations and Expectations of the Quebec Black Community with regards to Education" Submitted by: The Black Community Work Group in Education to the: Comite d'etude sur les Affaires Interconfessionnelles et Interculturelles du Conseil superieur de l'Education, Montreal July 1978."
[85] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 7, File 7-15: "The Cultural Differences of the Black Child in the Canadian School System," Dorothy Wills, "The Cultural Differences of the Black Child in the Canadian School System. Prepared for workshop discussion to be held at the P.S.B.G.M," 2 May 1975.

institution-building process, the necessity of which not only bolstered internationalist Black Nationalism but also the appropriation of another type of national identity.[86]

For Black community leaders, the Black Value System and the Extended Family of Black People were not recent developments. Rather, they served to reclaim the past, simultaneously projecting the globally dispersed African nation into a brighter future, or lifting Black people to "our traditional greatness." As one *Black Scholar* author wrote, "A nation coming into being is a new creation. It must be willed into existence by itself. It is new-it is literally something other than what exists." He went on to assert: "We can build *ourselves* into a conscious nation once again-that we can free ourselves, from the chain of white commitment..." As in the case in other "modern" nations then, African Diaspora history in part served nationalistic purposes.[87] As a Black woman, Wills and others like her could have had a vested interest in this diasporic re-conceptualization of nationhood, seeing less barriers, less rigid hierarchies with which to contend outside the official workings of the racist and sexist nation-state.[88] Perhaps women of African descent would have gladly reappraised their role in history for the reason that within this interpretation they were not invisible, as they were in the White Canadian and Québécois national

[86] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 7, File 7-19: Addresses by Dorothy Willis delivered to Black Graduations and Community Dinners (1968-1975), Dorothy Wills, Speech "Rally 6pm George Brown College Toronto."
[87] Imamy Ameer Baraka (LeRoi Jones), "A Black Value System," *Black Scholar*, November 1969, 54-60.
[88] Exploring the possibilities offered by Diaspora, Richard Iton criticizes the idea of the nation-state: "Toward this end, it might be argued that the nation itself, as a modern emergence, cannot sustain nonwhite aspirations for emancipation and that such projects require the decentring of the nation-state and the decoupling to colored subjectivities and the limiting framework of the national." In the same book, he also writes: "It is in the context that we think of diaspora as both mapping and contesting racial hierarchies, and as containing traces and suggesting potential ways of being beyond the extended problem spaces of coloniality and modernity." See Richard Iton, *In Search of Black Fantastic: Politics and Popular Culture in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 193, 203. There is a comparable literature criticizing the gendered nature of the nation-state. See, for example, Nira Yuval-Davis, "Women, Citizenship and Difference," *Feminist Review* 57 (1997): 4-27.

narratives.[89] In the Pan-African version of events, as Dorothy Wills explained, they were instead the mothers of the "great militarists of antiquity" and the descendants of "the Queens of Ethiopia and Egypt."[90] Stated otherwise, a revisionist understanding of history was linked to Pan-African, as well as African Canadian notions of nationhood, and for Wills, at least, it allowed for the unacknowledged historical presence of Black women in Montreal and elsewhere.

In sum, the Black Value System, combined with African socialism and reinforced by a renewed, sometimes romanticized interest in African and Diaspora history, provided the intellectual and ideological basis for a worldwide, "imagined community" of Black peoples. Of course the nation-building tactic was more in the realm of the theoretical than based on everyday experience but this type of rhetoric still served as an impetus, a direction for local activism.[91] Community organising on the ground translated into cross-border alliances, both imaginary and, in some cases, real, because, in fact, the Pan-Africanist atmosphere of the times allowed for face-to-face meetings. Wills for instance used her time in Dar es Salaam strategically, speaking "with as many representatives of the liberation groups as possible in an attempt to discover how we, on the North American continent, could assist in the struggle for the liberation of Africa....without being on the African continent." In Tanzania, this woman activist discovered that printing

[89] For a study on the invisibility of African Canadian women in Canadian and Québécois history, see the work of community organizer, lawyer, and Congress of Black Women member, Esmeralda Thornhill: *Le revers de la médaille. Des oublis de l'histoire* Commission de droits de la personne du Québec. Montreal, 13 July 1982. Found in LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 6, File 6-18: Thornhill, Esmeralda: copies of her reports. 1982-1984.

[90] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 7, File 7-11: "Problems Facing Black Women in North American Society," Address given by Dorothy Wills to the "Think In" on Black Culture August 26-31, 1974. Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, "Think In" on Black Culture August 26-31 1974: Address on the Problems Facing Black Women in North American Society by Abike (Dorothy Wills)."

[91] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 4, File 4-20: National Coalition of Canada *Habari Kijiji* (*Village News*) Newsletter edited by Dorothy Wills, "The Sixth Pan African Congress." *Village News*, September 1974.

costs were very high, so since coming back to Canada, she printed and resent 2000 copies of PAC Azania's propaganda booklet, a South African liberationist group.[92] African Canadians therefore played a role in the global struggle against apartheid. More than a practical response, however, sending printed material served to reinforce, or even create, affective and personal ties between Africa and the Montreal Diaspora. In effect, Pan-Africanism since its inception at the turn of century was frequently termed Black Zionism, in that, now far-flung peripheries looked to another centre, one where they were not necessarily born.[93]

Like the establishment of Israel for World Jewry, the formation of independent of African nation-states served to shift the focus of Black peoples towards the "Motherland." [94] Thus, as decolonization accelerated, people of African descent, including, and perhaps especially, those born in the Caribbean, directed their attention to the African continent, essentially creating diasporic linkages where ones did not exist before. For example, Dorothy Wills, as previously mentioned, printed and shipped anti-apartheid propaganda booklets. As illustrated by the letters she received in return, her contribution to the South African liberation movement was greatly appreciated. She was described as "a great soul, real daughter of Mother Afrika" by the author of one letter, Elias L. Ntloedibe of Dar es Salaam.[95] Also writing from Tanzania, Okdt Bernard R Seme's letter in 1975 echoed a similar sentiment: "I am taking this opportunity to say thank you very much for all you did to us and the kindness you showed us while we were

[92] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 5, File 5-10: Pan African Congress (Azania) Project-Contributions for printing "Policy and Programme of the PAC of Azania, one of the liberation movement in South Africa, 1974, Dorothy Wills, Letter to the NBCC, 14 September 1974.
[93] Dufoix, *La dispersion: une histoire des usages du mot Diaspora*, 264-265.
[94] *Ibid*.
[95] LAC**,** Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 1, File 1-7: File of personal correspondence titled "The Struggle and Me" (1971-1979), Elias L. Ntloedible, Letter to Dorothy Wills, Dar-Es-Salaam, 21 November 1974.

in [Montreal].... The feeling I had while I was there is of the kind that makes someone less lonely and more at home than ever. We have mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers in Canada."[96] Wills was therefore a well-respected activist of Pan-African renown, further confirming the reputation of Black women regarding the key and recognized role they played within the community, in this case, worldwide.[97]

Indeed, Dorothy Wills' excellent reputation extended back to Montreal. Reporting on the foundation of the National Black Coalition of Canada (NBCC) in *Contrast*, a journalist wrote: "You didn't hear so much about women's lib at that time, but the men who knew of her abilities had no doubt that she would lead the [NBCC] before long," which she eventually did in 1972. Her leadership position was never called into question during this period because "you felt she had the talent, experience and charisma to make it work."[98] Positive feelings went both ways. When honoured at the Black Awards Banquet in 1976, Wills described the motivating force behind her involvement when she said, "It is a tremendous feeling of reciprocal love by the Black Community." Despite the mutual singing of praises, however, the woman activist was still hailed by the newspaper as "a brilliant example of a Black woman's contribution to the Black man's struggle for liberation."[99] These questionable semantics, however offhand or colloquial, were perhaps indicative of the lack of extensive gender-based analyses.[100] This analytical oversight was in contrast to the various forms of Black Nationalism, Marxism, and Socialism discussed

[96] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 1, File 1-7: File of personal correspondence titled "The Struggle and Me" (1971-1979), Okdt. Bernard R Seme, Letter to Dorothy Wills, Dar-Es-Salaam, 31 December 1975.
[97] Williams, *The Road to Now*, 52.
[98] John Harewood, "NBCC Leaders: Bayne, Wills, Clarke," *Contrast*, 24 October 1975, 6-7.
[99] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 5, File 5-1: National Black Coalition of Canada "The National Black Awards of Canada," 1976 Forward by Abike (Dorothy Wills), Extract "Dorothy Wills: The Persistent Apostle of Identity, Unity, Liberation."
[100] David Austin, "An Embarrassment of Omissions, or Rewriting the Sixties: The Case of the Caribbean Conference Committee, Canada, and the Global New Left," 370.

at length by these organisations' leaders and in the Black world more generally.[101] In other terms, the "woman question" was not fully incorporated into many forms of Black Nationalism.

III. The Congress of Black Women

The opening remarks of Rosemary Brown - the first Black women to be elected to political office- on the occasion of the first National Congress for Black Women, held in Toronto on 7 April 1973, outlined the differing, duality in Black women's thought. As Brown stated, "Because we are Black and because we are female, this conference has given us the opportunity to explore the two liberation struggles which we are sitting astride at this moment." She went on explain the difficulty of walking this tightrope, recounting the surprise many people expressed when they realized she was an active participant in women's movement, which in her view was because they expected her to be exclusively concerned with Black liberation. This amazement came from men and women alike, whereas, in her words, "to not participate in the Women's Liberation movement would be to deny my womanhood." This unique positionality, that is, as a Black woman at the crossroads of two struggles for social justice, shaped African-descended women's perception of Canadian society. As Brown affirmed, "To be Black and female in a society which is both racist and sexist is to be in the unique position of having nowhere to go but up! And to be in the unique position of learning about survival from being able to observe at very close range the Archilles heel of a very great nation." As a proportion of the community was "confined to the most menial and lowest paying

[101] See, for example, Maulana Ron Karenga, "Which Road: Nationalism, Pan-Africanism, or Socialism?," *Black Scholar*, October 1974, 21-31.

occupations," in the words of Brown, Black women's activism, even in women-led political spaces, was by necessity far-reaching and extended beyond strictly gender issues.[102]

Membership in Montreal's male-dominated political groups then, did not preclude women leaders from founding their own organisation. On the contrary, the Montreal Regional Committee of the Congress of Black Women of Canada (Congress) became a major institution within the community as of the early 1970s and *Village News* regularly reported on its events.[103] As founding members Shirley Small and Esmeralda Thornhill explain, the Coloured Women's Club of Montreal was the "progenitor" to the Quebec-chapter of Congress.[104] In 1973, the Canadian Negro Women's Association organized the first Congress of Black Women, attended by 500 women from across Canada, and the CWC hosted, a year later, another overwhelmingly successful gathering, this time under the theme "The Black Woman and her Family," in Montreal. Meetings held across the country, from Halifax to Edmonton, followed these initial conventions.[105] While multigenerational, with a strong presence of older women, the 1973 conference proceedings hint at generational divisions. As stated in the introduction, "There was enthusiastic participation by the delegates in expressing their various viewpoints, from the seemingly impatient sentiments of the youth to the more tempered outlook of the

[102] The Canadian Negro Women's Association, "Report of the First National Congress of Black Women 6-8 April 1973, Westbury Hotel, Toronto, Canada." Found in LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 9, File 9-23: Canadian Negro Women's Association –Report of the first National Congress of Black Women held 6-8 April 1973 Toronto. Hereafter referred to as "Report of the First National Congress of Black Women."

[103] See, for example, "Second Congress of Black Women," *Village News*, September 1974. There were similar articles in the October and December 1974 issues of *Village News*. See LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 4, File 4-20: National Coalition of Canada *Habari Kijiji* (*Village News*) Newsletter edited by Dorothy Wills.

[104] Shirley Small and Esmeralda M.A. Thornhill, "Harambec! Quebec Black Women Pulling Together," *Journal of Black Studies* 38, 3 (2008): 427-442, 430.

[105] See the Coloured Women's Club's website http://colouredwomensclub.tripod.com.

senior citizen." As evidenced by Rosemary Brown's opening remarks, however, there was an underlying message of togetherness and an understood importance placed on the creation of affective ties between women of all ages and national provenances. Indeed, women born in Canada, the U.S., the Caribbean, including Haiti, and Africa were involved since its inception, when Congress resolved that this "cooperation, joint action and community work must be based on informed mutual respect, reciprocal information, and a conscious political analysis of the international, economic and military system."[106] Reporting in *Village News*, Dorothy Wills, for instance, described the galvanizing effects of the 1974 Montreal meeting had on Black women: "What can we say, except that we seem to be becoming more self-sufficient each day as we acquire the necessary skills to run our own show. Maybe one day we will run our own community and it will be a glorious day."[107] In other words, the Congress of Black Women's initial conferences were undoubtedly an historic and momentous occasion.

Writing on feminism in Britain, Hazel V. Carby argues that key concepts such as the family, patriarchy, and reproduction which are "central to feminist theory become problematic in their application to Black women's lives."[108] Indeed, African Canadian women struggled with these issues. For example, the Committee addressing issue of birth control at the 1973 Congress of Black Women, which included Anne Cools, was prepared for serious discussion on the matter; however the conversation was deemed inappropriate "once the subject of 'Genocide' was raised from the floor." Referring to

[106] The Canadian Negro Women's Association, "Report of the First National Congress of Black Women."
[107] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 4, File 4-20: National Coalition of Canada *Habari Kijiji* (*Village News*) Newsletter edited by Dorothy Wills, "Second National Congress of Black Women a Tremendous Success," *Village News*, December 1974.
[108] Hazel V. Carby, "White Women listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood," In *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain*. Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham (London: Hutchinson and Co. Publishers Limited, 1982), 214.

reproductive rights, Angela Davis notes that the "cries of genocide" on the part of Black women, while seemingly "an exaggerated-even paranoiac-reaction," stemmed from the movement's historical advocacy of involuntary sterilization, "a racist form of mass 'birth control'."[109] As Rosemary Brown stated at the same conference, however, "I cannot accept the theory that the most valuable contribution that I have to make to the Black struggle is that of giving birth to additional Black male children."[110] As the two, not necessarily conflicting perspectives illustrate, Black women could not separate gender concerns from structural racism.[111] Therefore, Congress was concerned with "Conception Control as it pertains to the birth of children into a society where there is no 'home' situation for them." Referring to out-adoption, the conference proceedings indicated, "That black women, in particular single migrant women, were sexually exploited by black men and by white men." Some had children out of wedlock and were forced, out of circumstance, to put their children up for adoption.[112] Numerous sides of this issue were addressed at the 1973 Congress of Black Women convention from the pitiful assistance available to single mothers and the racial biases in the social service sector, to the community's attitudes towards young mothers and intra-communal adoption.[113]

To paraphrase Patricia Hill Collins and Evelyn Higginbotham, the concepts of race and family have been double-edged swords for African-Americans, in that, rather than strictly oppressive and, in the case of the family, a site of gendered inequality, they have been frequently relied upon for oppositional purposes and mobilized as a means to

[109] Angela Davis, "Racism, Birth Control and Reproductive Rights," In *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: a Reader*, eds. Reina Lewis and Sara Mills (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 2003), 354, 363.
[110] The Canadian Negro Women's Association, "Report of the First National Congress of Black Women."
[111] Jennifer Nelson, *Women of Color and the Reproductive Rights Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 2-4.
[112] Dubinsky, *Babies without Borders*, 72-73.
[113] The Canadian Negro Women's Association, "Report of the First National Congress of Black Women."

liberation and resistance.[114] We notice traces of these discourses in Montreal. For instance, the same year Dorothy Wills went to Dar es Salam, she authored a series of articles in *Contrast* entitled "The Status of the Black Woman Today." Exemplifying the political leanings of their author at the time, these articles were infused with Pan-African language. As Wills editorialized, "The role of the Black woman in the liberation struggle cannot be underestimated and this is the way it ought to be. We have a role to play wherever we are." When in Tanzania, Black women brought medical supplies to freedom fighters and donated blood and, in Canada, they had an integral role to play in the family, raising children to embody the Black Value System.[115] By heading important community institutions and traveling to the United States and Africa, Dorothy Wills was evidently not an advocate of a passive, subordinate role for women. For this leader, revolutionary motherhood was instead a means to counteract the hegemonic whiteness faced by African Canadians when, for example, children were racially slighted at school and came home in tears, seeking comfort. By transmitting racial pride to children, the reasoning went; they would grow up ready to contribute to the struggle. For Wills and others like her, mothers were therefore playing the all-important role of dictating "the shaping of tomorrow and the building of the Black nation." Through their empowerment in the home, Black women were contributing to the well-being of their families and, by extension, the entire community because "a nation is comprised of units."[116]

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[114] Patricia Hill Collins, "It's All in the Family: Intersections of Gender, Race, and Nation," *Hypatia* 13, 3 Border Crossings: Multicultural and Postcolonial Feminist Challenges to Philosophy, Part 2 (1998), 62-82, 63; 77; See Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, "African-American Women and the Metalanguage of Race," *Signs* 17, 2 (1992), 251-274, 267-268.

[115] Dorothy Wills, "The status of the Black woman today," *Contrast*, 13 September 1972, 14.

[116] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 7, File 7-23: "The Status of the Black Woman in Today's World," by Dorothy Willis, Workshop Paper, Dorothy Wills, Workshop Paper entitled "The Status of the Black Women in Today's World."

Similar to the Coloured Women's Club of Montreal, the Congress of Black Women was gravely concerned with Canadian immigration law practices, appointing an "Immigration Committee," which included Juanita Westmoreland-Traoré, to deal with 1973 Green Paper changes. The latter proved "more discriminatory towards Black and Third World peoples."[117] Race and gender went hand in hand, producing, as discussed at Congress, a "marked imbalance in the male/female ratio of immigrants in the black community."[118] Indeed, the plight of domestic servants, though independent agents with their own agendas and migration strategies, was on the minds of Congress attendees. In general, the community leadership was concerned with the widespread reports of abuse under the auspices of the 1955 West Indian Domestic Scheme.[119] More specifically, employment in domestic service (i.e. working directly under White women) was one of the few ways by which Black women could migrate to Canada prior to 1962 and, for women already in the country, finding a foothold in non-domestic labour force was a struggle.[120] In the post-World War II period, the federal government turned to the West Indies to satisfy its demand for this form of cheap female labour. With business interests in the Caribbean, Ottawa was forced to comply with these countries' push to ease population pressure and unemployment. This strategy only came about, however, after European women refused to fit the bill. In the early 1950s, Italians and Greeks promptly abandoned domestic service –the most reviled of professions, where sexual harassment,

[117] The Canadian Negro Women's Association, "Report of the First National Congress of Black Women."
[118] *Ibid*.
[119] Frances Henry, "The West Indian Domestic Scheme in Canada," *Expression* (years unknown), 14-24.
[120] Dionne Brand, "'We weren't allowed to go into factory work until Hitler started the war': The 1920s to the 1940s," In " '*We're Rooted Here and They Can't Pull Us Up." Essays in African Canadian Women's History*, eds. Peggy Bristow, et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 190.

among other indignities, was a constant threat -almost immediately upon arrival.[121] Black Caribbean women then, were locked in the worst jobs in the country or kept out all together, due to a combination of legal and social practices where they were simultaneously stereotyped as "mammys," "Aunt Jemimas," "promiscuous," and "single parents."[122]

The Congress of Black Women consequently stressed "the centrality of race and racism" in the lives of Black women as well as the salience of triple oppression, that is, race, gender, class.[123] According to sociologist Jennifer Mills, Congress in turn reached out to other women based on a shared "anti-racist, anti-sexist, and anti-imperialist ideology." In 1974, for example, the organisation expressed "its solidarity with Indigenous peoples and communicated with the Quebec Native Women's Council to explore ways and means of collaboration in the struggle for justice."[124] Indeed, in an article on domestic servants, sociologist and Congress member Agnes Calliste emphasized the role Canadian overseas imperialism played in the Caribbean, linking the presence of foreign banks and insurance companies to the underdevelopment of the region.[125] This unequal rapport was long-standing. During the First World War, Ottawa even wanted the West Indies to join the federation. Historian Paula Hastings outlines Canada's expansionist designs in the Carribean, connecting the country's own desire for

[121] See Franca Iacovetta, "'Primitive Villagers and Uneducated Girls': Canada Recruits Domestics from Italy, 1951-52," *Canadian Women's Studies* 7, 8 (1986): 14-18; Noula Mina, "Taming and Training Greek "Peasant Girls" and the Gendered Politics of Whiteness in Postwar Canada: Canadian Bureaucrats and Immigrant Domestics, 1950s-1960s," *Canadian Historical Review* 94, 4 (2013): 514-539.
[122] Agnes Calliste, "Canada's Immigration Policy and Domestics from the Caribbean: The Second Domestic Scheme," In *Canada Women: A Reader*, eds. Wendy Mitchinson, et al. (Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company, Canada, 1996), 380-405, 282.
[123] Small and Thornhill, "Harambec! Quebec Black Women Pulling Together," 427-442.
[124] Jennifer Mills, "Conferencing as a Site for the Mobilization of Black Feminist Identities in the Congress of Black Women of Canada," *Journal of Black Studies* (2015): 1-17, 15.
[125] Calliste, "Canada's Immigration Policy and Domestics from the Caribbean," 381.

autonomy within the British Empire to a race-based colonial project. Discrimination against migrants in Canada, however, not only reinforced transnational forms of Black resistance but also "contributed to an emerging collective consciousness among West Indians that was increasingly anathema to white colonial rule-whether from Bridgetown, Ottawa, or London."[126] With similar concerns and positionalities, Black women therefore sought out Indigenous women. They too were grappling with colonial and postcolonial forms of racism.

The Congress of Black Women thus engaged in anti-racist education initiatives – not unlike, as we saw in the previous chapter, the Quebec Native Women's Association. In 1973, for instance, participants in the workshop session on education, where Gwen Lord, Joan Lawrence, Marjorie Griffiths, and Marion de Jean represented Montreal, made four recommendations. Firstly, they sought the creation of community planned daycare and nursing centres, outside of "the aegis of the public school system and staffed by "people experienced with living in the black community." Secondly, they advised that school curricula give "proper recognition to our ethnic contributions, past and present." Thirdly, they advocated on behalf of immigrant students, suggesting that these newcomers "be given courses to orient them to their new academic environment." Finally, they demanded that teacher-training colleges, in response to an increasingly multiracial Canada, help teachers "free themselves from of those stereotypes which can prejudice their relationships with children."[127] In contrast, the Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ), for example, focused strictly on the elimination of gender stereotypes, the latter one of its founding principles and a key component behind its push to establish the

[126] Paula Hastings, "Territorial Spoils, Transnational Black Resistance, and Canada's Evolving Autonomy during the First World War." *Histoire sociale/Social History* 47, 94 (2014) : 443-470.
[127] The Canadian Negro Women's Association, "Report of the First National Congress of Black Women."

Conseil du statut de la femme.[128] In fact, in 1978, after a meeting organized by Quebec's Human Rights Commission attended by Congress as well as the Quebec Native Women's Association, Sheila Finestone wrote in the FFQ's newsletter that "On peut penser aussi que les associations féminines seront plus vigilantes en ce qui trait à l'élimination du racisme tout autant que du sexisme dans le matériel scolaire."[129] This was the first and last time, however, that the Fédération evoked the racial biases in Quebec's curriculum.[130] Only a year later, conversely, some Congress members participated in a working group, dedicating to rectifying the unequal place of Black children in the province's education system.[131] In the early 1980s, moreover, Congress convinced Camille Laurin, the Minister of Educaton, to redact a story about a Black boy who was rewarded blue eyes for good behaviour from the textbook, *La lecture sous toutes ses formes.*[132]

The Congress of Black Women was an inherently transnational women's organisation, paying much greater attention to happenings abroad in conjunction with – though never separate from -local matters. As we have seen, Black women were imbued with the ideologies of Black Power and Pan-Africanism and often employed them in mixed-gender settings, like the 6th Pan-African Congress. These two modes of thought carried over to the political activities of women's groups. In the an article on

[128] "A Women's Bureau." Brief presented to the Honourable Robert Bourassa by the Federation des femmes du Quebec (November 1971).
[129] Sheila Finestone, Une journée à la Commission des droits à la personne," *Bulletin de la FFQ*, April-May 1978, 8.
[130] Ghislaine Patry-Buisson, a former FFQ president, mentioned Westmoreland's role in representing Congress at FFQ meetings in the mid-1970s. Interview with author.
[131] Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, *L'école et les enfants de divers groupes ethniques et religieux: recommandation au ministre de l'éducation* (Quebec City: Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, 1979). The Black community's working group was as follows: Esmeralda Thornhill (president), Maryse Alcindor-Jeanty, Sylvia Cheitenham, Paul Déjean, Cyril E. Dickson, Wiadimir Jeanty, Ashton Lewis, Manuel Lima, Charles Pierre-Jacques, Alwin Spence, Charles Tardieu-Dehoux, Winston Williams, Dorothy Wills.
[132] Jane Kouka-Ganga, "Femmes noires au Canada," *Les Cahiers de la femme* 4, 2 (1982): 29-30.

"consciousness raising," published in the 1977 proceedings of the Congress of Black women, Agnes Calliste argued for a "unified effort, not only among Black women in Canada but among Black women throughout the world." Evoking the writings of Frances Beal, American civil rights activist and founder of the Third World Women's Alliance, Calliste continued: "For despite the differences in our cultural backgrounds, we have one thing in common: the double jeopardy of being Black and female."[133] At the same conference, Congress women also expressed their "solidarity with struggles of peoples of Namibia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa for their liberation against colonialism and from apartheid and demands that the Canadian government stop any form of aid to the racist government of Ian Smith and L. Vorster."[134] Speaking in Chicago in 1982 on "Race and Class in Canada: The Case of Blacks in Quebec," Esmeralda Thornhill similarly outlined the global imperative of anti-racism, "With racism in OUR part of the country being just as volatile as in any other place in the world –whether it be Soweto, the Deep South, or Montreal –the Black response, in the face of this common adversity can be nothing less than that of the very large extended family of the African Diaspora pulling shoulder to shoulder."[135] "As long as apartheid exists in South Africa," as Thornhill stated in another venue, "It makes it more difficult for me to deal with racism on the streets of

[133] Frances Beal, "Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female," In *The Black Woman: An Anthology*, ed. Toni Cade (New York: New American Library, 1979), 90-100.
[134] See Joella H. Gipson, PhD, ed., *Impetus –The Black Woman: Proceedings of the Fourth National Congress of Black Women of Canada* (Windsor, Ontario, August 19-21, 1977). This document was located in Library and Archives Canada.
[135] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds MG 31 H179 Volume 6, File 6-18: Thornhill, Esmeralda: copies of her reports. "Race and Class in Canada: The Case of Blacks in Quebec." Presented by Esmeralda Thornhill to the National Council for Black Studies VI Annual Conference "Academic Excellence and Social Responsibility: Science and Politics in Black Studies." Chicago, 17-20 March 1982.

Montreal."[136] Indeed, Congress participated in a 1980 conference, *La femme sous apartheid*, organized by the Ligue des femmes du Québec.[137] Much more research needs to be done, however, on the role African Canadian women played in the anti-apartheid struggle.

In contexts where women predominated then, African Canadian women maintained an internationalist mindset. So when the Congress of Black Women resolved to intervene in favour of including domestic servants under the Minimum Wage Act, insisting the latter benefit from social security measures, or attended the trial of Haitian exiles facing deportation defended by Congress member Juanita Westmoreland, they were not strictly acting within the national sphere, but as members of a global Diaspora.[138] In other words, Montreal's women activists continued to exercise a form of "dissident transnational citizenship," to borrow the terminology of Daiva Stasiulis and Abigail Bakan, by attempting to protect the rights of community members who bore the negative consequences of the international political economy, extending beyond the borders, yet intrinsically related to the First World country where they resided.[139] Despite these far-reaching focuses, however, one criticism levelled at the Congress of Black Women was the relatively homogeneous socio-professional make-up of its participants. In a 1977 article published in *Contrast*, a journalist begged the question: "In a congress

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[136] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds MG 31 H179 Volume 6, File 6-18: Thornhill, Esmeralda: copies of her reports "Esmeralda Thornhill. A Canadian Civil Rights Pioneer Joins Lawyers' Committee," *Committee Report* 2, 1 (1988), 2.

[137] Kouka-Ganga, "Femmes noires au Canada," 29-30; The BANQ possesses few written documents on the Ligue. For a very brief report on the conference, see "Rétrospective 1977-1980," *Bulletin/Ligue des femmes du Québec*, Janurary 1981, 5-6.

[138] *Ibid*; LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 4, File 4-20: National Coalition of Canada *Habari Kijiji* (*Village News*) Newsletter edited by Dorothy Willis, Second National Congress of Black Women-Follow-up," *Village News*, January 1975.

[139] The terminology of "dissident transnational citizenship" was taken from Chapter 8 of Daiva Stasiulis and Abigail Bakan, *Negotiating Citizenship: Migrant Women in Canada and the Global System* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

intended to address itself to the problems of the average black woman, where was the domestic, the factory worker? One would hardly expect to find her in the carpeted corridors of the Holiday Inn." The author nevertheless acknowledged the necessity of this get-together, because, as he or she wrote, "It is this group of people that will lay the foundations of a nation-wide black women's organisation."[140] Moreover, Congress was open to all Black women, regardless of whether they paid the membership fees or if they were documented[141] and in 1980, the women's group applied for $17,860 grant, receiving $12,550 from the Multiculturalism Directorate, to pay for travel funds, the latter demonstrating a concerted attempt on the part of the organization to make its gatherings accessible.[142]

Thus the women in attendance, representing a wide-range of ages and national provenances, were undertaking the all-important work of reconciling the competing, though not mutually exclusive liberation movements transforming their community. As Rosemary Brown stated in the opening remarks of the 1973 Congress of Black Women conference:

> I made the choice for liberation because I believe in our men –I believe that they are strong enough to accept me as an equal –and to join with me and stand with me in my struggle to be myself even as I stand and will always stand with them in theirs, and I know that we must work in and draw strength from both of these liberation struggles if we are to hasten the day when the dream of those early pioneers is realized –and we all live as truly equal human beings in this country.[143]

[140] "Editorial: Fourth National Congress of Black Women," *Contrast*, 25 August 1977, 6.
[141] Small and Thornhill, "Harambec! Quebec Black Women Pulling Together," 434, 440.
[142] RG6-F, ATIP Division Interim Container 92, File: 0901-H, Citizenship Sector-National Congress of Black Women of Canada –Founding Conference of the NCBWC, 15 September 1980.
[143] The Canadian Negro Women's Association, "Report of the First National Congress of Black Women."

Stated otherwise, the two activisms ultimately fed off each other. As Brown took the pains of explaining, women's liberation did not "drain her energies," taking away valuable time from the Black struggle. On the contrary, the women's movement was "strengthening" her, as she had greater faith in her own abilities, bringing to the broader community a greater confidence and ultimately contributing to the liberation of both Black men and women.[144] By this logic, suppressing the contribution of Black women would hinder the entire movement. For African Canadian leaders, then, the notion that women should be relegated to a subservient role within the anti-racist struggle not only perpetuated male domination, but also White supremacy.[145] Jaded after years of discrimination, Rosemary Brown was neither "concerned nor surprised" at the racism she knew existed within the women's movement. For this activist, the imperative was placed on mobilizing other women.[146]

In conclusion, English-speaking Black women's cultural and political backgrounds led them to employ a Pan-Africanist lens to their socio-economic position, Because Canadian institutions failed to fully take into consideration the needs of these citizens, the community turned to ideologies of worldwide Black nationhood, as a framework to facilitate links with other Black Diasporas. The connections between Black peoples whether in Chicago, at the Elders of the Black Community conference, or in Tanzania, at the 6th Pan-African Congress, solidified a diasporic identity. The Congress of Black Women similarly relied upon the same ideology and methods as other community organisations, that is, Black consciousness, local organising, and

[144] *Ibid.*
[145] Frances Beal, "Slave of a Slave No More: Black Women in Struggle," *Black Scholar*, March 1975, 2-10.
[146] Brown, *Being Brown*, 80- 84.

internationalist perspectives. Its members were well represented within other organizations, the ones that we have examined here as well as many others, for example the Quebec Board of Black Educators. Moreover, they enjoyed, in the words of Small and Thornhill, "self-affirming camaraderie" at Congress' numerous events, from chapter meetings to conferences to *vins d'honneur*.[147] They also pushed for institutional change, especially within educational milies. Congress member Esmeralda Thornhill, for example, taught the first Canadian university accredited course in Black Women's Studies, *Black Women: The Missing Pages from Canadian Women's Studies*, at Concordia University's Simon de Beauvoir Institute in 1983.[148] In 1987, Congress made the strategic decision to nominate Thornhill for a position on the Conseil du Statut de la femme (CSF), a well-funded government body.[149] Yet, as the first Black women to be appointed to the Conseil, the lawyer and human rights advocate expressed difficulty making the experiences of women of colour understood to the CSF, nevertheless pointing to the ways in which Congress members mobilized and maintained an oppositional consciousness, even when in close proximity to hegemonic feminism.[150] Thus, African-Canadian women ultimately promoted a strand of women's activism inseparable from this form of Black Nationalism. Given the emphasis on human liberation within some manifestations of Pan-Africanist thought, this brand of activism was an extension, not a

[147] Small and Thornhill, "Harambec! Quebec Black Women Pulling Together," 437-438.
[148] http://www.dal.ca/faculty/law/faculty-staff/our-faculty/esmeralda-thornhill.html See also Esmeralda Thornhill, "Black Women's Studies in Teaching Related to Women: Help or Hindrance to Universal Sisterhood?" *Fireweed, A Feminist Quarterly* 16 (1983): 97-104.
[149] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds MG 31 H179 Volume 6, File 6-18: Thornhill, Esmeralda: copies of her reports, "Letter from Glenda Simms, president of the Congress of Black Women, to Monique Gagnon-Tremblay, ministre délégué à la condition féminine." 22 December 1986.
[150] *Désirs de liberté*. DVD. Directed by Paula Mckeown. Québec: Vidéo Femmes, 2008, 1996; I am following here Chela Sandoval, "U.S. Third World Feminism: The Theory and Method of Oppositional Consciousness in the Postmodern World," In *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: a Reader*, eds. Reina Lewis and Sara Mills (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 2003), 75-92.

break, from the latter.[151] Coming from the standpoint of a minority in marjority White city, Black Montrealers embraced Pan-Africanism precisely because it allowed them to inscribe their fight for equality at home within a more powerful activism of global proportions.

[151]For example, in an article published in the *Black Scholar*, Sekou Touré outlines the role of African women in the revolution. In spite of a few dubious claims, namely the absence of patriarchy in pre-conquest Africa, the first president of the independent Guinea asserted the mutually constitutive nature of two social movements, taking place all over the Black Diaspora: "If African women cannot possibly conduct their struggle in isolation from that our people wage for African liberation, African freedom, conversely, is not effective unless it brings about the liberation of African women." Sekou Touré, "The Role of Women in the Revolution," *Black Scholar*, March 1975, 32-36.

Chapter 4: Feminism, Language and the Front de libération des femmes du Québec

On 28 November 1969, 200 women marched onto Saint Laurent Boulevard in chains, sat down and waited to be arrested. This action was in response to Regulation 3936, a law enacted by the Drapeau-Saulnier municipal administration to ban public protests in the aftermath a violent demonstration demanding the freedom of two political prisoners, Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ) members Pierre Vallières and Charles Gagnon. While many members of the Left condemned the legislation, these women were the first to take action and, within one hour, 165 of them were behind bars. Two FLF members, Lise Landry and Suzanne Plamondon, even served three years in prison for refusing on principle to pay the $25 fine.[1] In the lead-up to as well as during the protest, Montreal Women's Liberation Movement's adherents joined forces with French-speakers associated with a range of leftist groups in order to establish the anti-hierarchical Front commun des Québécoises. Shortly thereafter, White French- and English-speaking activists came together to found the Front de libération des femmes.[2] The action received extensive coverage in the media, where protestors made sure journalists understood that they had, to quote one woman, "neither a president, nor a leader, nor an official feminist movement that supported us."[3] In the words of former FLF members Véronique O'Leary and Louise Toupin, demonstrating how selective media coverage reinforced the

[1] "Tables rondes. Front de libération des femmes. Le 16 novembre 1982," *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome II: Collection complète suivie de deux tables rondes avec des femmes du Front de libération des femmes (1969-1971) et du Centre des femmes (1972-1975)*, eds. Véronique O'Leary and Louise Toupin (Montreal: Les Éditions du remue-ménage, 1982), 329. Hereafter referred to as *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome II.*

[2] Sean Mills, *The Empire Within: Postcolonial Thought and Political Activism in Sixties Montreal* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 119-120.

[3] Solange Chalvin, "Le Front commun des Québécoises descendra dans la rue, ce soir," *Le Devoir*, 28 November 1969. Reprinted in O'Leary, Véronique and Louise Toupin, eds. *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome 1. Une anthologie de textes du Front de libération des femmes (1969-1971) et du Centre des femmes (1972-1975*) (Montreal: Les Éditions du remue-ménage, 1982), 57. Hereafter referred to as *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome 1*.

leadership of certain women, "We were no longer part of the silent majority."[4] By moving from male-dominated to women's groups, however, women called into question some of the underlying ideologies of French Quebecers' neo-nationalism.

Because Front de la libération des femmes', and later the Centre des femmes', activist and intellectual work set the stage for the gender politics of the 1970s, much has been written about this period. Historian Sean Mills' *The Empire Within* provides an excellent analysis of this strand of feminism and its links to and divergences from the broader nationalist movement.[5] From a theoretical point of view, Micheline de Sève and Diane Lamoureux outline the ambiguous relationship between French Quebecers' feminism and nationalism, where both informed, stimulated, as well as limited the other.[6] And Susan Mann's overview of Quebec history pays close attention to the divergences and convergences of feminism and nationalism.[7] Therefore, this chapter follows an already-established tradition of analyzing Quebec's "feminist nationalism."[8] It also sheds light on the rapport between White French- and English-speaking radical feminists, illustrating how the power imbalance between the two groups influenced their activisms. Most importantly, however, the chapter raises questions surrounding the unexamined whiteness of French Quebecers' radical feminism, even if proponents of this ideology

[4] "Ce vendredi 29 novembre 1969. Le Front commun des Québécoises descend dans la rue," *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 54.
[5] See Chapter 5 of Mills, *The Empire Within*, 119-137.
[6] See, for example, Micheline de Sève, "Féminisme et nationalisme au Québec, une alliance inattendue," *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 17 (Spring 2007): 157-176 and Diane Lamoureux, "Nationalisme et féminisme: impasse et coïncidences," *Possibles* 8, 1 (1993): 43-59; *L'amère patrie: Féminisme et nationalisme dans le Québec contemporain* (Montreal: Les Éditions du remue-ménage, 2001).
[7] See Chapter 20, "Feminism, Federalism, and the Independence of Quebec," In Susan Mann, *The Dream of Nation: A Social and Intellectual History of Quebec* (Montreal: Queen's-McGill University Press, 2002), 317-332.
[8] See, for example, Daiva Stasiulis, "Relational Positionalities of Nationalisms, Racisms, and Feminisms," In *Between Women and Nation: Nationalisms, Transnational Feminisms, and the State*, eds. Caren Kaplan, Norma Alarcón, Minoo Moallem (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 185.

generally identified with the colonized versus the colonizing peoples of the world.[9] Similar to English-speaking White Canadian women of all political stripes and reformist French-speakers, the FLF drew parallels between women and African descended and "Third World" peoples, making, even if unwittingly, "women" synonymous with "White women."[10] The RCSW's Laura Sabia and the FFQ compared "women" to African Americans and Black Rhodesians and the Front de libération des femmes called French-speaking women the "slaves of the slaves."[11] In short, the chapter analyses the similarities and differences between these forms of White feminisms, with a particular emphasis on the leftist Francophone narrative.

I. The Montreal Women's Liberation Network

In the fall of 1969, mere months before the legendary protest, English-speaking White women approached their Francophone counterparts, attempting to convince them of the necessity for a women's liberation movement in Montreal.[12] At the time, French-speaking activists did not see the need to organize along gender lines, as they were concerned over the possibility of weakening Quebec's national liberation struggle by creating a parallel feminist movement. In the words of Véronique O'Leary and Louise Toupin, former FLF members, "Ici, le néo-feminisme a dû passer par le nationalisme."[13] But after a number of conversations with this group of approximately ten women, French

[9] Chantal Maillé, "Réception de la théorie postcoloniale dans le féminisme québécois," *Recherches féministes* 20, 2 (2007): 91-111.
[10] bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (Boston: South End Press, 1981), 8.
[11] Laura Sabia, "Canadian Feminists Fight for Change," *CBC Archives* video, 5 :03, 28 March 1967. http://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/canadian-feminists-fight-for-change; FFQ, *La participation politique des femmes du Québec*. Directrice de recherches: Francine Depatie, professeur à l'Université de Montréal. Montréal (Québec) juin-juillet 1969 (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1971), 1; "F.L.F.Q. Historique. Été 1970," *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 66.
[12] O'Leary and Toupin, *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 27.
[13] *Ibid*., 26.

Quebecers came to the full realization that they were often relegated to secondary, "feminine" tasks within these leftist formations. They spent their time typing, for example, rather than actively participating in decision-making processes.[14] White American radical feminists undertook a somewhat similar trajectory, as historian Sara Evans outlines, "gaining experience in organizing and collective action," "a language to name and describe oppression," and "a belief in freedom and equality" within the New Left and Civil Rights movements. The same could be said for Waffle women, that is, socialist women associated with the New Democratic Party.[15] Because they were excluded from leadership positions within these same groups, however, these women opted to organize autonomously, relying upon social networks to create, in the words of Evans, a "growing sense of collective power."[16] Indeed, political and friendship ties played a key role in the resurgence of feminist activism, where, in some cases, word of mouth determined group membership.

Within forty-eight hours after the Drapeau-Saulnier administration imposed its draconian law, English- and French-speaking leftist women convoked 200 women in the streets of the city. In contrast, mixed groups tried the same yet remained unsuccessful.[17] The acquaintanceship between Naomi Brickman, a McGill student, and Nicole Thérien, an employee of the Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN), served as the initial impetus behind this action. The two met at a Milton-Park Citizen's Committee, creating an informal women's group consisting of women from their respective milieus who

[14] "F.L.F.Q. Historique. Été 1970," *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 65-66.
[15] See, for example, Varda Burstyn, "The Waffle and the Women's Movement," *Studies in Political Economy* 33 (1990): 175-184.
[16] Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Role of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movements and the New Left* (New York: Random House, 1979), 24, 100, 105, 204, 205.
[17] "F.L.F.Q. Historique. Été 1970," *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 66.

would later organize the protest.[18] In Montreal, then, social networks were linguistically heterogeneous.[19] English-speaking radicals initially tended to gravitate around Montreal Women's Liberation Movement (MWLN), founded by university students in October 1969, and from here, fostered alliances with their Francophone counterparts.[20] MWLM's headquarters were located in the downtown area, near McGill. Women first met at the University Settlement on St. Urbain. They then moved to St. Lawrence Boulevard before eventually gathering at the Women's Centre on St. Famille. Occasionally members would host other women in their own homes, especially for consciousness-raising or study groups.[21] In a linguistically divided city, the Montreal Women's Liberation Network therefore remained well within its comfort zone, staying on the predominately English-speaking side of the metropolis.

The MWLN's mishmash of influences was striking. Similar to women's groups across North America, the MWLN referred to the liberal ideas of the *Feminine Mystique*, the seminal feminist text published in 1963. Writing in the Network's first newsletter, Marie Henretta remarked that, "The system holds up maternity as a panacea for every frustration a woman feels in society. Yet many mothers who cannot escape their children for even a few hours a day are embittered, bored, unsatisfied."[22] Even though they struggled, to quote the same article, "for a revolution that is both feminist and socialist, in which there will be equal human beings creating a society in which all share freely,"

[18] Mills, *The Empire Within*, 122.
[19] Yolande Cohen, *Femmes philanthropes: catholiques, protestantes et juives dans les organisations au Québec* (Montreal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2010) and Andrée Lévesque, "Les midinettes de 1937 : culture ouvrière, culture de genre, culture ethnique," In *1937: Un tournant culturel*, eds. Yvan Lamonde and Denis St. Jacques (Quebec City: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2009), 71-78.
[20] Mills, *The Empire Within*, 124.
[21] No title. *Montreal Women's Liberation Network Newsletter*, June 1970, 1.
[22] Marie Henretta, "The Oppression of Women in Canada," *Montreal Women's Liberation Newsletter*, March 1970, 1.

Henretta still evoked Friedan, demonstrating the malleability of feminist discourses.[23] To paraphrase historian Stephanie Coontz, the book touched many women on a deep level regardless of political orientation, spelling out what they felt but had never heard spoken aloud.[24] For these activists, who, like Friedan, were mostly White, middle-class and may not have had mothers who had to work out of necessity, domesticity was an utter trap, and the workforce offered a means toward financial, and by extension, personal independence.[25] This younger generation, however, remained disillusioned despite moderate gains, such as the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, and thus adopted a much more radical feminism than Freidan ever espoused.[26]

There were multiple intellectual currents behind young leftists' radical edge. In the first place, the Montreal Women's Liberation Network's members, many of whom were from the U.S. and came to Montreal with male draft-dodgers, were, as Sean Mills contends, "deeply shaped by American feminist theory."[27] In fact, it was these women who familiarized the FLF with key Anglo-American writings, such as Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics*, Juliet Mitchell's *The Longest Revolution*, and Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunach*.[28] Regardless of citizenship, however, Montreal feminists were well versed in these works, because, as political scientist Stephen Azzi explains, "ideas and individuals have long moved easily across the Canadian-American border." In university

[23] *Ibid.*
[24] Stephanie Coontz, *A Strange Stirring: The Feminine Mystique and American Women at the Dawn of the 1960s* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), xvi, 18, 103, 140.
[25] For evidence of this perspective within MWLN, see "Women Losing Former Gains," *Montreal Women's Liberation Newsletter*, March 1970, 9. For more on the class biases present within the *Feminine Mystique*, see Coontz, *A Strange Stirring*, 102.
[26] Coontz, *A Strange Stirring*, 160.
[27] Mills, *The Empire Within*, 124. During the 1960s, an estimated 30,000 to 100,000 American resisters came to Canada, of which many were women, following their husbands, boyfriends, or, as David Churchill explains, "their own political conscience into an uncertain exile." David Churchill, "Draft Resisters, Left Nationalism, and the Politics of Anti-Imperialism," *Canadian Historical Review* 93, 2 (2012): 227-260, 227.
[28] O'Leary and Toupin, *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 40.

settings especially, Americans wielded considerable intellectual influence, carrying a significant demographic weight in the wake of a rapid growth of student enrollment that created a need for new faculty.[29] The American Marlene Dixon's appointment at McGill University in 1969 was case in point. MWLN members took her classes on the sociology of women and, partly as a result, founded the women's group.[30] Covering topics as diverse as women in labour movements, women and colonization, the family, and the education system, Dixon's classes exemplified the multi-faceted nature of White radical feminism, where gender was not the only category of analysis.[31] In other words, socialist perspectives were an integral part of this women's movement since its inception.[32]

Pointing to its, often unacknowledged, influence on feminism, Black Power and anti-colonial ideologies were particularly evident in the MWLN's newsletter as well.[33] They were also, as we will see, relied upon within the FLF analyses of national oppression. In the opening article, Marie Henretta denounced marriage "as a minute system of imperialism." She continued: "Not only does the husband own and control the family property; not only has he legal power over his wife and children; not only does he direct the labour of his domestic slave, his wife, for his own benefit, but he also engages in a psychological stance as 'lord and master.'[34] Stated otherwise, the difficulty women faced within the family was reminiscent of the status of Black peoples in North America.

[29] Stephen Azzi, "The Nationalist Movement in English Canada," In *Debating Dissent: Canada and the Sixties*, eds. Gregory Kealey, Lara Campbell, and Dominique Clément (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 219, 221.
[30] Mills, *The Empire Within*, 124.
[31] "Monday Night Classes," *Montreal Women's Network Newsletter*, March 1970, 3.
[32] Meg Luxton, "Feminism as a Class Act: Working-Class Feminism and the Women's Movement in Canada," *Labour/Le Travail* 48 (2011): 63-88, 64.
[33] Becky Thompson made this argument. See "Multiracial Feminism. Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave Feminism," In *No Permanent Waves. Recasting Histories of U.S. Feminism*, ed. Nancy A. Hewitt (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 44.
[34] Marie Henretta, "The Oppression of Women in Canada," *Montreal Women's Liberation Newsletter*, March 1970, 1.

These sorts of analogies eventually came under attack by Black feminists.[35] Still, White radical women utilized an already available discourse to advance their cause, one that was very powerful as well as problematic. In order to free themselves from detrimental social constraints, these feminists advocated sexual liberation, as part of a larger quest toward individual and collective self-sufficiency. As Mary Porter, from the Women's Liberation Study group, argued: "It is very important that women be sexually independent for the same reasons that they must learn to be psychologically and economically independent. Women need to learn to be free autonomous human beings." Women's independence vis-à-vis the family and broader society was not supposed to be "at the expense of men." Women did not look for "dominance over men," as Porter explained, referring to the imminent Black Power leader, "But as Stokely Carmichael has said, 'We want them to get off our backs.'" Women sought, as it was referred to in the Montreal Women's Liberation Newsletter, "self-determination." [36]

Control over one's life, for these women, was linked to control over one's body and therefore only guaranteed by easy access to contraceptive measures. Indeed, reproductive rights were one of the major focuses of women's activism during this period.[37] For instance, two students at McGill University, Allan Feingold and Donna Cherniak, published *The Birth Control Handbook* in 1968, considered one of the founding texts of the women's liberation movement in Montreal. The *Handbook* became so well known that it was not only distributed by the Montreal Women's Liberation Network, but it was also shipped to the United States and positively referred to in the

[35] hooks, *Ain't I a* Woman, 8.
[36] University of Ottawa, Morisset Library Special Collections, Canadian Women's Movement Archives Collection, Box 139: Women's Liberation Study Group. Mary Porter, "Some Reflections on the Problem of Female Sexual Oppression. Prepared for the Women's Liberation Study Group."
[37] "Karate," *Montreal Women's Liberation Newsletter*, June 1970, 4.

seminal *Our Bodies, Our Selves*, published in 1970.[38] Separating sex from reproduction, the authors promoted a "new morality," by paraphrasing Margaret Sanger, anarchist and active member of the American Socialist Party, one "which would prevent the submergence of womanhood into motherhood." They were attentive to class differences in this regard, condemning the differential treatment women from lower socio-economic strata received where quality of care was "determined by her husband's or father's social class and not by her own needs." According to Feingold and Cherniak, the implications of effective birth control measures were enormous, leading to the redefinition of society writ large, because "if bearing children becomes an option, certainly the role of socializing children can be seen as matter of choice as well."[39] At no point were its authors deterred, fuelled by what they perceived to be the justness of their cause.[40]

In addition to advancing a pro-choice agenda, *The Birth Control Handbook* criticized racist notions of population control, global inequality, and American interventionism in the Third World. Feingold and Cherniak reproached male doctors who denied reproductive choice to middle-class White women but "offered" poor and especially Black women abortions, "with the stipulation that they must accept sterilization as well." They called this tactic "merely a cover for racist genocide," a political position that was taken, as we have seen, by Indigenous and Black women.[41] The McGill students linked domestic policies to global geopolitics, critiquing the so-called "Population Explosion" theory, which was "only a threat to the supremacy of white nations which today, as in the past, are raping the Third World." Trying to limit the

[38] L. Wynn, "The Pill Scare," *Montreal Women's Liberation Newsletter*, March 1970, 5.
[39] Donna Cherniak and Allan Feingold, *The Birth Control Handbook*. 4th Edition (Montreal, 1970), 3.
[40] Christabelle Sethna, "The Evolution of the Birth Control Handbook From Student Peer-Education Manuel to Feminist Self-Empowerment Text, 1968-1975," *CBMH/BCHM* 23, 1 (2006): 89-118, 96.
[41] Cherniak and Feingold, *The Birth Control Handbook*, 43.

"natural increase of "black, brown, and yellow peoples of the world" exposed, in the view of these activists, the tenuous hold the United States had on its neo-colonies, at the time rife with liberation movements calling for a more equitable distribution of wealth between nations and peoples. According to Feingold and Cherniak, the "population control movement" was a "weapon of imperialism," referring, specifically, to the Vietnam War and the accompanying indiscriminate killing of civilians. The *Handbook* therefore promoted reproductive rights from a resolutely anti-racist feminist perspective, where, in addition to being the product of the peace movement, the booklet paid close attention to how the U.S. relied "on more subtle birth control methods to control the population of non-white people."[42] Canada seemed conspicuously absent in this analysis.

White feminists have typically, and perhaps unfairly, been described as inattentive to the specific needs of racialized women. Still, the accounts of numerous activists and scholars lend credibility to this generalization.[43] Why, then, were Allan Feingold and Donna Cherniak different? On this point, we can only speculate, however perhaps the authors' Jewish backgrounds offer key insights. Feingold was born in Israel to Holocaust survivors, who then migrated to Montreal. He spent his youth surrounded by the city's left-leaning Jewish community. Cherniak was raised in Windsor, Ontario where her father ran as a candidate for the CCF, the forerunner to the NDP.[44] Indeed, historians have found that many "Red Diaper babies" such as Feingold and Cherniak turned to 1960s social movements, applying, in the words of Harold Troper, "their parents' original values" to the New Left, especially in Montreal, "one of the four most important student

[42] *Ibid*., 1.
[43] See, for example, Karen Dubinsky, *Babies without Borders: Adoption and Migration across the Americas* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 75.
[44] Sethna, "The Evolution of the Birth Control Handbook," 96.

centers of North American Jewish activism." This contestation included strong support for feminism, as exemplified by the high percentage of Jewish women involved in the women's liberation movement.[45] In fact, Betty Friedan, herself Jewish, noted in the *Feminine Mystique* that the unhappiest college students in her Smith College sample "had come from 'the more restrictive ethnic groups' (Italian or Jewish)," later hypothesizing that the tensions explored in her book were more extreme for Jewish women, among the most educated in America but whose only "legitimate" self-conception derived almost entirely from home and family.[46] Montreal-based sources indeed confirm these feelings on the part of some Jewish women.[47]

Ironically then, traditional upbringings contributed to later contestations of restrictive gender norms. In addition to a family background that lent itself to leftist and feminist politics, Jewish Montrealers frequently identified as part of a minority group, arguably making the positionalities of other marginalized people easier to understand. Even though the community was undergoing a "whitening" process and religious affiliation decreased in importance during this period- as evidenced by the presence of Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant women within the FFQ since its inception- Jewish Montrealers were not yet entirely mainstream Canadians or Quebecers.[48] In 1961, a full 40 percent of Jews in Canada were foreign-born, and Yiddish was widely spoken.

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[45] Harold Troper, *Defining Decade: Identity, Politics, and the Canadian Jewish Community in the 1960s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 197; Joyce Antler, "'We Were Ready to Turn the World Upside Down': Radical Feminism and Jewish Women," In *A Jewish Feminine Mystique? Jewish Women in Postwar America*, eds. Hasia Diner, Shira Kohn and Rachel Kranson (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 211.

[46] Quoted in Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Roots Too: White Ethnic Revival in Post-Civil Rights America* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2006), 258. This was also the argument of Frye Jacobson.

[47] Leonore Leiblin, "The Professional Woman and the Nice Jewish Girl," *Viewpoints*. Published Quarterly by the Labour Movement of Canada 10, 1 (1979): 23-25.

[48] See, for example, "Notes biographiques sur les administrateurs de la FFQ," *Bulletin de la FFQ*, June 1970, 7; "National Council of Jewish Women," *Bulletin de la FFQ*, December 1970, 9.

Institutionalized anti-Semitism, such as quotas at McGill, only just disappeared and Anglo-conformity was still the means to social-mobility.[49] It is therefore significant, and perhaps applicable to Canada, that American Jewish women, along with Lesbian women, were among the first to articulate a feminism that accounted for racial difference and, in particular, as sociologist Becky Thompson explains, "a politic that accounted for white women's position as both women and white," and by extension, as "oppressed and oppressor."[50] Arguably, these ideas were embedded in the *Birth Control Handbook*. Speaking to the possibility of alliances across group lines, Feingold and Cherniak wrote the following: "From the understanding of one's own oppression as a woman comes a better understanding of the oppression of others also enchained in master-slave relationships."[51] In other words, women's alternative subjectivity *as women* created the affective possibility of cross-group political linkages. For Jewish women, or a Jewish man, the intellectual leap toward a dual positionality, integral to anti-racist feminism, was even shorter.

Similarly, Allan Feingold and Donna Cherniak paid close attention to local politics, writing "Montréal" and "Québec" in French and, three years later, translated the *Handbook* into the language of Quebec's majority with the help of French-speakers. The Quiet Revolution, the McGill français movement, and the rise of neo-nationalism made the authors see the relevance of a Francophone *Birth Control Handbook*, one that was not a direct translation. Therefore, English- and French-speakers worked together to produce a culturally appropriate *Handbook*, *Pour un contrôle de naissances*, which was published in February 1970. Here, the authors asserted, in what historian Christabelle Sethna calls

[49] Troper*, Defining Decade*, 24, 84.
[50] Thompson, "Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave Feminism," 45.
[51] Cherniak and Feingold, *The Birth Control Handbook*, 3.

"a high wire balancing act," women's right to control their bodies in minority national context. They critiqued the Church's historic role in regulating sexuality, where "seul le 'devoir' de perpétuer la race, française et catholique, pouvait rendre acceptable la péché de la chair," instead emphasizing that women's access to contraceptive measures was "le premier pas vers le contrôle de sa propre existence et de son existence collective." It was not only women who would benefit from birth control, however, but also the French Québécois nation or the "nous" the authors evoked in the text. Because capital was frequently in the hands of English-speakers, neo-nationalists argued that Francophones constituted an exploited ethnic class. For these women, reproductive rights served a nationalist purpose: "Les Québécoises n'auront plus alors pour fonction d'assurer la perpétuation du 'cheap labour'; les enfants qu'elles choisiront d'avoir grossiront les rangs de ceux qui combattent actuellement pour un mode d'existence plus juste, dans un Québec libre."[52] The FLF was one of the groups that diffused the booklet, as part of its larger quest for reproductive choice, specifically for French Quebecers.[53] Indeed, as soon as *Pour un contrôle de naissances* reached the broader public, the women's group immediately received phone calls, asking for assistance in procuring an abortion.[54]

The Montreal Women's Liberation Network worked from a similar perspective as Feingold and Cherniak, in that, its members were conscious of their positionality as English-speakers in a Francophone Quebec. The MWLM interrogated its role vis-à-vis Quebec neo-nationalism, demonstrating a degree of self-awareness in this regard. In an article entitled "New Morning," the author outlined what, for her, were the "crucial

[52] Lisette Girourd, *Pour un contrôle de naissances* (Montreal: Journal Offset Inc., 1971); Sethna, "The Evolution of the Birth Control Handbook," 107-109; Mills, *The Empire Within*, 126.
[53] O'Leary and Toupin, *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 45.
[54] Diane Lamoureux, "La lutte pour le droit de l'avortement, 1969-1981," *RHAF* 37, 1 (1983): 81-90.

weaknesses" of the group, namely that its "goals were too vague" and that members "lacked a solid theoretical understanding of "a. women b. what a women's movement ought to be and do and c. how our movement fits into Quebec and its struggle."[55] In these early days of the resurgence of feminism then, when women were trying to establish an intellectual and organizational basis for their activism, left-leaning English-speakers were at least aware of the broader context within which they operated.[56] Bilingual members, moreover, enabled the MWLN to reach out to its Francophone counterparts. Brenda Zannis, for example, represented to group at a teach-in organized by the Ligue des femmes du Québec on International Women's Day.[57] Some women even belonged to both the MWLN and the FLF.[58] Therefore, social movements in Montreal fed off of each other, where activists formed alliances, even if imperfectly, across linguistic or ethnic lines.

II. Language and Feminism

Yet this Anglophone/Francophone alliance more or else ended in 1970, when the Front de libération des femmes decided to exclude English-speakers from its ranks, many of who were responsible for the group's very origins.[59] This decision, which created much internal strife within the FLF, was due to what was considered ideological domination. Because English-speakers had access to Anglo-American writings, they were perceived to be pushing the group in a direction that, in the words of Toupin and

[55] "New Morning," *Montreal Women's Liberation Newsletter*, August 1971, 1.
[56] For example, the group wrote about how difficult it was for rural French-speaking women to gain access to contraception. L. Wynn, "The Pill Scare," *Montreal Women's Liberation Newsletter*, March 1970, 5.
[57] "International Women's Day," *Montreal Women's Liberation Newsletter*, March 1970, 6.
[58] O'Leary and Toupin, *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 40.
[59] *Ibid*, 137.

O'Leary, had "little regard for the specific realities of Quebec." Apart from Simone de Beauvoir and translations of Friedan and Engels, unilingual Francophone women had virtually no access to feminist tracts, putting them at a distinct disadvantage, especially as the Florence Bird's report had yet to be published. This dearth of information motivated their actions vis-à-vis English-speaking women. Furthermore, Anglophones were over-represented within the ranks of the FLF, consisting of nearly half of its membership. Some people thought this proportion to be too high. Many English-speaking members, however, were deeply hurt by this decision, a few of which forever distanced themselves from the movement. One Francophone woman left the group, considering the expulsion intolerant.[60] In other words, boundaries between political groups were not only porous but also contested. The decision to include or exclude were not easy ones, and led to internal dissension.

Similar to women in English-Canada, the United States, and even in France, French Quebecers read and cited, among others, Kate Millet, Betty Friedan, and Germaine Greer.[61] Francophone women who could read English of course engaged with Anglo-American works. But once a women's group in France translated major feminist texts from a range of countries into French, all members of the FLF rushed to read this literature. The book in question, *Libération des femmes, année zero*, edited by the Partisanes, published by Les Éditions Maspero in 1970 and made available in Quebec in 1971, maintained a permanent position on the group's coffee table and was often referred to during meetings. After reading this literature, Denise, formerly a member of the

[60] "Septembre 1970. Un bilan de parcours," *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 76.
[61] For French Québécois women see O'Leary and Toupin, *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome1*, 40. For French women see Claire Duchen, *Feminism in France: May '68 to Mitterand* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), 69.

Comité ouvrier St-Henri, came to consider the "woman question," calling it a "revelation."[62] In fact, women of the group attributed one of the book's texts, entitled *L'ennemi principal*, which consisted of a Marxist feminist analysis of the family, to be one of the founding texts of White Francophone feminism in Montreal.[63] Before the translation of major feminist works, moreover, feminists looked to Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*. Whereas the book went virtually unnoticed in Quebec when it was first published in 1949, mainly due, according to the co-authors of *L'histoire des femmes au Québec*, to the "lethargy" of the Quebec women's movement in the wake of the 1940 suffrage victory, by the 1960s, Beavoir's essay, as sociologist Chantal Maillé explains, "became the encyclopaedia on the condition of womanhood for many Quebec women."[64]

Thus, like other Quebec radicals of the 1960s and 1970s, feminist militants were at least partially inspired by the leftist agitation occurring in Paris.[65] In some cases, it was because they had spent considerable time there. FLF member Martine Éloi, for example, joined the group after having spent a year in France on exchange. There, she participated in the establishment of the Mouvement de libération des femmes (MLF). Upon her return to Montreal, she looked for an organization with a similar outlook, finding an activist home in the FLF.[66] Whether or not they had been to France, politically engaged women in Quebec seemed to have been well versed in French feminism, often

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[62] "Table ronde : Centre des femmes. Le 18 novembre 1982," *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome II*, 349.
[63] Christine Delphy, "L'ennemi principal," In *Libération des femmes, année zéro*, ed. Les Partisanes (Paris: Maspero, 1971), 112-139; "Septembre 1970. Un bilan de parcours," "Été 1971: publication de deux bulletins de liaison. Le FLF : Pourquoi? Pour qui? Comment?" *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 76, 100.
[64] Chantal Maillé, "French and Quebec Feminisms: Influences and Reciprocities," In *Transatlantic Passages: Literary and Cultural Relations between Quebec and Francophone Europe*, eds. Paula Ruth Gilbert and Milena Santoro (Montreal: Queen's-McGill University Press, 2010), 51-56. Maillé references the Collectif Clio's 1982 *L'histoire des femmes du Québec*.
[65] Mills, *The Empire Within*, 64.
[66] "Table ronde: Centre des femmes. Le 18 novembre 1982," *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome II*, 328.

citing journals such as *Questions féministes* and *Cahiers du Grif* in their writings.[67] Not unlike Éva Circé-Côté, the early 20th century journalist and freethinker, French Québécois women followed French intellectual trends in the 1960s and 1970s.[68] They also appear to have been aware of developments in French politics with regards to women.[69] In the view of some feminist scholars, Quebec feminism has combined the pragmatism favoured by American activists with the theoretical approach relied upon by French women. [70]

Although France seemed to remain a key reference point for feminists, radical French Quebecers were perhaps most inspired by anti-colonial writings, especially *Les Nègres blancs d'Amerique*, authored by Quebec's own, Pierre Vallières in 1968.[71] In this semi-autobiographical tract, Vallières described the cultural alienation experienced by working-class French Quebecers, especially in Montreal, the province's most Anglophone jurisdiction.[72] Vallières' remedy was not independence for the sake of independence, however, but rather a complete transformation in social relations and the overthrow of imperialism.[73] Because both "the English-speaking and French-speaking petty bourgeoisie" were tied "to imperialism and profit from the sale of Quebec to

[67] O'Leary and Toupin, *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 13.
[68] Andrée Lévesque, *Éva Circé-Côté: libre penseuse, 1871-1949* (Montreal: Les Éditions remue-ménage, 2010), 154.
[69] For example, in a leaflet issued by the France-based *Mouvement pour la libération de l'avortement et contraception* (MLAC), the importance of creating links with women in other countries was clearly stated, as was the necessity of sending pamphlets abroad. See Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, Montreal, Quebec (BAnQ Vieux-Montréal). Histoire du féminisme québécois: les groupes féministes 1970-1974, File: MLAC*, Mouvement pour la libération de l'avortement and contraception*, Bulletin 1 (July 1975); *Mouvement pour la libération de l'avortement and contraception. Solidarité Internationale*, Bulletin 2 (November 1975).
[70] Francine Descarries and Christine Corbel, "Penser la maternité: les courants d'idées au sein du mouvement contemporain des femmes," *Recherches sociographiques* 32, 3 (1991): 347-366.
[71] O'Leary and Toupin, *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 40.
[72] Pierre Vallières, *White Niggers of America: The Precocious Autobiography of a Quebec "Terrorist."* Translated by Joan Pinkham (Montreal: Éditions Partis Pris, 1968, 1969), 17.
[73] *Ibid*., 13.

foreigners," Vallières believed that exchanging one dominant class for another would accomplish very little. In order to achieve "the revolution that Quebec needs," as he explained, nothing short of the "disappearance of capitalism itself" was necessary. Therefore, the path to liberation was intrinsically tied to global anti-capitalism and anti-imperialism, Canadian as well as American.[74] Pierre Vallières was widely read by those on the Left, for example his condemnation of religion and capitalism was one of the lead quotes in *Pour un contrôle de naissances*, second only to a citation on free love and contraception by Emma Goldman.[75]

The Front de libération des femmes came out of this same tradition, calling for a radical transformation of the province's social structures and Quebec's independence. However, the group incorporated a gender-based analysis into an anti-colonial discourse. In 1970, the FLF issued a press release, following a pro-choice protest in Parc Lafontaine:

> Notre mouvement s'inscrit dans la lutte de libération du peuple québécois. Nous appartenons à une société de classes. Nous nous définissions comme « esclaves des esclaves ». Nous considérons que les femmes ne pourront se libérer qu'à l'intérieur d'un processus de libération globale de toute la société. Cette libération ne sera possible qu'avec la participation entière et à tous les niveaux, des femmes qui composent la moitié de la population québécoise.[76]

By calling themselves the "slaves of the slaves," they claimed their place alongside other "Third World Women," an identity that encompassed racial minorities in North America.[77] On this point, the group sharply diverged from the reformist Fédération des femmes du Québec. Its adherents were decidedly uninterested in pressuring the

[74] *Ibid*., 234-236.
[75] Lisette Girourd, *Pour un contrôle de naissances* (Montreal: Journal Offset Inc., 1971).
[76] "F.L.F.Q. Fonctionnement. Été 1970," *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 66.
[77] Judy Tzu-Chu Wu, *Radicals on the Road: Internationalism, Orientalism, and Feminism during the Vietnam Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 211.

government for gender equality measures or "crumbs." They sought instead a "radical change of our condition," knowing that "society in its present form cannot accept these changes without self-destructing." The FLF made parallels were made between gender and national oppression. As stated in the same text: "Nous savons que toutes les femmes ne pourront arriver à une libération totale au milieu de tel état de choses tout comme nous ne croyons pas que n'importe quel Canadien français puisse devenir riche et puissant dans l'état actuel de la société québécoise."[78] Moreover, French Quebecers drew inspiration from Black Power ideologies, adopting the "white nigger" metaphor. Similar to English-speaking women, they instrumentalised the historical experiences of African-Americans to express the concept of women's subordination, but they also, significantly, appropriated Black peoples' understanding of racial oppression.[79]

Although some were initially sceptical regarding Quebec's claim to colonized and racialized status, Vallières' proponents eventually managed to sway a number of prominent intellectuals.[80] Albert Memmi, an advocate for North African independence, even drew on similarities between African-Americans and French-Canadians in his seminal text, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. The Tunisian Jewish thinker did not discount French-Canadians' experiences of oppression, though these North American *colonisés* benefited from better living conditions than Black Africans. Rather he stressed that, "All domination is relative. All domination is specific."[81] More specifically, Memmi addressed the devaluation of the French language in Quebec: it was rarely if ever spoken

[78] "F.L.F.Q. Fonctionnement. Été 1970," *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 67.
[79] David Austin, *Fear of a Black Nation: Race, Sex, and Security in Sixties Montreal* (Toronto: Between the Lines Press, 2013), 45.
[80] As Sean Mills explains, "Aimé Césaire initially laughed at the prospect of a white population employing the concept of negritude, but he eventually came to see that Vallières and other Quebecers had understood the concept at a profound level." Mills, *The Empire Within*, 74.
[81] Albert Memmi, *Portrait du colonisé, précédé du portrait du colonisateur; et d'une préface de Jean-Paul Sartre. Suivi de Les Canadiens français sont-ils des colonisés?* (Montreal: L'Étincelle, 1972), 139.

in hallways of Montreal's English-Canadian- or American-run businesses, and hence had become a source of shame for the native-speaker.[82] "Colonial bilingualism," or the forced knowledge of two languages and cultures, rendered the colonized "a foreigner in his own country."[83] Echoing Memmi, Michèle Lalonde, shortly after the publication of *Les Nègres blancs d'Amerique*, wrote the poem "Speak White," not only to fuel Quebec's liberation movement, but also to declare solidarity with African-Americans, Africans under British rule, and Algerians.[84] In Montreal then, language was akin to race, shaping radical French Quebecers' understanding of themselves and the world. As David Austin explains in *Fear of a Black Nation*, however, Albert Memmi "opted for the term 'domination' rather than 'colonization.' "Perhaps," as Austin hypothesizes, "his familiarity with colonialism in North Africa and his consciousness of the dire situation of Indigenous people across Canada, including those in Quebec, did not permit him to give an unqualified nod to the notion of French Quebecers as colonized or *nègres*."[85]

To a degree, radical feminists put forth a similarly nuanced stance. In a *Québécoises déboutte!* article, an unnamed author linked the subjugation of Indigenous women to European colonization, critiquing the Jesuits' so-called "civilizing mission" and its effects on social relations, namely the erosion of women's power and the usurpation of First Nations' sovereignty.[86] Still, texts like this one were an exception, whether authored by the FLF or other, French-speaking radical feminist groups.[87] In general, the FLF and the Centre des femmes focused primarily on patriarchy, economic

[82] *Ibid*, 138-145.
[83] *Ibid*, 103.
[84] Mills, *The Empire Within*, 81.
[85] Austin, *Fear of a Black Planet*, 59, 60.
[86] "Histoire d'une oppression. Les Amérindiennes," *Québécoises Déboutte!* publié par le centre des femmes. December 1972, 4-8. In *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome II*, 41.
[87] The same could be said for the *Les Têtes de pioche*. Préface, Armande St-Jean (Montreal: Les Éditions du remue-ménage, 1980).

exploitation, and the English-French divide, to the detriment of analyses that took into consideration other social groups in or near Montreal. Although the FLF was highly influenced by Black Power ideologies, for instance, its members did not appear to pay attention to Black women in Quebec.[88] When Black peoples entered the discussion, they were painted as being elsewhere, literally. The FLF, for example, only mentioned African Americans and the FFQ attended a conference in Jamaica in 1975 to discuss the impact of under-development on women.[89] That same year, however, the Fédération had difficulty getting its International Affairs Committee off the ground. With a mandate to prepare its members for International Women's Year and integrate foreign-born women, a seemingly homogenous category, its chair, Huguette Lapointe-Roy, was surprised about how difficult it was to penetrate the immigrant milieu.[90] In other words, French- and English-speaking White women did not consider the needs or perspectives of racialized women at home, putting these same women in a marginalized, minoritized position while their own positionality was left only superficially examined. Nevertheless, a linguistic dynamic that favoured English over French pervaded Montreal's social structures, even if French Quebecers had an ambiguous claim to colonized or *nègre* status.

Despite declaring common cause with their co-nationals, leftist French-speaking women still felt the need to organize autonomously. FLF members expressed their frustration in its newsletters at being undervalued in mixed settings. For the feminist group, men's disregard was compounded by women's inability to speak up, due to a gendered socialization process where women were supposed to remain the meeker,

[88] Austin, *Fear of a Black Nation*, 67.
[89] Madeleine Gapriepy Dubuc, "Un colloque au soleil," *Bulletin de la FFQ*, April 1975, 29.
[90] "Rapport du comité des affaires internationales (C.A.I.) par Huguette Lapointe-Roy, Présidente de la C.A.I." Found in BAnQ Vieux-Montréal, Fonds Huguette Lapointe-Roy, P656, 1998-04-002/14, File: C.A.I. Projet de comité.

quieter sex. Because of lower levels of self-confidence, women became, and were expected to perform, the "cheap labour" of the Left, making coffee, taking care of the secretarial tasks, or answering the phone. Moreover, men frequently ignored women's concerns, since their emancipation was not considered to be a priority. [91] The liberation of Quebec or the working-class always took precedence.[92] For this reason, New Left men refused to invest the time or energy to critically examine their own sexist behaviour, for instance forcing their wives stay home to watch the children while they attended political meetings, and women who evoked issues surrounding gender equality spoke from a position of defensiveness, needing to justify the little attention brought to what were seen as secondary, or frivolous complaints.[93] Yet, Danièle, an active FLF member, recalled more than subtle sexism pervading mixed groups. The Comité ouvrier St-Henri, of which she belonged before joining the FLF, proposed that women dance as go-go girls to fund their activities. Once American and French feminists texts were first published, the young woman breathed a sigh of relief.[94]

In 1982, FLF activists came together to reflect on their experiences within the women's organization. Speaking about the group's earliest days, Martine Éloi reminded the audience that "c'est difficile de s'imaginer à quel point rien n'était acquis."[95] Indeed, the novelty of autonomous women's organizing, for these women, was apparent in the sources. In the FLF bulletin, the group's members attempted to delineate its *raison d'être*,

[91] "Le sexisme dans les groupes mixtes," *Bulletin de liaison FLFQ*, August 1971, In *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 119.
[92] O'Leary and Toupin, *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 31.
[93] "Le sexisme dans les groupes mixtes," *Bulletin de liaison FLFQ*, August 1971, In *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 119; "Bilan du Centre des Femmes de Montreal, November 1974," In *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 158.
[94] "Table ronde: Centre des femmes. Le 18 novembre 1982," *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome II*, 349.
[95] "Table rondes. Front de libération des femmes. Le 16 novembre 1982," In *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome II*, 329.

stressing the importance of creating affective ties between women. In order to reach as many people as possible, the FLF and later the Centre des femmes issued newsletters, the *Bulletin de liaison FLFQ* and *Québécoise déboutte!* (QB). By publishing radical, feminist journals, the editors responded to the lack of information in the mainstream press, specifically the subpar, intellectually bereft "women's pages" relegated to the back of popular magazines.[96] The publications aimed to portray the difficulties faced by women, and expose the oppression they dealt with on a daily basis.[97] In addition to promoting feminist politics, the *Bulletin de liaison* and *Québécoise déboutte!* were written in *joual*, exemplifying the leftist, nationalist leanings of their authors. They wrote informally as means to declare their solidarity with, and remain close to, the working-class, as well as put forth a uniquely Québécois French.[98] For the FLF, in particular, its bulletin served as an organizational tool, linking its non-hierarchical and disparate "cells," where each "Cellule" was responsible for a specific action, for instance free day care, contraception, or direct action.[99] The bulletin also functioned as a means to unify an unstable, constantly growing membership, based increasingly in East Montreal. By moving its headquarters to the French-speaking part of the city, activists felt, to quote the newsletter, "plus chez nous."[100]

In addition to an egalitarian structure, the FLF wanted to put forth a new way of political organizing, distinct from male-dominated groups. Rather than fall into "male intellectualism," radical feminists wanted to create "their own language," a way of analyzing oppression unique to them. "Cellule I," for example, met to collectively discuss

[96] "FLFQ Fonctionnement. Été 1970," In *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 67.
[97] *Ibid*.
[98] O'Leary and Toupin, *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 129.
[99] *Ibid.*, 100.
[100] "Cellule X," *Bulletin de liaison FLFQ*, July 1971. In *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 101.

select texts from "Partisans." Those present remarked afterwards that the conversations were valuable, even if superficial. Some women thought it was necessary to acquire theoretical training before taking action, whereas others wanted to engage in concrete efforts immediately.[101] Even though radical feminists insisted among the necessity of women-only spaces, the FLF never conceived of women's liberation outside of questions surrounding national oppression or economic exploitation where the feminist struggle was linked to, and should remain alongside, that of male workers.[102] Therefore, the women's group advocated links with other political formations whose mandate did not contradict its feminist principals, that is, the elimination of the sexual division of labour. Because working-class men and women were subjected to similarly oppressive conditions, they had to engage in a shared struggle to transform capitalistic social structures. They same logic was extended to the status of French Quebecers, or "the men and women living in a country dominated by a wealthy minority" that had to fade away, regardless of whether Québécois, English-Canadian, or American. For the FLF, women were not a unified but instead a sharply divided category, consisting of women that profited from or, conversely, were exploited by the capitalist system. Only the former, save rare exceptions, could engage in a true struggle for women's liberation.[103] The FFQ, in contrast, had a liberal approach to gender equality.

The FLF's membership was fairly diverse, as CSN employees, artists, writers, nurses, teachers, a handful of housewives, and students, primarily Anglophone, at least at the beginning. Ages ranged from 18 to 40 and most members were associated with one of

[101] "Cellule I," *Bulletin de liaison FLFQ*, July 1971. In *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 104.
[102] "Cellule II. Pourquoi un FLF," *Bulletin de liaison FLFQ*, August 1971. In *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 107.
[103] "Quelques conditions de la libération des femmes," "Comment?" "Pour qui?" *Bulletin de liaison FLFQ*, August 1971. In *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 111-113, 118, 120.

the many social movements flourishing in Montreal at the time.[104] According to O'Leary and Toupin, FLF activists were "relatively privileged," in that they were better educated than the average Québécoise and benefitted from a greater access to contraception.[105] Despite a degree of material comfort, however, these radical feminists aimed to ally themselves with working class women, specifically housewives, factory workers, and the unemployed. They wanted to learn more about their problems, in order to help them organize, stay informed, and mount an action plan.[106] This brand of feminism was purposely constructed in opposition to "bourgeois" activities, such as the Salon de la femme.[107] The FLF's Cellule X "Action-Choc" disrupted the proceedings of the women's trade show, denouncing the objectification of women's bodies. Protestors held up signs, stating "Vous n'avez pas fini de vous faire acheter!" and "Votre culture de salon, on n'en veut pas!"[108] Although the FLF was largely of "petit-bourgeois" origin, its membership still sought social change through grassroots struggles, alongside the working-class, in contrast to the Fédération des femmes du Québec. The latter consisted of mostly upper-middle-class or upper class women and approached political work through governmental lobbying. In other words, radical and liberal, predominately White, Francophone feminist groups promoted radically different organizing tactics, perhaps due to the different class backgrounds, or at least sensibilities, of their respective memberships.

Thus, even if mostly lower middle or middle-class, FLF members fostered cross-class alliances. Because they were concerned over the "missionary" aspect, however, they

[104] O'Leary and Toupin, *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 22.
[105] *Ibid.*, 47.
[106] "Mouvement des femmes," *Bulletin de liaison FLFQ*, August 1971. In *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 113.
[107] Diane Lamoureux, "The Paradoxes of Quebec Feminism," In *Quebec Questions: Quebec Studies for the Twenty-First Centur*y, eds. Stéphan Gervais, Cristopher Kirkey, and Jarrett Rudy (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2011), 313.
[108] "Cellule X," *Bulletin de liaison FLFQ*, July 1971. In *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 101.

approached the awkwardness of reaching out to marginalized women with self-awareness. For example, during a strike at Daoust-Lalonde, a skate making factory on Rue Hochelaga, the group posed the question, "Qu'est ce qu'on est nous autres pour aller les *aider*?"[109] Feminists evoked the same line of questioning with regards to housewives, trying to reach out, with limited success, to women in the working-class neighbourhood of Papineau.[110] Nonetheless, the FLF dedicated extensive time analyzing their positionality, pointing to the "invisible" nature of domestic work. More specifically, women's unpaid labour in the home, integral to the functioning of the family and society at large, was deemed under-appreciated, resulting in double duty for women concurrently working for wages.[111] According to the FLF, the family and the capitalist system was at the "origin of this exploitation." Drawing upon the ideas of Friedrich Engels' 1884 *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, the women's group linked female subordination to capitalist production and the family, namely the latter's role in isolating women, exploiting their labour by rendering them dependant, and, as a site of both production and consumption, perpetuating capitalism. Perhaps unsurprisingly then, the FLF called for the destruction of the family, denouncing its ideological and economic control, a stance that differed from that taken by Indigenous women, Black, and Southern European women.[112]

The links between "the nation" and "the family" have been explored in depth, since, as literary scholar Anne McClintok explains, the "iconography of the family,"

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[109] "Cellule II," *Bulletin de liaison FLFQ*, July 1971. In *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 105.
[110] "Cellule I," *Bulletin de liaison FLFQ*, July 1971. In *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 104.
[111] "Exploitation spécifique des femmes," *Bulletin de liaison FLFQ*, August 1971. In *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 107.
[112] "Origine de cette exploitation," *Bulletin de liaison FLFQ*, August 1971. In *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 107-110;

"retained as the figure of national unity" has played a role in maintaining social, specifically gender hierarchies. Therefore, feminist scholars have pointed to the transformative and potentially subversive potential of feminist nationalism, as an ideology that is inherently paired with, but also critical of, other liberation movements.[113] Regardless of how dedicated they were to the *indépendantiste* cause, French Quebecers, for example, maintained unease with neo-nationalism, fearful of a return to its patriarchal pro-natalism.[114] "Is one first a women or a Quebecker?" was repeatedly posed within the FLF. The 1970 elections served as a catalyst in this regard, provoking heated discussion. A faction of the FLF wanted to group to join forces with the Parti Québécois, becoming, in essence, the "feminist wing" of the party. Others were vehemently opposed, whether because the PQ was not leftist enough or because they wanted the FLF to maintain its status as an autonomous women's group. In the end, women were encouraged to vote according to their "conscience…de femmes ou de Québécoises." Some FLF members voted for the PQ whereas others decided to push candidates from all parties on women's issues during electoral assemblies. Because of these discussions, activists who felt more "Québécoise" decided to leave the FLF to work within the PQ. This dossier, however, was far from closed.[115]

III. An Alternative Feminist Narrative

The intersection of gender and nation played out in all arenas of feminist activism. The Abortion Caravan was perhaps the most striking example of how the linguistic

[113] Anne McClintok, "Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism, and the Family," *Feminist Review* 44 (1993): 61-80, 77-78.
[114] Diane Lamoureux, "Nationalisme et féminisme: impasse et coïncidences," *Possibles* 8, 1 (1993): 43-59; Sethna, "The Evolution of the Birth Control Handbook," 109.
[115] O'Leary and Toupin, *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 31, 69.

divide infused feminists politics, this time, on the pan-Canadian level. In 1970, the Vancouver Women's Caucus organized a march to Ottawa, travelling across the country and stopping at various locations along the way. English-speaking Montreal-based women's groups met the Caravan in Ottawa. The RCMP, concerned over subversive, and more specifically "Trotskyist" activity, followed the protestors from Vancouver to the Capital.[116] However, the Vancouver Women's Caucus and its associates did not advocate for the overthrow of the Canadian state. Rather they demanded reproductive freedom as well as the social support to raise children in an egalitarian society. These women's groups, as outlined in the Brief of the Abortion Caravan, conceived of contraception holistically, in that, they wanted low-cost housing, child-care facilities, maternity leave, and good quality pre-natal and post-natal care. They also criticized the "population control" movement, where women of colour, poor and Third World women were readily offered means to limit or terminate pregnancies, in contrast to their White, middle-class First World counterparts. The Brief's authors, for instance, cited Canada's hypocrisy in this regard, as Maurice Strong, the president of the Canadian International Development Agency, was in the process of considering a $15 million project for birth control in the Third World, whereas the federal government had no equivalent domestic policy. [117]

Therefore, the Abortion Caravan made two demands: that the government "remove all mention of abortion from the Criminal Code," and that it pardon "all persons charged under sections 209, 237, and 238."[118] In a highly symbolic action, the Abortion

[116] Steve Hewitt and Christabelle Sethna, "Sex Spying: The RCMP Framing of English-Canadian Women's Liberation Group during the Cold War," In *Debating Dissent: Canada and the Sixties*, eds. Gregory Kealey, Lara Campbell, Dominique Clément (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2012), 134.
[117] University of Ottawa, Morisset Library Special Collections, Canada Women's Movement Archives Collection, Box 1-8: Abortion Caravan (May 1970): proposals, brief, clippings and other material, 1970-1988." "Abortion Caravan (1970)."
[118] *Ibid*. This statement refers to Trudeau's "The state has no room in the bedroom's of the nation."

Caravan and its allies marched on to Parliament Hill where they watched guerrilla theatre, sang, listened to speeches, and waited for a government spokesman to meet with them. Once one never came, the Vancouver Women's Caucus suggested that the protestors go to Trudeau's residence. The Montreal Women's Liberation Network recounted the event in the pages of its newsletter, describing the Mounties' confusion at their presence, and how, after the PM failed to make an appearance, they left a coffin and the dangerous tools of "butcher" abortionists on his doorstep.[119] Indeed, Pierre Trudeau decriminalized abortion, as well as homosexuality, with the Omnibus Bill of 1969, "in accordance," as Sethna explains, "with the more secular mood of the country."[120] The battle was far from over, however, as abortion was only allowed when the mother's life or health was in danger, and it had to be performed in a hospital with the permission of three doctors.[121] The FLF was invited to participate in the Abortion Caravan, yet because its members "did not recognize the legitimacy of the Government of Canada," the group refused. In a press release, given to Montreal Women's Liberation to pass on to the rest of the Caravan, the FLF nevertheless "proclaimed its solidarity with Canadian women," because "as women, we are subjected to the same oppression."[122]

Similar to their English-Canadian counterparts, French Québécois women were victims of botched operations. In order to demand access to contraceptive measures, the FLF organized a parallel event the next day in Parc Lafontaine, making similar appeals as the Abortion Caravan. The women's group invented new slogans and did an "On est

[119] "Abortion Caravan," *Montreal Women's Liberation Newsletter*, June 1970, 9-10.
[120] Sethna, "The Evolution of the *Birth Control Handbook*," 97.
[121] Lisa Delorme, "Gaining a Right to Abortion in the United States and Canada: The Role of Judicial Capacities," *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 36 (1991): 93-114.
[122] "10 mai 1979, jour de la fête des mères: le FLF manifeste en faveur de l'avortement," "Communiqué de presse," *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 70, 71.

tannée" chant.[123] The Montreal Women's Liberation Network was also in attendance, in order to partake in the activities and answer questions about the Ottawa actions.[124] Yet the reproductive rights movement took a slightly different hue in Quebec, over and above constitutional matters. In the first place, the birth control bill reached the province at a much slower rate. It was not until the mid-1970s that it would become widely available, roughly seven years after, for example, American jurisdictions.[125] Once abortion laws were liberalized after the 1969 Omnibus Bill, moreover, women needed to permission of three doctors, a more challenging feat.[126] French Catholic hospitals were less likely to have a therapeutic committee than their Anglophone counterparts, even in Montreal. Case in point, 80 percent of abortion took place at the Montreal General Hospital.[127] In 1970, for instance, there were 11,200 therapeutic abortions across Canada but only 5 took place at Francophone hospitals in province.[128] Because of the restrictions embedded in the Omnibus Bus, doctors increasingly performed abortions, illegally, in private or for-profit clinics.[129] In other words, a woman's linguistic preference, religious affiliation, and financial resources in large part determined accessibility. Before activists could confront these issues, however, they had to contend with the War Measures Act and its accompanying political repression.

The 1970 FLQ Crisis, precipitated by the kidnapping of the Pierre Laporte, the Minister of Labour, and James Cross, the British Trade Commissioner, had deep

[123] *Ibid*.
[124] "Abortion Caravan," *Montreal Women's Liberation Newsletter*, June 1970, 9-10.
[125] O'Leary and Toupin, *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 50.
[126] *Ibid*., 43.
[127] Nora Milne, "Creating Change to Maintaining Change: The Federation du Quebec pour le planning des naissances and the Pro-Choice Movement" (M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 2011).
[128] "Avortement libre, gratuit, et sur demande," *Québécoises Déboutte!*, November 1971. In *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome 1*, 144.
[129] Milne, "Creating Change to Maintaining Change," 11.

reverberations on feminist activism. In fact, the Front de libération du Québec, established in 1963, and other self-styled national liberation groups inspired the FLF's name. Rather than using "movement," the group adopted "front," imitating the political language at the time.[130] Once the federal government enacted the War Measures Act, suspending civil liberties, the FLF held an emergency meeting, in order to debate its position. The women's group momentarily considered officially supporting the FLQ, until one member reminded the rest of the room that there was "nothing on women" in the radical Manifesto. Once again, in the view of this woman, feminists were let down by male-dominated nationalist groups.[131] However, the feminist group quickly came to the defense of Lise Balcer, one of the witnesses in the trial of *félquiste* Paul Rose, after she went to the FLF.[132] Because women were not allowed to sit as jurors in Quebec, Balcer refused to testify as a witness and was found in contempt of court. In response, the FLF's "Cellule X Action-Choc" ran to the front of the courtroom as Balcer explained her reasoning, yelling "discrimination" and "la justice c'est de la merde!"[133] In a vivid, detailed manuscript, Marjolaine Péloquin described the atmosphere of depression pervading activists circles, recounting how her apartment got searched and she interrogated at four in the morning by five plainclothes policemen and the RCMP. Despite these repressive measures, Péloquin and five other women, including Nicole Thérien and Louise Toupin, launched Celulle X Action-Choc. They were determined to

[130] O'Leary and Toupin, *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 32.
[131] *Ibid*.
[132] "Table Ronde. Front de libération des femmes du Québec. Le 16 novembre 1982," *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome 2*, 332.
[133] Mills, *The Empire Within*, 128; O'Leary and Toupin, *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 20.

express their outrage, for which they were eventually imprisoned.[134] Therefore, the FLF's understanding of its place within the larger nation or nations was different than both English-Canadian feminists and French Québécois neo-nationalists.

This alternative nationalist narrative played out on the global stage, demonstrating the far-reaching consequences of internal, national divisions. In the early 1970s, anti-Vietnam war activists organized the Indochinese Women's Conferences (IWC). They were held in Canada because its status as an officially neutral country enabled face-to-face contact between North American and Vietnamese women. Originally, the ICWs were set to take place in three cities, Toronto for East Coasters, Vancouver for West Coasters, and Montreal for Midwesterners. In a letter addressed to The Interim Work Committee, the Montreal International Collective, which consisted of Anne Cools, Marlene Dixon, Estelle Dorais, Susan Dubrofsky, Vickie Tabachnik, and Eileen Nixon, outlined why Montreal would be an ideal setting, "as the centre of revolutionary activity in Canada." By hosting an IWC, Montreal "would focus world attention and world support on the liberation movement of the Québécois people." Moreover, the city had "been instrumental in exposing Canadian Imperialism and Militarism in the Third World areas of the Americas, in particular the Caribbean territories." Because of a highly active African descended community, Quebec's metropolis was intimately connected, the authors maintained, to both the North American and the Caribbean Black liberation movements. The activism of the Barbados-born Anne Cools, for example, exemplified the centrality of Montreal to these struggles. Therefore, a Indochinese Women's Conference held in Montreal, according to the, presumably ad-hoc, Montreal

[134] Marjolaine Péloquin, *En prison pour la cause des femmes. La conquête du banc des jurés* (Montreal: Les Éditions du remue-ménage, 2011), 9, 11, 21-22.

International Collective, "could easily pull together the entire revolutionary movements of the New World" and Southeast Asia, "thereby fostering revolutionary internationalism" in a "meaningful" manner, one which was based on genuine "solidarity and comradeship."[135]

The FLF was initially enthusiastic. A few of its members accompanied Marlene Dixon to New York City in order to discuss the possibility of hosting a gathering, taking the opportunity to attend a demonstration for the release of African-American political prisoners.[136] In the end, however, the FLF rescinded its support. In an open letter addressed to American feminists, the women's group expressed its concern over the security of the Vietnamese delegates in light of the War Measures Act. Significantly, the authors explained how the October Crisis reoriented its priorities, making it "urgent to work first and foremost with Québécoises." The group reiterated its claim to colonized status, stating that it would interpret the taking place of a meeting organized predominately by English-Canadian and Americans on Quebec soil as "another gesture of colonization," of the kind that French Quebecers were "subjected to on a daily basis." Case in point, Marlene Dixon never learned sufficient French, despite ten years in Montreal, to communicate directly with the Front de libération des femmes, nor was the American feminist a member of the MWLN. According to the FLF, the best way for Francophones to struggle with the women of the world was to dedicate their energies to the Quebec women's liberation movement.[137] Interestingly, Marlene Dixon was willing

[135] Simon Fraser University Archives, Women's Movement Collection, F-166, File 2: Indochinese Women Conference, The Montreal International Collective, "Memorandum to the Interim Work Committee," December 19th 1970. N.B. I was only able to order 1 out of the 3 files from the Simon Fraser University Archives.
[136] "Décembre 1970: Lettre à des féministes américaines," In *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 79-80.
[137] *Ibid*.

to promote the cause internationally, but was, to a degree, rejected by the FLF because she did not abide by local, linguistic norms. Thus, the tensions between Montreal-based feminists were reflective of the larger impact of national questions, pointing to the interconnectedness of the local/global spheres.

The Montreal Women's Liberation Network had a similar discussion. In the pages of its newsletter, the feminist organization remarked that the Indochinese Women's Conference would be "a great opportunity to try to bring together women from as many cities and countries as possible." In 1970, the MWLN was in the process of contacting women's groups across Canada to see if they could garner the necessary interest. However, the Network questioned its own ability to organize the gathering when its members, to quote an unsigned article, had "not truly involved ourselves in the reality of the Quebec revolutionary struggle."[138] While the Montreal conference was cancelled, the Toronto and Vancouver meetings took place as planned, a year later in 1971. According to historian Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, the gatherings brought together four groups of people: "old friends," usually older women relying upon a discourse of maternalist feminism to justify their involvement in the political sphere working within, for example, the Voice of Women, "new friends," or liberal, radical, socialist, and lesbian "second wave" feminists, who looked to anti-colonial Asian women for inspiration in their search for new political roles and identities, Third World women, a category that encompassed activists from marginalized groups in North America, who had become active during the late 1960s in racially-based liberation movements, and delegates from Southeast Asia, who stressed the need for developing alliances across national and racial lines. "Literally engaged in a struggle for life and death," as Wu explains, "the women of Vietnam

[138] "Conference?" *The Montreal Women's Liberation Newsletter*, June 1970, 3.

cultivated the widest possible range of allies." Global sisterhood then, originated from the "East" as well as a "West," complicating traditional understandings of this, usually Eurocentric, phenomenon.[139]

Ironically, the North American women, despite a desire to cultivate ties with Southeast Asians, could not do the same among themselves. Rather than solidifying links between activists, the Indochinese Women's Conferences exasperated existing tensions. Diverging sexual, racial, and national identities came to the fore, making genuine partnerships difficult. Among the Canadians, the delegates' very different understandings of colonization, both between themselves and vis-à-vis the Americans, were the main source of dissension. Much to the irritation of English-Canadian participants, women from south of the border dominated the conference, in numbers and in attitude. In response to American chauvinism, Canadian organizers distributed a 40-page, nationalist women's history, entitled *She Named It Canada: Because That's What It Was Called*. Even if Canada was undoubtedly under U.S. economic domination, however, the country had its own history of colonization, at home and abroad. Indigenous attendees, for instance, rejected English-Canadians' claim to colonized status and, as we saw in the previous chapter, the Caribbean Conference Committee, of which Anne Cools was a member, was highly critical of Canada's role in the Caribbean.[140] Although the exact number and contributions of French-speakers and Canadian women of colour at the IWCs remain unknown, the criticisms of the Los Angeles-based Third World Women's Caucus provided key insights, more specifically the group's claim that "White women appear to

[139] Wu, *Radicals on the Road*, 198, 205-212, 259, 218.
[140] Moreover, Gerry Ambers, for example, recalled how she and her counterparts wanted to include First Nations men into their struggles, whereas White women drew a "hard line at gender" earlier, Wu, *Radicals on the Road*, 239.

be eager to meet with the Indochinese women and sympathize with their struggle while at the same time ignoring the struggle of Third World people in North America." The latter were "tokenized" and not included "on an equal level" within the ranks of the IWC organizing committee.[141]

IV. The Legacy of the FLF

The Front de libération des femmes dissolved in December 1971, at the beginning, according to O'Leary and Toupin, of the Marxist-Leninist shift in leftist Montreal politics.[142] Indeed, FLF members cited ideological confusion and organizational issues as the major reasons behind the group's break-up. A faction of the group, reiterating the critiques emanating from the far Left, abandoned the FLF for En lutte!, or various other Marxist-Leninist groups and Comités mixtes d'action politiques, because they felt that autonomous women's groups diluted radical forces, that patriarchy was an ideology versus a material reality, and that feminists are nearly always of "petit-bourgeois" origin.[143] Only one month after the death of the FLF, however, two former members from this group co-founded the Centre des femmes in January of 1972 with two activists of the leftist Comité ouvrier St. Henri. Gradually, other women joined the ranks of the Centre, from, for example, the social services sector. The average age was quite young, at twenty-five. In contrast to the FLF, the Centre des femmes limited its

[141] Simon Fraser University Archives, Women's Movement Collection, F-166, File 2: Indochinese Women Conference, "Untitled document," Submitted by the Third World Women's Caucus, Los Angeles, California. According to Judy Wu's estimates, relying upon the estimates of the Voice of Women, 109 women from 6 states and 5 provinces attended the Vancouver conference and 388 women from 19 states, 3 provinces, and Australia attended the Toronto conference. Wu did not specify if there was a Quebec delegation or if Francophone women attended the conference. The delegation from the Southeast Asia consisted of 3 teams of 2 women and one male translator each for North Vietnam, South Vietnam, and Laos. See Wu, *Radicals on the Road*, 388, 244.
[142] O'Leary and Toupin, *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 34.
[143] *Ibid.*, 129-130; "Table ronde. Front de libération des femmes. Le 16 novembre 1982," *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome 2*, 368.

membership to approximately 15 people. With a different operating logic, the Centre des femmes sought a degree of isolation, to create a core of revolutionary feminists and encourage the implantation of similar nuclei in other milieus. In order to then establish a larger, radical autonomous women's organization, the Centre sought to formulate an analysis of women's oppression in Quebec within the framework of its overarching goal, that is, the elimination of both capitalism and patriarchy.[144]

In the *Bilan du Centre des Femmes de Montréal*, published in 1974 and distributed to other women's groups and women working in mixed settings, the organizing committee outlined the group's objectives, in that, its adherents strived to make the Centre an activist base where women could go for information and emotional support. They aimed to use the right to abortion as a means to mass mobilization, produce research on women as a basis for an ideological struggle, and unleash a so-called "propaganda offensive."[145] The Centre was perhaps best known, however, for the integral role it played in the Comité de lutte pour l'avortement et la contraception libre et gratuits, established during the spring of 1974, shortly after Dr. Henry Morgentaler was arrested for carrying out, what were at the time, illegal abortions.[146] While the Front de libération des femmes was engaged in the pro-choice movement then, serving as a referral service, the Centre des femmes was at the forefront of a legal battle, while still continuing its informational role. Now that Montreal doctors were under arrest, for example, the Centre encouraged women seeking abortions to travel to New York, mentioning a gynaecologist

[144] *Ibid*., 23.
[145] "Bilan du Centre des Femmes de Montréal, janvier 1972 à septembre 1974," In *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 159.
[146] Lamoureux, "La lutte pour le droit de l'avortement," 83.

who only charged $100 dollars yet never refused anyone with less.[147] The Centre des femmes was also a proponent of state-funded day care. In order to encourage women's workforce participation, the Centre proposed child care facilities in every neighbourhood, region, and workplace open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.[148] Again, reproductive choice was viewed as a means to choose when to have a child and under which socio-economic conditions.

Pointing to the role of state repression, the Centre des femmes was subjected to a police raid. At eleven in the morning in February of 1973, four police officers from the Sureté du Québec arrived to Centre, staying for an hour and half. Officially, as outlined in *Québécoises Déboutte!*, they were looking for instruments or drugs used to carry out abortions, claiming that someone issued a complaint. Significantly, Montreal feminists never learned how to terminate pregnancies, unlike pro-choice activists in, for example, Italy or France. Diane Lamoureux argues that women's activists in Quebec, after the RCSW, assumed legalisation would come quickly and therefore prioritized information and referral.[149] Because they did find what they were looking for at the Centre, the officers appeared to "forget" their mandate and preceded to requisition all the materials they managed to get their hands on, mainly written documents. They even interrogated activists and women in the waiting room, asking them point blank, "Are you pregnant?"[150] The first time the police raided the organization they confiscated the list of *Québécoises Déboutte!* subscribers, but, when they did the same thing again, in

[147] "Bilan du Centre des Femmes de Montreal, janvier 1972 à septembre 1974," In *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome I*, 165.
[148] "Les garderies: une lutte politique," *Québécoises Déboutte!*, February 1973. In *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome II*, 62.
[149] Lamoureux, "La lutte pour le droit de l'avortement," 81.
[150] "Perquisition au Centre des Femmes," *Québécoises Déboutte!* Publié par le Centre des femmes. March 1973, 22. In *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome II*, 114.

December 1974, the Centre's workers had the foresight to make copies. This time, however, seven people were arrested, a group that included women seeking abortions. The six women and one man were interrogated for six hours at the police station, and denied the right to a lawyer.[151] Because of what were perceived to be close connections between the State and doctors, feminists retained a critical analysis of the medical establishment, pointing to its bourgeois, male origins and inaccessibility issues borne most severely by poor women. In fact, the *Manifeste des femmes du Quebec pour l'avortement libres et gratuits*, signed by the Centre des femmes' affiliates demanded, on behalf of all women, "free abortion on demand, in their community, in their language, under proper medical conditions, without discrimination based on class, nationality, race or age."[152]

While the Centre des femmes and the Comité de lutte pour l'avortement et la contraception libres et gratuits was concerned with abortion issues on a legal level, the Théâtre des Cuisines, with close ties to the latter, took care of the "agit-pop," performing a play, *Nous aurons les enfants que nous voulons*, across the city.[153] In 1973, a Centre des femmes member with theatre experience contacted women in other political groups, asking them if they wanted to start a amateur, feminist troupe. Through performance, these six women, all engaged in one form or another with the pro-choice movement, strived to reach a broader audience, finding art to be an easier way to broach a sensitive topic.[154] The play contained an overt political message, geared toward women from a

[151] "Table ronde. Front de libération des femmes. Le 16 novembre 1982," *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome II*, 361.
[152] Cited in Milne, "Creating to Change to Maintaining Change," 18-19.
[153] Lamoureux, "La lutte pour le droit de l'avortement," 84.
[154] University of Ottawa, Morisset Library Special Collections, Canadian Women's Movement Archives Collection, Box 105: Théâtre québécois: annonces des productions, manifeste du théâtre des cuisines aussi

range of ages and classes. *Nous aurons les enfants que nous voulons*' main characters, Mesdames Germain, Lamoureux, and Brassard, as well as the teenage Madeleine, were, respectively, a married mother with 6 children teetering on the edge of destitution, an older woman facing a dangerous, though not lethal, pregnancy, a middle-class woman wanting to keep her job, and a 15 year trying to avoid a loveless marriage. While all four wanted to terminate their pregnancies, the "Curé", who told Mme Germain that "Votre seul devoir est de vous sacrifier pour les vôtres. C'est un épreuve d'accepter un enfant mais il faut trouver un sens à la souffrance," discouraged them.[155] For leftist women's groups then, reproductive choice meant free access to abortion on demand, outside of hospital committees, the Church, and the family. By 1975, the Fédération des femmes du Québec made the same demands.[156]

Once the worst of the repression was over, the Comité de lutte pour l'avortement et la contraception libres et gratuits changed focuses, deciding to lobby the recently-elected Parti Québécois provincial government for reproductive rights.[157] White Francophone feminists' relationship with the PQ, however, remained complicated throughout the 1970s. In a *Québécoises Déboutte!* article "Le PQ. Espoir ou illusion," for instance, an unsigned author commented on its 1973 programme, calling the appointment of two women to the party executive and the adoption of women-friendly policies a "masque trompeur." In this hard-hitting piece, the author accused the party of using the rhetoric of "national unity" to hide its desire to "see a Québécois bourgeoisie allied with American imperialism develop and take control." In the interim, the PQ

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des documents sur nemo-theatre et théâtre expérimental des femmes, 1975, 1980-1982, "Manifeste du Théâtre des cuisines (1975)."

[155] *Ibid*. "Pièce de théâtre."

[156] "La FFQ prend position au sujet de l'avortement," *Bulletin de la FFQ*, January 1976, 3.

[157] Lamoureux, "La lutte pour le droit de l'avortement," 84.

needed to rally the middle- and working-class, men and women, "whose objective interests diverged and opposed each other," and hence the ostensibly progressive platform. For this reason, the author accused the political party of "demagogy" and "electorialism," encouraging readers "to look closer," specifically that the PQ never "called into question the "capitalist order" or took measures to legalize abortion. Women, according to this woman, went from "Christian mothers to national mothers."[158] Indeed, in the nationalist discourse of a wide-range of contexts, women have typically been viewed as the reproducers of the nation, biologically, culturally, and symbolically.[159] But the FLF and the Centre des femmes, in contrast, centered of the reproductive rights movements at the heart of their feminist struggles, therefore offering a dissenting version of malestream nationalism.

As Sean Mills outlines, "The PQ challenged, frustrated, and inspired leftists from its very beginnings."[160] The same could be said for feminists, as exemplified by the above-mentioned article. Because of local efforts in Montreal, however, the party "feminized" over years, in that, rank-and-file militants, as well as the city's feminist resurgence, pushed the male-dominated executive to "modernize" its policies on women.[161] In 1973, for example, a Centre des femmes member, perhaps the author of "Le PQ. Espoir ou illusion", and Andrée Lavigne, a PQ militant, submitted a brief, "La condition de la Québécoise," to the 1974 National Congress, where Camille Laurin announced the establishment of a committee dedicated to women's issues. Nevertheless,

[158] "Le PQ. Espoir ou illusion," *Québécoises Déboutte!* Publié par le Centre des femmes. April 1973, 3-7. In *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome II*, 127-131.
[159] Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 2.
[160] Mills, *The Empire Within*, 211.
[161] Jocelyne Praud, "La seconde vague féministe et la féminisation du Parti socialiste français et du P.Q," *Politique et Sociétés* 17, 1-2 (1998): 71-90.

Lavigne, a long-time adherent to the PQ and its predecessor Mouvement Souveraineté Association, never recovered her enthusiasm for the political party, especially in light of René Lévesque's initial opposition to abortion. The activist then resigned to co-found the Regroupement des femmes québécoises (RFQ) in 1976 with her sister, Denise, and Andrée Yanacopoulo, the wife of Hubert Aquin, a renowned novelist. In fact, many, though not all, of the RFQ's members were former PQ adherents, demonstrating the ongoing tension between the party and the many feminist groups that flourished in the years following the FLF's dissolution.[162] Indeed, according to political scientist Diane Lamoureux, the pro-choice movement allowed feminists to enter the political discussion on their own terms, in that, they avoided marginalization vis-à-vis the "the national question" by contributing to the debate on the division of powers, as the criminal code was under federal jurisdiction, whereas health care was in the provincial domain. The abortion question also enabled them to ensure their place at the table during the post-independence era, avoiding the convenient forgetting of women's concerns once or if sovereignty was achieved.[163] These sorts of ideas, however, can be traced to the intellectual foundations of the Front de libération des femmes.[164]

In words of Andrée Yanacopoulo, "Ce que nous voulons, c'est une indépendance mais pas n'importe laquelle."[165] Arguably, this was the opinion of many feminists in Montreal in the lead up to the 1980 referendum. Whereas older activists remained

[162] Andrée Yanacopoulo, *Regroupement des femmes québécoises, 1976-1981* (Montreal: Les Éditions remue-ménage, 2003), 23-26. Hubert Aquin killed himself in 1977. As Yanacopoulo explains, Aquin supported her initiatve in fouding the RFQ, writing on the first official minutes, "Je veux que tu saches que je te soutiens." This quotation is from footnote 13 on page 26 of Yanacopoulo's, *Regroupement des femmes québécoises, 1976-1981*.
[163] Lamoureux, "La lutte pour le droit de l'avortement," 85.
[164] Chantal Maillé, "Transnational Feminisms in Francophone Space," *Women: A Cultural Review* 23, 1 (2012): 62-78, 69.
[165] Yanacopoulo, *Regroupement des femmes québécoises*, 99.

suspicious of overtly nationalist discourses, fearing a return to Duplessis-era policies, younger women, according Lamoureux, rallied to the "yes" side.[166] Presumably, this decision, especially in radical groups, was not taken lightly. In the pages of *Québécoises Déboutte!*, the Centre des femmes analyzed the Algerian revolution with regards to gender equality, explaining how, after massive participation, they were forced to return to their traditional, mother and wife role. Because the North African movement remained "national," according to the Quebec women's group, revolutionaries did not succeed in transforming the country's social structures.[167] Similarly, Chinese women, as another QB article outlined, were not entirely freed from domesticity under socialism.[168] French-speaking women then, regardless of what they thought of the Parti Québécois or the independence movement, remained critical vis-à-vis neo-nationalism. In engaging with these issues, however, feminists succeeded in penetrating the public sphere and in shifting the terms of debate. When Michèle Gauthier, a FLF member, died after police charged the crowd during a protest in defence of locked-out workers at *La Presse*, major union figures served as her pallbearers along with a FLF representative, and after Dr. Henry Morgentaler's arrest and another failed conviction attempt, the PQ decided not to enforce a law that appeared to be unenforceable, even if access was still severely restricted at the hospital level.[169] Therefore, the White Francophone feminist movement

[166] Diane Lamoureux, "Les ambivalences du féminisme québécois face au discours postcolonial," Conférence présentée au XIe congrès de l'Association française de science politique. Strasbourg, 31 August – 2 September 2011.
[167] "Les Algériennes," *Québécoises Déboutte!* Publié par le Centre des femmes. July 1973, 11-22. In *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome II*, 227-238.
[168] "Les femmes en Chine," *Québécoises Déboutte!* Publié par le Centre des femmes. September 1973. In *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome II*, 249-248.
[169] Mills, *The Empire Within*, 136; Delorme, "Gaining a Right to Abortion in the United States and Canada," 109.

irrevocably changed how the government and other leftist social movements viewed women.

Save a few exceptions, however, the notion that French Quebecers were themselves a colonizing people or majority in a province with a degree, though limited, of constitutional power, was absent from the FLF's analyses, nearly exclusively focused on the English-French divide. Although the FLF were highly influenced by Black Power ideologies, for instance, its members did not appear to pay attention to Black women in Quebec. And while they discussed past garment industry strikes or cited Selma James' text on Southern and Eastern European immigrant women in New York after the well-known feminist visited Montreal, French Quebecers in this group did not discuss the conditions of the city's foreign-born women.[170] There could be many reasons for this oversight. As part of a minority in Canada, White Francophone women were justifiably dedicated to theorizing their own oppression. Similarly, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the territorialisation of the Quebec identity was still a relatively recent phenomenon. Since they were unaccustomed to conceiving of themselves as a majority people, French Quebecers could have easily overlooked other women's feminist narratives. Nevertheless, this initial race-blindness, even if understandable, set the tone for later, similarly ethnocentric feminist organizing, especially given the FLF's key role in establishing a uniquely Québécois radical feminism. In fact, the metaphor of colonization and racial oppression evoked by White feminists across Canada, both liberal and radical, Francophone and Anglophone, to paraphrase historian Ruth Roach Pierson, "marginalized and silenced women belonging to those social groups within our own

[170] "Le pouvoir des femmes et la subversion sociale," *Québécoises Déboutte! Tome 2*, 318-319.

country."[171] In Quebec, these questions were certainly all the more complex but no less pressing.

[171] Ruth Roach Pierson, "The Mainstream Women's Movement and the Politics of Difference," In *Canadian Women's Issues*. Vol. 1, eds. Ruth Roach Pierson and Marjorie Griffin Cohen (Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1993), 190.

Chapter 5: Montreal's Transnational Haitian Feminism

According to sociologist Carolle Charles, three elements, in particular, shaped Haitian women's activism in the Diaspora: opposition to the Duvalier dictatorship (1957-1986), anti-racist struggles, and exposure to the ideas of North America feminists.[1] Their activist trajectories also closely mirrored, and intersected with, those of their English-speaking counterparts. More specifically, Haitian-born women were involved in multiple political groups during this period, from male-dominated groups, to Haitian women's organizations, to multi-ethnic or multiracial women-only settings, such as the Congress of Black Women and the Ligue des femmes du Québec.[2] Although there was a panoply of Haitian women's groups in Montreal, in the interest of coherence and brevity, this chapter focuses on the activities and membership of two groups active in the 1970s, Nègès Vanyan (translates as Strong, Vibrant Women), sometimes referred to as the Rassemblement des femmes haïtiennes (RAFA) as well as the Point de ralliement des femmes d'origine haïtienne, established in 1973 and 1971, respectively. RAFA consisted predominately of women associated the Maison d'Haïti, an organization founded in 1972 in order to help new arrivals adjust to Quebec society, whereas the Point de ralliement was based upon the personal networks of mostly middle-class professionals. Both groups, however, responded to the socio-economic marginality faced by the Montreal community at large. They continued in their struggle for the restoration of democracy in Haiti, even, or arguably especially, while exiled abroad.

[1] Carolle Charles, "Gender and Politics in Contemporary Haiti: The Duvalierist State, Transnationalism, and the Emergence of a New Feminism (1980-1990)," *Feminist Studies* 21 (1995), 148.
[2] Becky Thompson, "Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave Feminism," In *No Permanent Waves. Recasting Histories of U.S. Feminism*, ed. Nancy A. Hewitt (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 40 – 41.

Whether writing from the perspective of Haiti or the Diaspora, activists and scholars trace the beginnings of Haitian feminism to the Ligue féminine d'action sociale (LFAS), a middle- and upper class women's group established in Port-au-Prince during the final months of the 1915-1934 U.S. occupation. Historian Grace Sanders provides an excellent analysis on the continuities between the Ligue and women's activism in Montreal, and virtually every publication authored by Diaspora women referenced the LFAS, paying homage to the organization.[3] There were, in other words, connections between the two feminist traditions, despite temporal and physical distance. Because they emerged from the same, highly politicized middle-class, many Haitian Montrealers were in fact related to the Ligue's original members.[4] Renowned author and community activist Ghislaine Charlier, for example, is the granddaughter of LFAS co-founder Alice Garoute, and remembered attending women-only gatherings at her grandmothers' house. It was in Alice's library where Ghislaine first encountered leftist thought.[5] As we will see, 1970s-era women's groups built on the Ligue's emphasis on international feminism, fostering affective and political ties between women across national and community lines. Similar to their predecessors, they maintained close relations to their male counterparts, by avoiding a language of gender separateness. Experiences abroad in conjunction with the global resurgence of feminist and anti-colonial activism, however,

[3] Grace Louise Sanders, "La Voix des Femmes: Haitian Women's Rights, National Politics and Black Activism in Port-au-Prince and Montreal, 1934-1986" (PhD Dissertation, University of Michigan, 2013). For LFAS references see, for example, Myriam Merlet, *La Participation Politique des Femmes en Haïti. Quelques éléments d'analyse* (Port-au-Prince: Éditions Fanm Yo La, 2002), ix; Clorinde Zéphir, ed., *Haitian Women: Between Repression and Democracy* (Port-au-Prince: ENFOFANM Éditions, 1991), 1; *Femmes et démocratie en Haïti* (Pétionville: Le Forum de Jeudi, 1989), 13; Myriam Chancy, *Framing Silence: Revolutionary Novels by Haitian Women* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 40-45.

[4] Micheline Labelle et Marthe Therrien, "Le mouvement associative haïtien au Québec et le discours des leaders," *Nouvelles pratiques sociales* 5, 2 (1992): 65-83, 72.

[5] Interview with Sanders. See *La Voix des Femmes*, 62, 107.

precipitated a more class-conscious women's activism on the part of Diaspora women, who moved away from the LFAS' bourgeois tendencies. When many Haitian Montreal women returned to Haiti after the overthrow of Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier in 1986, they brought their experiences with them, contributing to Haiti's political re-birth.

Haitian Montrealers can therefore be considered "transmigrants" *par excellence*, a reality which undoubtedly carried over to the community's feminism. In the words of sociologists Nina Glick Shiller and Georges Fouron, transmigrants "live simultaneously in two countries, participating in personal and political events in both the (Diaspora) and Haiti." Expatriates remained attached to their country of birth long after leaving, sending money to family members, maintaining regular content with friends, and closely following the political situation of their home country. In the Haitian case, the latter has been particularly salient.[6] "Transmigration," to paraphrase Barbara Burton, "is also about the traveling of much-layered and highly charged ideals."[7] Haiti's iconic place in world history as the site of an unprecedented and inspiring slave revolt in 1804 only contributed to this tendency, reinforcing the community's "long-distance nationalism."[8] For instance, Yolène Jumelle, Maison d'Haïti founder and future president of the Congress of Black Women, started her 1989 study on the Haitian family in 1804, and after a sweeping gendered analysis, ended the text in Montreal.[9] But like the family, the transnational nation contained its own set of hierarchies and indeed Haitian political life undervalued the role of women, relegating them to the margins. Moreover, women faced

[6] Nina Glick Shiller and Georges Eugene Fouron, *Georges Woke Up Laughing: Long-Distance Nationalism and the Search for Home* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 3.
[7] Barbara Burton, "The Transmigration of Rights: Women, Movement, and the Grassroots in Latin America and the Caribbean," *Development and Change* 35, 4 (2004): 773-798, 773.
[8] Charles, "Gender and Politics in Contemporary Haiti," 297, 298.
[9] Yolène Jumelle, "Les structures sociales de la famille haïtienne," In *African Continuities/L'héritage African*, eds. Simeon Waliaula Chilangu and Sada Niag (Toronto: Terebi, 1989).

a particular set of challenges adapting to life in Quebec.[10] For both these reasons, it is unsurprising that the Montreal Haitian feminist narrative started in Haiti.

I. The Intellectual Origins of Haitian Diaspora Feminism

Whether active in the early or later decades of the 20th century, Haitian feminists, based in or outside the country, consistently underlined the integral role women played in national development. From the slave revolt of 1804 onwards, women took on important leadership roles. Despite active participation in all spheres, however, Haitian women's socio-economic conditions, to synthesize the arguments of various prominent activists, rarely improved vis-à-vis their male counterparts, nor were female citizens adequately recognized for their paid and unpaid labour. Yet, the status of women, they argued, was intrinsically linked to the status of Haiti as whole, where one could not be improved without the other.[11] The *désoccupation* of 1934, proclaimed Haiti's "second independence" by newly elected president Sténio Vincent, was a case in point. Although elite youth and intellectuals of both sexes worked together to combat American encroachment, women were left out of the reconstruction process and denied full enfranchisement in spite of their contribution to the independence movement.[12] In response to gender-based exclusion, prominent women such as Madeleine Sylvain-Bouchereau, Alice Garoute, Alice Mathon and others, many of whom were the country's

[10] Georges Fouron and Nina Glick Schiller, "All in the Family: Gender, Transnational Migration, and the Nation-State," *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 7, 4 (2001): 539-582, 547.
[11] See, for example, Madeleine Sylvain Bouchereau, *Haïti et ses femmes: une étude d'évolution culturelle* (Port-au-Prince: les Presses Libres, 1957), 231; Myriam Merlet, "Women in Conquest of Full and Total Citizenship in an Endless Transition," In *Engendering Social Justice, Democratizing Citizenship and Women's Activism in Latin American and the Caribbean*, eds. Elizabeth Maier and Nathalie Lebon (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 127-139.
[12] Mathew Smith, *Red and Black in Haiti: Radicalism, Conflict, and Political Change, 1934-1957* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2009), 1.

first female lawyers, doctors, and social workers, founded the Ligue féminine d'action sociale, pursing women's suffrage, legal recognition in the penal code, access to education and sovereignty.[13] Early Haitian feminists were therefore coming out of a period of mass mobilization, one that saw, in the words of historian Mathew Smith, "a reinvigoration of national discourse."[14]

Because they failed to reap its full rewards, however, these leaders founded an autonomous organization. Its membership put forth a feminist, anti-colonial nationalism, setting the stage for future forms of women's civic engagement.[15] In 1950, for instance, Alice Garoute, the LFAS president, stated the following during a speech to the constitutive assembly: "Donnez à la femme haïtienne le droit et la fierté de coopérer au sauvetage de la Patrie, renversez les barrières qui dont fait d'elle un mineure à la vie et en route ensemble, cœurs et mains unis, pour l'avancement définitif de notre chère patrie."[16] Similar language was used during the First National Congress of Haitian Women, a landmark event held from April 10th to 15th of the same year. The proceedings of the conference, *Le féminisme en marche*, offer a vivid and rich recollection of the gathering as well as some of the Ligue's activities. Welcoming delegates, Madeleine Sylvain Bouchereau purposely evoked Haiti's national slogan, "union fait force," to describe the conference's over-arching goal, that is, the coordination of women's efforts.

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[13] Charles, **"**Gender and Politics in Contemporary Haiti," 146; Chancy, *Framing Silence*, 42; Sanders, *La Voix des Femmes*, 36.
[14] Smith*, Red and Black in Haiti*, 188.
[15] Ligue Féminine d'Action Sociale, *Femmes Haïtiennes* (Port-au-Prince: Éditions Fardin, 1953), 200. For instance, Madeleine Sylvain-Bouchereau, Haiti's first woman lawyer and a graduate of Bryn Mawr College, described fellow LFAS member Alice Garoutte's brand of "feminism to be but a form of patriotism."
[16] "Suprême appel de notre président, Alice Garoutte, à la constitution de 1950." Le Ministère à la Condition Féminine et aux Droits de la Femme, en concert avec le Musée du Panthéon National Haïtien vous présente à l'occasion du 8 mars, Journée Internationale de la Femme, l'exposition: *Femme: Notre Histoire: Un panorama des Femmes haïtiennes, héroïnes de notre Independence et figures politiques contemporaines*. 1998, 36.

"In the days that follow," Bouchereau explained, "We will try to envision the 'feminine problem' in its entirely." Participants were there to discuss the situation of the family and childhood, education, work, and finally, "la question fondamentale des droits civils et politiques qui permettront à la femme d'occuper la place qui lui revient dans la communauté nationale."[17] Although heavily impregnated with an upper-class bias, the first lady Lucienne Estimé's opening address was indicative of this new era of women's organizing, the latter finally moving, according to Estimé, from the "social" to the "political sphere."[18]

If the number of speeches was any indication of the event's significance then the First National Congress of Haitian Women in 1950 was truly momentous. Moreover, it paved the way for later transnational practices. Not only did the wife of President Estimé share her remarks with the crowd, but India's Lakshmi Menon, head of the Status of Women Section of the United Nations, also addressed the audience. There were a diversity of attendees at the conference, from other associations and the unions, as well as, significantly, from abroad. LFAS' Jacqueline Scott called upon delegates to reflect on the notion of "foreigner" immediately before Menon's speech, proclaiming that there were "no foreigners here" but rather "fervent hearts" working in unison toward a common goal.[19] Although the UN representative paid homage to British and American feminists, who won the battle "not only for themselves," "but for women the world over," Lakshmi Menon drew parallels between Haiti and India, stating:

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[17] Ligue Féminine d'Action Sociale (LFAS), "Exposé d'introduction. Par Madeleine Sylvain Bouchereau. Présidente du Comité d'Organisation," *Le féminisme en marche: bulletin dédié à la mémoire de Alice Garourte*. Rapport du Congres national des femmes. II. Activités de la Ligue féminine d'action sociale pour l'année 1950-1951 (Port-au-Prince, Eben-Ezer, 1951), 7-9. Hereafter referred to as *Le féminisme en marche*.

[18] LFAS, "Discours d'Ouverture de Mme Lucienne Heurtelou Estimé," *Le féminisme en marche*, 6-7.

[19] LFAS, "Discours de Madame Lakshmi N. Menon à la séance du Premier Congres National des Femmes Haïtiennes." *Le féminisme en marche*, 9.

> On a compris depuis longtemps qu'aucun état ou peuple ne peut demeurer à demi esclave et à demi libre. C'est le cas surtout des pays comme les nôtres, c'est-à-dire, le votre et le mien, qui, après une longue période de vicissitude politique sont encore sur la voie d'une plus grande liberté coopérative tendant à certaines fins constructives. En ceci inutile de vous dire que les femmes étant à la fois des êtres humains et des citoyennes ont une grande responsabilité que l'on ne doit pas ignorer.[20]

In addition to Menon, a number of other non-Haitian women made the trip to Port-au-Prince, representing Puerto Rico, Cuba, Jamaica, and the National Council of Negro Women, based in the U.S.[21] Feminist alliances therefore reflected the changing political landscape in the postwar era of decolonization, where, as evidenced by the First National Congress of Haitian Women, political and affective ties were created between so-called "Third World" women.

Although certainly anti-colonial and focused on women's concerns, the Ligue féminine d'action sociale was undoubtedly bourgeois, even if there is some scholarly debate over the degree to which the organization occulted the concerns of working class women.[22] In the months following the Congress, for example, the LFAS staged a dramatic protest for women's rights during a meeting to adopt a constitution in the historic Gonaives, the city where revolutionaries proclaimed Haiti's independence in 1804. Women from all corners of the country descended on the town that late November, holding signs and chanting slogans directly outside the diocese where constitutional discussions were taking place. The marchers held signs with punchy, classist slogans such as "Le paysan vote, l'avocate vote pas- La séduction doit être punie-La femme veut

[20] *Ibid*., 9-10.
[21] LFAS, "Premier Congres National des Femmes Haïtiennes du 10 au 15 avril 1950," *Le féminisme en marche*, 1-2.
[22] Charles, "Gender and Politics in Contemporary Haiti," 147; Chancy, *Framing Silence: Revolutionary Novels by Haitian Women*, 40-45.

des droits."[23] In the end, women achieved a partial victory, as the Constitutional Assembly ratified the 8th Amendment, granting women 21 years and older the right to vote in all elections. However, once Estimé, an LFAS sympathizer, was ousted from power shortly after the First National Congress of Haitian Women, Paul Magloire was slow to enact the legislation.[24] Ironically, the first presidential election women could vote in was in 1957, the year François Duvalier came to office with a "noiriste platform." In his attempt to eliminate dissent, Duvalier unleashed a reign of terror, targeting the educated elite and the organized opposition.[25] Not only was the Ligue reduced to virtual powerlessness, as its membership disappeared, emigrated or aged, but pro-democracy advocates across the country were also subjected to violent state repression. Politically engaged women joined the struggle against Duvalier, picking up where the Ligue left off, this time, in the Diaspora.[26]

Regardless of their ties to the LFAS, the leaders of Montreal's Haitian women's organizations acquired extensive political experience in the Caribbean. Before co-founding the Point de ralliement des femmes d'origine haïtienne and the Bureau de la communauté chrétienne des Haïtiens de Montréal, Josette Jean-Pierre Rousseau, for example, volunteered with the Jeunesse étudiante catholique in Port-au-Prince's *bidonvilles*. In 1961, Rousseau left for Quebec shortly after the violent repression following the student strike at the École normale supérieure de Port-au-Prince. [27] In fact, many women were involved in the organized resistance. For instance, Adeline Magloire-

[23] Cléante Desgraves Valcin, "La manifestation aux Gonaives," Lydia Jeanty, "Campagne pour les droits de la femme haïtienne," *Le féminisme en marche*, 31-39.
[24] Sanders, *La Voix des Femmes*, 162.
[25] Sean Mills, "Quebec, Haiti, and the Deportation Crisis of 1974," *Canadian Historical Review* 94, 3 (2013): 405-435, 411.
[26] Sanders, *La Voix des Femmes,* 188-89; Charles, "Gender and Politics in Contemporary Haiti," 139-141.
[27] Pierre, *Ces Québécois Venus d'Haïti*, 257-260.

Chancy, one of the founders of the Maison d'Haïti and the Rassemblement des femmes haïtiennes, was a member of Femme Patriote, an anti-Duvalier group active in the early 1960s. The organization's reason for being was reflected in its newsletter: "Struggling for the establishment of a democratic society, struggling for the betterment of the Haitian woman, these are the objectives of Femme Patriote. The two struggles are inseparable." The women's group was associated with HAÏTI-DEMAIN, a clandestine anti-regime movement that published a widely distributed French- and Creole-language newsletter.[28] Because of these, and other Leftist activities, Adeline and her husband Max had to flee the country in 1965. Family and friends risked their lives to help the Chancy couple and their three children seek refuge in the Chilean embassy and then Montreal.[29] Once they left Haiti, however, Montrealers' previously acquired political baggage came with them, into the new context. Building on this experience, they were able to put forth a critical analysis of both Haiti and Canada/Quebec and from here, their sphere of political activity only expanded.

In terms of feminist thinking, however, a rupture appeared to occur between the Ligue féminine d'action sociale and its Diaspora counterparts. One of the potential reasons behind this shift merit a momentary aside, especially with regards to migratory trajectories. Although it remains important not to generalize, the vitality provided to Montreal-based women's organizations by educated, middle-class women was undeniable. Marlène Rateau, one of the founding members of the Point de ralliement, studied nursing upon her arrival to Montreal in 1963, and later, in the 1970s, completed

[28] RAFA, *Femmes Haïtiennes* (Montreal: Maison d'Haïti: Carrefour International, 1980), 45; Adeline Magloire Chancy, *Profil: Max Chancy (1928-2002)* (Pétionville: Fondation Gérard Pierre-Charles, 2007), 19.
[29] *Ibid*., 22.

teaching and human resources degrees.[30] Likewise, Yolène Jumelle, one of the founding members of the Maison d'Haïti and the president of the Congress of Black Women from 1988-1989 was trained as a lawyer and sociologist.[31] Most Haitian Montrealers that were part of this first emigration wave, however, arrived to the metropolis after having completed significant years of schooling back home, often at École Normale Supérieure de Port-au-Prince. Mireille Neptune-Anglade, the wife of the renowned geographer and UQAM professor, Georges Anglade, was case in point. The alumna, who tragically perished in the 2010 earthquake alongside her husband, prepared the highly competitive entrance exam in the early 1960s.[32] Adeline and Max Chancy were graduates as well, attending the renowned institution in its early years.[33] Established in 1946-47, the Normale was founded during an era of national development, when president Dumarais Estimé actively sought to create a new, young leadership.[34] The impact of the Normale's rigorous training and social purpose on the transnational Haitian nation was undoubtedly considerable, especially since an estimated one fifth its graduates eventually settled in Montreal.[35] But the Normale was, in many cases, only the stepping-stone to a European, and more often than not, French, graduate school experience.

In fact, it was often on the Continent where Haiti's petit-bourgeoisie, women and men, deepened its knowledge of Marxism.[36] Max Chancy, for example, studied philosophy and political science at the Sorbonne during a time of anti-colonial and

[30] Pierre, *Ces Québécois Venus d'Haïti*, 44.
[31] Dawn Williams, *Who's Who in Black Canada: Black Success and Black Excellence in Canada. A Contemporary Directory* (Toronto: D.P. Williams and Associates, 2001), 215-216.
[32] Pierre, *Ces Québécois Venus d'Haïti*, 42, 52; Joseph Lévy, *Espace d'une génération*. Entretiens avec Georges Anglade (Montreal: Éditions Liber, 2004), 26.
[33] Chancy, *Profil: Max Chancy*, 12, 14.
[34] Lévy, *Espace d'une génération*, 17; Pierre, *Ces Québécois Venus d'Haïti*, 3-5.
[35] Lévy, *Espace d'une génération*, 26. 17.
[36] For more on Marxism and Haiti's intellectual elite see Jean Luc, "Sur la diffusion du marxisme en Haiti," *Nouvelle Optique*, April-September 1972, 89-101.

Marxist critique, forever influencing his thinking.[37] Mireille Neptune-Anglade, the author of a pioneering study on women's labour, *L'autre moitié du développement: à propos du travail des femmes en Haïti*, seemed to have a comparable experience. Even though the monograph was not published until 1986, the book's intellectual genesis took place in the mid-1960s while Neptune-Anglade was a graduate student in Paris.[38] Indeed, *L'autre moitié du développement*, to quote its author, constituted both a "continuity" and "break" with previous forms of Haitian feminism. Similar to the LFAS, Neptune-Anglade emphasized the integral societal role played by women and put forth a discourse on Haitian women by a Haitian woman within an anti-colonial framework. But, unlike the Ligue, Mireille focused on women's work in home as well as the workplace. In other words, Neptune-Anglade moved away from the rights-based, or, for her, elite perspective offered by the first women's organization.[39] Moreover, there was an explicit recognition of class privilege. As she remarked, the male breadwinner model only corresponded to the very wealthiest of households. The vast majority of women had to work for wages, in order to support their families. Case in point, Haitian women are frequently referred to as *poto mitan*, that is, as the pillars of the economy and the family.[40] In other words, Neptune-Anglade's purportedly Marxist feminist analysis was decidedly different than the "grande dame," high political approach taken by the LFAS.[41]

In this regard, Mireille Neptune-Anglade perhaps took a cue from her, as she put it, "exceptional" dissertation advisor, Andrée Michel. While the latter was certainly a

[37] Chancy, *Profil: Max Chancy*, 14.
[38] Lévy, *Espace d'une génération*, 38, 52.
[39] Mireille Neptune-Anglade, *L'autre moitié du développement. à propos du travail des femmes en Haiti* (Paris: Éditions des Alizés, 1986), 24-26.
[40] Mare-Jose N'Zengu-Tayo, "'Fanm Se Poto Mitan': Haitian Women, the Pillar of Society," *Feminist Review* 59 Rethinking Caribbean Difference (1998): 118-142, 132.
[41] *Ibid*., 57.

pioneer in feminist scholarship and was the founder, in 1974, of Groupe d'études des rôles, des sexes, de la famille et du développement humain at the Centre national de la recherche scientifique in Paris, Michel was by no means a proponent of "hegemonic feminism."[42] In fact, Andrée Michel, the author of the seminal *Que sais-je?* edition of *Le Féminisme* (1979), first forayed into academia with a study on Algerian workers, published in 1957. According to Neptune-Anglade, *Les travailleurs algériens en France* served as an important basis for anti-colonial activism.[43] Starting with a hypothesis that ethnic relations between Europeans and North Africans in the metropole resembled those in the colony, Michel found a "colonial structure" in France where Algerians were systematically discriminated against in all social and economic spheres, leading to high rates of segregation.[44] Interestingly, these arguments shed light on some of the convergent interpretations offered by feminist academics. For Neptune-Anglade, however, these ideas translated into thinking intensely about difference between women. As she explained, "Il y a certes une oppression spécifique dont sont victimes les femmes de toutes les classes sociales de tous les pays, capitalistes, socialistes et des Tiers-Monde; et même si certaines féministes parlent d'un "quatrième monde" qui serait constitué par les femmes, il va de soi que cette oppression n'est pas au même degré partout ni pour toutes les femmes." The condition of women was, in other words, intrinsically linked to the status of their respective countries.[45] Therefore, Andrée Michel's and Mireille Neptune-Anglade's scholarship underscores the porous nature of women's intellectual

[42] Lévy, *Espace d'une génération*, 38, 39; Interview with Mireille Neptune-Anglade, in Ghila Stroka, *Femmes Haïtiennes: Paroles de Négresses* (Montreal: Éditions de La Parole Métèque, 1995), 20.
[43] Mireille Neptune-Anglade, "Hommage à Andrée Michel," *Recherches féministes* 13, 1 (2000): 159.
[44] Andrée Michel, *Les travailleurs algériens en France*. Préface par Pierre Laroque (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1956), 6, 91, 125, 151, 158, 217.
[45] Neptune-Anglade, *L'autre moitié de développement,* 42.

discourses, even if the latter was more explicit in contending with the concerns of women of colour.[46] Movement across borders, it could be argued, played a large role in this melding of ideologies.

II. Women and Diaspora Political Life

After fours years in France, Mireille Neptune-Anglade and her husband decided to immigrate to Montreal in order to join family members, arriving in June 1969. In fact, once Duvalier came to power, migratory movements became long term.[47] The French-speaking Haitian middle-class settled in a Quebec at a time when its state apparatus was undergoing a massive expansion. Because French-speakers were needed to fulfill important public service jobs, Haitian migrants, women included, were hired in the educational and health care sectors with relative ease, even if they were at times hired below their qualifications. Whereas the average Haitian woman in Montreal had acquired more years of schooling than her typical Quebec-born counterpart, from 1972 onwards, recent arrivals came with increasingly less formal education, reinforcing the structural barriers already in place. From 1976 to 1980, 60 percent of women immigrants who came to the city had not completed primary school. The statistics were not much better for men, or only marginally so. For this reason, new arrivals, and women in particular, were segregated in the manufacturing, textile, and domestic service sectors, areas with poor pay, long hours, and weak unions. This second wave of immigration, moreover, was highly feminized. Out of the 24,300 Haitians admitted to the province from 1968 to

[46] Mrinalini Sinha, Donna J. Guy, and Angela Woolacott, "Introduction: Why Feminism and Internationalism?" *Gender and History* 10, 3 (1998): 345-357, 346.
[47] Deborah Ann Paul, "Women and the International Division of Labour: The Case of Haitian Workers in Montreal" (M.A., Queen's University Press, 1992), 39.

1980, 12,700 were women.[48] In fact, women often started the process of "chain migration" to Quebec's metropolis, by responding to the industrial "opportunities" available to them.[49] The reality of low education levels and female-headed households aggravated the problems inherent in migration, such as ensuring an adequate family wage or establishing a safe home for one's children. The issues that the Haitian community faced, one could argue, were in fact women's issues, although at times they took on other forms.

As a direct response to the sharp increase in Haitian immigrants, Max and Adeline Chancy founded the Maison d'Haïti in 1972-73, along with other political exiles. The centre quickly became a reference for the growing community, functioning solely as a result of donations until 1978. While the organization was government-funded from this point onwards, providing salaries for two full-time employees and paying for select programs, citizen participation remained the driving impetus behind its initiatives. Young, progressive students such as Yolène Jumelle and mature adults with a history of political engagement worked together in this cultural and political space, with, significantly, a predominately female clientele.[50] The Haiti House was extremely active on a number of fronts, focusing on the adaption, as opposed to the assimilation, of Haitian Montrealers. Its leadership sought to promote the maintenance of tradition among the collectivity's youth, for example, while at the same time encouraging their integration into broader society.[51] To this end, the organization played an advocacy role,

[48] "Études: Les caractéristiques sociodémographiques de l'immigration des femmes haïtiennes au Québec," *Collectif Paroles*, March-April 1984, 3-4.
[49] Paul, "Women and the International Division of Labour," 178.
[50] Pierre, *Ces Québécois Venus d'Haïti*, 350; Paul, "Women and the International Division of Labour," 200.
[51] Claude Moise, "Dans la Diaspora. Ici, La Maison d'Haïti," *Collectif Paroles*, January-February 1980, 11-13.

attempting to bring governmental attention to the "miseducation" of young Black Montrealers, irrespective of mother tongue and in conjunction with the Quebec Board of Black Educators (to which many Congress of Black of Women members belonged).[52] Volunteers also ran activities for youth, providing cultural reinforcement outside of the home.[53] Middle-class Haitians therefore took on the responsibility of leadership, trying to assist their working-class counterparts, who were only increasing in numbers.

The Maison d'Haïti worked in conjunction with other community groups, such as the Bureau de la communauté chrétienne des Haïtiens de Montréal (BHCM).[54] Founded in 1972 by Haitian Jesuits, the BHCM also consisted of women such as Josette Jean-Pierre Rousseau, nurse, CEGEP teacher, and Point de ralliement founder.[55] The Bureau, however, was perhaps best known for "saving" approximately 1500 recent arrivals from expulsion. In 1974, Paul Dejean, priest and president, mounted a successful anti-deportation campaign that mobilized Haitian Montrealers as well as large factions of the White Francophone Left. Historian Sean Mills provides an excellent analysis on the strategic linkages between the two, as Haitian community leaders and potential deportees entered the public sphere on their own behalf. "Questions pertaining to immigrants," as Mills put it, "could not be separated from the poverty and exploitation of the global south." Even though Canada and Quebec were part of this neo-colonial rapport, Haitian Montrealers' critiques were well received by progressive French Quebecers, many of whom spoke out against the deportation of the "1500." This moment of cross-cultural

[52] "French and the Black Student," *Contrast*, 24 November 1977, 4.
[53] Claude Moise, "Dans la Diaspora. Ici, La Maison d'Haïti," *Collectif Paroles*, January-February 1980, 11-13.
[54] *Ibid*.
[55] Pierre, *Ces Québécois Venus d'Haïti*, 257-260.

solidarity exemplified the anti-racist politics burgeoning in the metropolis.[56] During the controversial drive, the Chancys were willing to put their own status on the line, as they had yet to acquire permanent residency. In an otherwise self-effacing memoir, Adeline hints at the role she played during the ordeal, as well as the ongoing, overseas opposition to Duvalier, through a quotation from Gérard Pierre Charles (Suzy Castor's husband), a one-time member of the Haitian Unified Communist Party, about Max: "…and Adeline, his fellow traveler, whose courage never swayed for a moment during this long path of struggle and life together."[57]

While the deportation crisis infiltrated the psyche of the entire community, day-to-day issues, without discounting the difficulty that Haitian men faced in Montreal, were highly gendered. Not only were women among the original founders of the Haiti House and the BHCM, but they also addressed issues disproportionately effecting women. Starting in 1973, the Maison d'Haïti, for example, put into place French-language classes to assist Creole-speaking newcomers. By 1978, the objective of these courses shifted focus, once the organization decided to concentrate more extensively on combatting high illiteracy rates, particularly prevalent among women.[58] In one of many *Collectif Paroles* (CP) addressing the issue, Adeline Chancy argued that low education levels was a problem embedded as much in the sending as in the receiving society, in that, the inability to read only exacerbated the challenges relating to the adaption process. Poorly educated newcomers from the Third World and Southern Europe were segregated in low-paying "subaltern" occupations. Because they possessed a precarious legal status,

[56] Mills, "Quebec, Haiti, and the Deportation Crisis of 1974," 405-435.
[57] Chancy, *Profil: Max Chancy*, 23, 25.
[58] Émile Ollivier, "Étude. L'alphabétisation des immigrants haïtiens à Montréal," *Collectif Paroles*, June 1980, 19-24; Adeline Chancy, "Éducation: La lettre à la famille : une situation d'apprentissage pour les immigrants haïtiens analphabètes," *Collectif Paroles*, March 1980, 33-36.

Haitian workers were oftentimes unwilling to contest their poor treatment in the workplace, while their children, subjected to social, economic, and racial discrimination, were at risk for high drop out rates. However, as Chancy made clear, the ongoing social disenfranchisement of these migrants and their offspring served a purpose, as their presence fuelled "les rouages de la machine économique." "Ils fonctionnement," she wrote, "ils fonctionnent même très bien, du point du vue du système qui les utilise."[59] Literacy work also provided a platform for Haitian Montrealers to form coalitions with other ethnic groups, as exemplified by the *Projet multiethnique d'alphabétisation de Saint-Léonard*. In a reflection piece published in CP in the 1980s., Linh Phan, Isa Iasenza (a founder of the Montreal Italian Women's Centre), Frantz Voltaire, and Gilles Thérien outlined the project's philosophy, pointing to the need for a community-based approach, specifically targeting the ultra-marginalized, namely allophone women.[60] In short, the Maison d'Haiti provided a space, even if occupied by both sexes, where women could tackle the difficulties inherent in migration, borne most severely by women.

Although they never left mixed groups, women eventually felt the need to meet separately. For Marlène Rateau, a close, personal friend of Mireille Neptune-Anglade's and a founding member of the Point de ralliement des femmes d'origine haitienne, Haitian Montrealers relished the opportunity to establish voluntary organizations once they settled in Quebec, as they were coming from a country under dictatorial rule. According to Rateau, however, women were oftentimes denied the right to express

[59] Adeline Chancy, "L'alphabétisation des immigrants: un problème spécifique ancré dans la société québécoise," *Collectif Paroles*, April-May 1981, 23-25.
[60] "Diaspora. Le projet multiethnique d'alphabétisation de Saint-Léonard," *Collectif Paroles*, June/July/August 1982, 26-30.

themselves freely within anti-Duvalier associations. The men involved were seemingly unaware that they too had their own concerns.[61] In response to feelings of gendered exclusion, the Point de ralliement was officially established in 1971 and remains active to this day. After some debate, its founders settled on the aforementioned name. They deemed the "d'origine" most appropriate and inclusive, given that some of its members were born in Montreal. In an interview with *Collectif Paroles*, Marlène Rateau described the various influences shaping the Point de ralliement, where this group of women developed a heightened feminist consciousness once they noticed the "malaise" within the community vis-à-vis gender roles, and came into contact with French Quebecers in the workforce who shared, "toutes proportions gardées," similar problems. From here, these activists started to attend Front de libération des femmes meetings held on Sainte-Famille, the link between the two groups stemming from a personal connection between a Point de ralliement member and the FLF.[62] From this encounter, as Rateau underlined, the Haitian women's group started to receive "material support" from the latter, without specifying what it was. These actions were not without consequence. When asked how men perceived the group, Rateau responded sarcastically in an interview, describing the stereotypes frequently leveled at feminists. For instance, members were accused of being "trouble-makers" or "sexually frustrated." Women who remained in the group were suspected of becoming "Québécoises qui apportent 'la révolution dans leurs lits'."[63] Therefore, the Point de ralliement, and presumably other groups as well, pushed the

[61] Marlène Rateau, "Mireille Neptune, la militante féministe," *La Nouvelliste*, 16 August 2011.
[62] Interview with Marlène Rateau.
[63] "Entrevue avec Point de Ralliement des Femmes d'Origine Haïtienne," *Collectif Paroles*, March-April 1984, 10-12.

broader community to consider gender issues, judging by the intensity of the responses to its activities.[64]

The Point de ralliement initially focused on consciousness-raising. As Rateau outlined, Haitians internalized prevalent gender norms where women were constructed as the meeker, more timid sex. The education they received in Haiti carried over to life in Montreal. This "state of affairs" made some women uneasy, especially given the resurgence of feminist activism in the French-speaking province as well as across the Western world. In order to overcome this exclusion, a group of middle-class women, many of who were nurses, decided to get together on regular basis in the early 1970s. In these early years, they read and discussed feminist texts.[65] These meetings, led by women who previously loitered in the kitchen while their male partners engaged in heated political debates, as Rateau recounted, were empowering and exciting, even if at first the participants, not used to discussing their opinions, felt awkward and hesitant. With time, however, they grew more confident, acquiring an increased sense of self-esteem and ability to speak in public.[66] In the 1980s, women working within the Maison d'Haïti had a similar experience, reading Elena Belotti's, *Little Girls: Social Conditioning and its Effects on the Stereotyped Role of Women During Infancy*.[67] Thus, reading and discussing feminist texts took place in multiple settings in Montreal.

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[64] For more on how Haitian men responded to feminism see, Cary Hector, "Rapport sur quelques états d'âme de males haïtiens face au féminisme: confidences, inquiétudes, interrogations et…espoirs," *Collectif Paroles*, November-December 1984/January-February 1985, 10-14.

[65] Interview with Marlène Rateau.

[66] Marlène Rateau, "Pawol Fnam: des femmes haïtiennes de Montréal au micro de Radio Centre-Ville," In *Interrelations femme-médias dans l'Amérique française*, ed. Josette Brun (Quebec City: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2009), 178-179. Rateau reiterated many of these ideas when interviewed by the author. Also, when asked which texts the group read, Rateau could not remember, saying that the group studied some of the more well-known feminist texts.

[67] Adeline Chancy and Suzy Castor, eds. *Théories et pratiques de la lutte des femmes.* Séminaire de formation: Le rôle et les droits de la femme dans le développement haïtien. Port-au-Prince, 14-17 mai 1987

While the organization maintained an exclusively female membership, some of the Point de ralliement's events were open to men. In an interview with the author, Marlène Rateau emphasized the equal role men were expected to play on these occasions. Their participation was planned to be in proportion to their numbers, where grandstanding and domineering attitudes were unwelcome. Although Rateau stressed the necessity of an autonomous Haitian women's organization, the Point de ralliement's activism was not necessarily construed as a strictly woman-only space. Moreover, Rateau, for example, was involved in a number of mixed groups and maintained close ties with Haitian-based organizations. For her, "feminism" was another word for "humanism." This leader, in other words, saw feminism, as a philosophy that could be mobilized to benefit the entire community, men, women, and children.[68] However, when asked by *Collectif Paroles* if Nègès Vanyan was a "feminist organization," the group's spokeswoman, curiously unnamed, answered "We define ourselves as a group of women concerned with all the questions pertaining to women."[69] Likewise, Myriam Merlet, an active Montreal community member before returning to Haiti once the Duvalier dictatorship fell in 1986, to then become Chief of Staff of the Haitian Ministry of Women before tragically dying in the 2010 earthquake, referred to women's activism as "le mouvement féministe (et/ou des femmes)," hinting at the ambiguity surrounding this terminology.[70] In these cases then, the vocabulary was not as important as the claims to a politics based on helping women.

(Port-au-Prince: Centre de Recherche et de Formation Économique et Sociale pour le Développement, 1988), 27.

[68] Interview with Marlène Rateau.

[69] Raymonde Ravix, "Entrevue avec Nègès Vanyan," *Collectif Paroles*, March-April 1984, 11.

[70] Myriam Merlet, *La Participation Politique des Femmes en Haïti. Quelques éléments d'analyse* (Port-au-Prince: Éditions Fanm Yo La, 2002), 14.

Rather than adopting a particular ideology, Nègès Vanyan (or RAFA) members grounded their activism in their own first hand experience. As outlined in *Collectif Paroles*, these activists not only witnessed, but also lived through "the problems that came with being a Black immigrant woman." Coming from a range of professional and class backgrounds, group members shared a dedication to the overall well-being of Haitian Montrealers, and had originally met through their community involvement. When asked by *Collectif Paroles* if she adhered to a separatist philosophy, RAFA's representative responded that the group's members were not concerned with adhering to specific feminist line, preferring to focus on Haitian women's problems in an all-encompassing manner. They were the ones, as she specified, most suited to do so. While RAFA members maintained that their lives would not improved unless Haiti's "national question" was resolved, the organization nonetheless refuted the notion that they had to remain "silent" on women's issues even if they were coming from an undemocratic country. Resistance to tyranny could, and should, be undertaken in a manner sensitive to women's concerns.[71] For this reason, they reached out to women in similar situations, especially those originating from the Latin American or the Caribbean, and therefore considered themselves active participants in the international feminist movement, not unlike the Point de ralliement, which also professed its allegiance.[72] Ultimately then, personal networks, - and from here we can extrapolate- rather than ideological

[71] Raymonde Ravix, "Entrevue avec Neges Vanyan," *Collectif Paroles*, March-April 1984, 10-12.
[72] "Entrevue avec Point de Ralliement des Femmes d'Origine Haïtienne," *Collectif Paroles*, March-April 1984, 10-12.

orientation, played the most decisive role in determining group membership in the 1970s.[73]

While based in Montreal, Adeline Chancy and her colleagues took their activism to the international stage, submitting a brief to the 1975 World Congress for International Women's Year, held in Berlin. The document they submitted to the conference, entitled *Femmes Haïtiennes*, quickly became a reference point, as a "pioneering study of the condition of women in Haiti in the context of the struggle for democracy." More specifically, it provided a summary of the history of Haitian women, their activism, as well as a critical synthesis of their challenges, both at home and in the Diaspora. *Femmes Haïtiennes*, written with the help of Haitian women working in various professional sectors, was widely distributed throughout progressive circles in Haiti and abroad.[74] Similar to Neptune-Anglade's work, the publication rendered homage to the Ligue féminine d'action sociale, yet at the same time its authors demarcated themselves from the, by then, practically defunct women's group. Relying upon *Le féminisme en marche*, RAFA outlined LFAS' accomplishments as well as its shortcomings, namely its "elitism" and "class biases." "Ses interventions dans le domaine social étaient dominées par l'esprit de charité," as the authors maintained, "ce qui explique le caractère limité de son action sociale."[75] Despite the organization's imperfections, *Femmes Haïtiennes* contained a historical account of the Ligue's push for the vote, written by Ghislaine Charlier, Alice Garoute's granddaughter.[76] However, these activists focused more extensively on contemporary battles, that is, the devastation, gendered or otherwise, that

[73] Both Marlène Rateau and Amanthe Bathalien, for example, stated that personal networks played the largest role in determining membership of their respective women's group.
[74] RAFA, *Femmes Haïtiennes*, 3.
[75] *Ibid*., 4, 43.
[76] *Ibid.*, 55-57.

came with violent state repression. Whether in Haiti or elsewhere, as RAFA emphasized, women like themselves sought concrete political action and community engagement, all while developing international solidarity.[77]

The World Congress for International Women's Year provided an ideal setting for activists to speak out against the dictatorship. Anita Blanchard, a self-identified "peasant woman," recounted her experiences in prison, recalling how the *Tontons* came to her village in search of her brother, accused of being a communist. Rather than finding and arresting him, the Duvalier militia captured Blanchard, torturing the young woman in an attempt to get her to divulge the names of her sibling's companions. After five years, Anita was released during a series of negotiations following the kidnapping of the American ambassador in Mexico. A "revolutionary commando" demanded the release of political prisoners and as a result Blanchard was sent to Mexico, the culmination of a strange series of events that ultimately saved her life. Now in Berlin, the Haitian woman asked the international community to stand in solidary with the citizens of Haiti, especially the men and women who chose to speak out against the regime. She drew particular attention to the case of Laurette Badette, who, like many others, was imprisoned without trial since 1971, the whereabouts of her children unknown.[78] By relying upon a global network then, Haitian feminists based outside the country were able to foster international support for both democratic and women's rights. Badette's liberation in 1977 was thus considered a major victory for the pro-democracy movement,

[77] *Ibid*., 4
[78] *Ibid*., 57, 58.

especially, as *Femmes Haïtiennes* makes clear, for women in the Diaspora, who were heavily invested in this particular national project even while abroad.[79]

Haitian activists' presence in Berlin was part of a broader, in effect long-standing, practice of engaging with the international women's movement. Speaking in Panama on the occasion of Women's International Democratic Federation's 1977 regional meeting, Lisette Romulus recounted the events leading up to her husband's disappearance in 1974. After completing his university studies in Montreal, Marc Romulus returned to Haiti with the intention of sending for his wife and son soon afterwards. The Romulus family's plans for reunification were interrupted however, once Marc was arrested on the street and then taken to the police for questioning. Since that day, his relatives had had no news of his whereabouts. During her speech, Romulus, in the name "of thousands of wives and mothers, of daughters and sisters," drew attention to the plight of political prisoners' families where, in addition to the emotional pain that came with imprisonment, they had to contend with the reality that they, and especially their children, frequently lived an impoverished, malnourished existence. Indeed, for this advocate, addressing an audience of Latin American and Caribbean "sisters," women living, in many cases, through similar horrors as their Haitian counterparts, freedom of expression and association were essential for "development," "pour la récupération de nos richesses naturelles et pour la souveraineté nationale."[80] The fate of women and their families, in other words, was intrinsically tied to that of their countries. The Congress of Black Women, as we will see in the next section, took up the cause of Haitian political prisoners.

[79] *Ibid*., 47.
[80] *Ibid*, 58-59.

Similar to their English-speaking counterparts, the Rassemblement des femmes haïtiennes tied immigrant women's socio-economic condition to unequal global power relations. *Femmes Haïtiennes*, for instance, attributed Haiti's under-development to the country's neo-colonial relationship with many industrialized countries, including Canada- one of the foreign powers propping up the regime by supplying aid in exchange for important concessions to businesses.[81] The Caribbean country, as RAFA argued, was in a state of economic catastrophe, due to Duvalier and the imperial penetration of its economy, and the two, significantly, were related. In that, not only was the country mired in dependency and under-development, but also this fundamentally unequal rapport led to the exodus of thousands to the First World. There, both political exiles and economic migrants faced exploitation, the fear of deportation, and racism on a daily basis.[82] The former were often, not coincidently, young, dynamic, and in the prime of their lives, as Canada (and the U.S.) sought to attract highly educated immigrants once racial quotas were eliminated in the 1960s. However, the latter entered the labour market as an under-paid, exploited workforce, and ultimately served the interests of global capitalism.[83] This sort of analysis was part of a broader community discussion on the connections between neo-colonialism, starting with missionaries and the businesses that followed them, political repression, emigration, and racial oppression in North America. Max Chancy published a landmark article in *Ovo Magazine* in 1977, entitled "The Chain Must Be Broken," addressing this very subject.[84] *Nouvelle Optique*, a journal published in Montreal from 1971 to 1973 and disseminated throughout the Diaspora, also contained a

[81] *Ibid*, 12, 13.
[82] *Ibid*, 13.
[83] Daniel Holly, Micheline Labelle, and Serge Larose, "L'émigration haïtienne, un problème national," *Collectif Paroles*, October-November 1979, 18-26; Lévy, *Espace d'une génération*, 26, 17.
[84] Max Chancy, "The Chain Must Be Broken," *Ovo Magazine*, 27/28 (1977): 88-89.

number of articles on Canada and Quebec's role in the neo-colonial penetration of Haitian society.[85] Only one *Nouvelle Optique* article, however, was authored by a woman. But even Suzy Castor's "L'occupation américaine en Haïti" elided gender-based analyses to instead concentrate solely on the legacy of American occupation, linking the U.S.' early 20th century actions to 1970s Haitian problems.[86]

Despite a lack of attention to women's concerns, *Nouvelle Optique* contained a number of erudite articles on, for instance, the detrimental effects of the *la question du couleur* and the Westernized education system. The role of Canadian missionaries in Haiti, in particular, was the subject of intense criticism. For instance, Jean-Michel Paré, in a 1972 article, "Dimension politique du fait religieux en Haïti," lambasted the "invasion" of missionaries (predominately Francophone, for obvious reasons), and the companies that followed on their heels, criticizing the arrogance they embodied since they considered themselves "invaluable" to the country, even though 95 percent of Haitians never truly benefitted from their presence.[87] In an article published in *Relations*, Franklyn Midy similarly called upon progressive French Quebecers to interrogate the meaning of this form of international engagement. Because while individual missionaries or businessmen may have been well intentioned, they were nonetheless reinforcing a highly problematic power dynamic embedded in the logic of "development," the solution

[85] See, for example, "Nouvelle Optique," *Nouvelle Optique*, January 1971, 5; "Symposium-Haiti 70," *Nouvelle Optique*, January 1971, 115-118; Guy Pierre, "Bilan économique duvaliériste," *Nouvelle Optique*, December 1971, 33-39; Cary Hector, "Fascisme et sous-développement: le cas d'Haïti," *Nouvelles Optique*, January-March 1972, 48-49; Émile Ollivier, "Le Rachitisme: L'Objectif pédagogique dans le système d'enseignement en Haïti," *Nouvelle Optique*, January-March 1972, 162-174; Émile Ollivier, "Lire Paulo Freire," *Nouvelle Optique*, April-September 1972, 187-192; Benoit Joachim, "Sur l'esprit de couleur en Haïti: à propos d'un article de René Piquoin," *Nouvelle Optique*, January-March 1973, 149-158; Gérard Pierre-Charles, "La complémentarité des stratégies du développement en Afrique et en Amérique latine," *Nouvelle Optique*, January-March 1973, 159-164.
[86] Suzy Castor, "L'occupation américaine en Haïti," *Nouvelle Optique*, January 1971, 27-43.
[87] Jean-Michel Paré, "Dimension politique du fait religieux en Haïti," *Nouvelle Optique*, April-September 1972, 13, 18, 19.

to which, according to Midy, was political and not charitable.[88] Recent scholarship adds considerable nuance to this narrative, specifically in light of the priest-run Comité Québec-Chili with regards to its assistance in resettling Chilean refugees and the role Jesuit priests played in defending illegal Haitian migrants in 1980.[89] Still, a political edge seemed to be lacking from the memoir of Sister Marie-Celine-du-Carmel, a French-Canadian missionary based in Haiti in the early 1950s. The young nun's descriptions of Haiti, on the contrary, seemed Orientalist: As she wrote, "Ma magnificence des paysages d'Haïti, la richesse de sa nature inculte, c'est l'image frappante du peuple primitif à l'âme fruste, mais douée de ressources évidentes que l'Église cherche à développer, après les avoir dégagées de l'ignorance et de la misère qui les étouffent."[90] Although more research needs to be done in this regard, a critical analysis of overseas and domestic missions could provide fruitful insights into the role Francophone women played in the post-colonial "international."[91]

Haitian women occupied a radically different position therein than their White Québécois and Canadian counterparts. Consequently, *Femmes Haïtiennes* stressed the gendered nature of migration, because for many women, "their position as primary financial supporters of the family forced them to migrate in order to fill this role," as well

[88] Franklyn Midy, "Dossier Canada-Haïti: présence canadienne et québécoise en Haïti," *Relations*, April 1973, 102-107.
[89] Catherine LeGrand, "Les réseaux missionnaires et l'action sociale des Québec en Amérique latine, 1945-1980," *Études d'histoire religieuse* 79, 1 (2013): 93-115, 106, 110; Lyonel Icart, "Haïti-en-Québec: notes pour une histoire," *Ethnologies* 28, 1 (2006): 45-79, 50.
[90] Sœur Marie-Céline-du-Carmel, s.s.a., *Au Cœur d'Haïti* (Lachine: Sœurs de Sainte-Anne-Maison mère, 1953), 45.
[91] Catherine Foisy provides an important gest in this direction where the religious studies scholar highlights the differences and similarities between Belgium and French-Canadian missionaries in 1950s Africa. Although Quebec missionaries had different political ties, both the overseas missions from both countries stemmed from a paternalistic "civilizing mission." According to Foisy, women occupied a subordinate position in religious orders. Still, they played an integral role, entering more easily enter into the private realm of local families. See Catherine Foisy, "Des frères…presque jumeaux: les Peres blancs belges et canadiens-français entre colonisation et mission dans l'Afrique des années 1950," *RHAF* 67, 3-4 (2014): 295-315, 312-314.

as the integral role women played in the Haitian economy. For example, multinational corporations, including those run by Canadians, took advantage of Haiti's large reserve of cheap labour and lax legislation. Approximately seventy percent of workers in these industries were women, making baseballs or television and radio parts for citizens of the First World. The presence of these companies only reinforced Haiti's economic dependence and further delayed development, which, in part, led to emigration.[92] As we saw in Chapter 3, similar patterns emerged in the English-speaking Caribbean. In this case then, Canadian immigration patterns resembled their American counterparts, where, as historian Donna Gabaccia argues, migrant trajectories in the 1960s "mirrored the geography and history of American empire-building in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia." "It was no accident," as Gabaccia hypothesizes, "that the immigrants Americans deemed least desirable by century's end came from those places in the world where investors, merchants, missionaries, and diplomats worked to expand American influence."[93] Euro-Canadian colonialism can therefore be understood as extending past the country's borders, going beyond, as well as complicating, the Indigenous-settler dynamic. Indeed, Paul Dejean, community leader and priest, referred to recent arrivals as the new "wretched of the earth" in his well-regarded book on the Montreal Diaspora, an explicit reference to anti-colonial thinker Franz Fanon.[94]

Francophone Quebecers, as we have seen in previous chapters, also combined feminism and anti-colonialism. At the UN World Congress for International Women's Year, the Ligue des femmes du Québec, for example, used its "presence in Berlin to

[92] RAFA, *Femmes Haïtiennes*, 12.
[93] Donna Gabaccia, *Foreign Relations: American Immigration in Global Perspective* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 179, 72.
[94] Paul Dejean, *Les Haïtiens au Québec* (Montreal: Les Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1978), 54.

publicize our national problem," making sure they had the Quebec flag in view during the opening ceremony.[95] Mireille Neptune-Anglade was in fact a member of the Ligue des femmes. While she later co-founded a Haitian women's group in the 1980s, Neptune-Anglade initially preferred mixed women-only settings.[96] The Ligue was a Marxist women's group, demonstrating continuity with her previous intellectual engagements. Vivian Barbot, the president of the Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ) in the early 2000s, similarly chose to get involved elsewhere rather than within strictly Diaspora Haitian political spaces.[97] In other words, women's political choices were multifaceted. Nevertheless, the extent to which French-speaking Black women's concerns were accounted for by predominately White organizations begs consideration. In the lead up the International Women's Year conference, for instance, Adeline Chancy attended a meeting with the other Berlin-bound groups. The Ligue des femmes, the Parti Communiste du Québec, Conseil Québécois de la Paix, the FFQ (as an observer), among others, met to discuss the international gathering as well as women's issues more generally. The meetings minutes indicate the primary themes evoked by each organization. For the Haitian group, however, "the immigrant woman and discrimination" were the most important concerns, highlighting the extent to which these issues were overlooked in the majority of White feminist settings.[98]

Other women echoed these views. Amanthe Bathalien, social worker and founder of a French-speaking, Congress of Black Women chapter, pointed to the feelings of

[95] Report of the Canadian Delegation, *Equality, Peace, Development. World Congress for International Women's Year, Berlin, 1975, GDR* (Mississauga: Canadian Liaison Committee for International Women's Year, 1976), 6.
[96] Marlène Rateau, "Mireille Neptune, la militante féministe," *La Nouvelliste*, 16 August 2011.
[97] Interview with Vivian Barbot.
[98] BANQ Vieux-Montréal, Fonds Huguette Lapointe-Roy, 1998-04-002/15, File: Année internationale de la femme, Procès-Verbal, "1975-Année internationale de la femme. Conseil Québécois de la Paix (sous-comité) Réunion du 11 février 1975."

solidarity she felt with White Francophones in terms of defending the French-language. Shortly after she arrived to Montreal in 1970, moreover, the federal government enacted the War Measures Act. As she stated in *Sisters in Struggle*, a documentary on Black Canadian feminism, the October Crisis made quite the "impression" on her, making her "relive what she left behind." Bathalien also, however, underlined the exclusionary, racializing attitudes that Haitians experienced: "We have a lot in common with Quebecers. We were colonized by the same French colonizers…but I believe Québécois society is uneasy with the Haitian community because we're Third World people, because we're Black. They consider us immigrants who can't be integrated…"[99] In an interview with the author, Bathalien described her short-lived involvement with the Fédération des Femmes du Québec, in a later period. Although Madeleine Parent initially brought her into the FFQ, the social worker was eventually turned off, distancing herself from the Fédération due to the maternalistic attitudes she encountered.[100] Vivian Barbot, the FFQ's first Black president, recalled being brought onto to a sinking ship, critiquing the racial dynamic within the organization in the early 2000s. She still mentioned, however, the positive effects her presidency had on young women of colour, demonstrating the importance of representation.[101] The FFQ was at least up to date on the political situation in Haiti. In a 1981 newsletter, for example, the women's organization reported on the arrest of 50 political activists and the mounting, grassroots

[99] *Sisters in Struggle*, DVD, directed by Dionne Brand and Ginny Stikeman (1991, Montreal, National Film Board of Canada).
[100] Interview with Amanthe Bathalien.
[101] Interview with Vivian Barbot.

opposition to the Duvalier dictatorship.[102] There was a degree of mutual awareness then, but cross-cultural familiarity remained highly and problematically uneven.

Likewise, Marlène Rateau, a founder of the Point de ralliement des femmes d'origine haïtienne, underlined her community's specific, but passed over, needs.[103] As part of the larger FFQ network, Rateau felt that she, as a "minority" woman, had to always remind the "majority" that she and others like her "existed."[104] Still, Point de ralliement members, as already mentioned, drew inspiration from attending the meetings of one of Montreal's first feminist groups, the Front de libération des femmes, and Rateau stressed the role "certaines Québécoises" played in getting the organization off the ground.[105] Furthermore, Rateau and her colleagues never considered themselves outside the broader women's movement. Rather they fought for the place within, standing side by side with feminists of other backgrounds, especially on key issues such as equal pay and maternity leave. To this end, the Point de ralliement participated in almost all the major feminists demonstrations since the 1970s.[106] Moreover, interviewees evoked a personal narrative of integration, asserting their own place within Quebec society despite discrimination. Amanthe Bathalien, in particular, referred to her long-standing citizenship, stating that she "lived longer here than in my country of birth."[107] Whereas the category of immigrant woman proved to be an important basis for mobilization, the way in which this terminology was used by mostly White, Montreal-born organizations pointed to hegemonic feminism's reinforcement of second-class

[102] "Haïti et le régime Duvalier," *Petite Presse*, January 1981, 2.
[103] Stroka, *Paroles de Négresses*, 46.
[104] Interview with Marlène Rateau.
[105] Interview with Marlène Rateau, Rateau, "Pawol Fanm," 179.
[106] Rateau, "Pawol Famn," 178.
[107] Interview with Amanthe Bathalien.

citizenship categories, including the notion that immigrant women need to be "saved."[108] In fact, Marlène Rateau, Amanthe Bathalien and Vivian Barbot all attributed the roots of their feminism to their Carribean mothers, who stressed the importance of career and education to maintain autonomy vis-à-vis men, rather than the receiving society.[109]

III. Multiple Activist Homes

Although exposed to the discourses of the White Francophone women's movement, and in select cases members of French-Quebecer-dominated organizations, women from the Haiti House appeared to work primarily within the Haitian community or within the broader Black community -their two activist "homes." Because in addition to the Berlin '75 event, RAFA members attended numerous Congress of Black Women of Canada (Congress) conferences from 1973 onwards, participating in and shaping the activities of the pan-Canadian, predominately English-speaking women's group.[110] The autonomous women's organization stressed "the centrality of race and racism" in the lives of Black women, as well as the reality of "triple-oppression." Congress also explicitly used a global lens to consider the oppression of Black Canadians.[111] As we saw in Chapter 3, some members professed a Pan African discourse to this end. Whereas Haiti, the site of an infamous slave revolt, was certainly part of the Afro-centric narrative, Haitian Montrealers tended to rely less upon this language, even if many, such

[108] Jo-Anne Lee and Linda Cardinal, "Hegemonic Nationalism and the Politics of Feminism and Multiculturalism in Canada," In *Painting the Maple: Essays on Race, Gender, and the Construction of Canada*, eds. Veronica Strong-Boag, Sherrill Grace, Avigail Eisenberg, and Joan Anderson (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998), 216-217.
[109] All three women paid hommage to their mothers in an interview with the author.
[110] Charles, "Gender and Politics in Contemporary Haiti," 150.
[111] Shirley Small and Esmeralda M.A. Thornhill, "Harambec! Quebec Black Women Pulling Together," *Journal of Black Studies* 38, 3 (2008), 427-442.

as Ghislaine Charlier, passed through Africa before settling in Montreal.[112] The Documents for the 6th Pan African Congress hint as to why this may have been the case, referring the Duvalier's interpretation of Black Power: "Like Pan-Africanism, Negritude in the hands of petty bourgeois black states became a sterile formulation of black chauvinism, incapable of challenging capitalism and imperialism. Negritude in Senegal buttresses neo-colonialism, while in Haiti it is used to gloss over an even more desperate situation of exploitation and suppression of the black masses."[113] Even so, there was at least one Haitian woman, a Miss J. Pierre-Louis, on the organizing committee of the Congress of Black Writers, held in 1968 at McGill University.[114] And both Georges Anglade and Dorothy Wills attended FESTEC '77, the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture, hosted by Lagos, Nigeria.[115] English- and French-speaking Montrealers therefore appeared to adhere the differing, yet at times overlapping, "Black internationals."[116]

Despite distinct intellectual and activist traditions, French- and English-speakers managed to find common ground within the Congress of Black Women. For instance, Haitian Montrealers were key contributors to the internationalist ethos of the organization. At the 1977 conference, Constance Beaufils spoke of women's problems in

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[112] Sanders, *La Voix des Femmes*, 204.
[113] *Pan-Africanism: the Struggle against Imperialism and Neo-Colonialism Documents of the Sixth Pan-African Congress with an assessment by Horace Campbell* (Toronto: Afro-Carib Publications, 1975), 33.
[114] "Congress of Black Writers. Towards the Second Emancipation. The Dynamics of Black Liberation." Students Union and Leacock Building, McGill University, Montreal, Canada. October 11th-14th, 1968. Interestingly, the first page of the conference proceedings was bilingual and the eminent René Depestre was a speaker at the Montreal gathering.
[115] Lévy. *Espace d'une génération*, 85; LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds MG 31 H179 Volume 16. Dorothy Wills, "Information Brochure: The Festival and How to Prepare for It." Dorothy Wills was the chairperson for the Quebec region.
[116] See, for example, Michael O. West and William G. Martin, "'Haiti I'm Sorry': The Haitian Revolution and the Forging of the Black International," In *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International since the Age of Revolution*, eds. Michael West, William Martin, and Fanon Che Wilkins (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 72-104.

the Caribbean country, as well as the "need for strengthening the bonds of sisterhood between black Canadian women and the women of Haiti." Adeline Chancy similarly brought attention to the specificities of life under Duvalier and the importance of transnational political engagement, authoring two resolutions in 1977. In the first, the Fourth National Congress of Black Women expressed its "solidarity with the struggles of people of Namibia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa for their liberation against colonialism and from apartheid and demands that the Canadian government stop any form of aid to the racist government of Ian Smith and L. Vorster." And in the second, Congress vowed to support "the struggle of Haitian people for democracy," demanding that "the democratic rights of political prisoners be respected; namely those of Laurette Badette and Denise Prophète, imprisoned since 1971 and 1973 without judgment…" and aimed to push "the Canadian government to take a stand against the violations of human rights in Haiti." Similarly, Chancy insisted that the Canadian government intervene on behalf of the husbands of two Haitian women living in Montreal, Françoise Ulysee and Lisette Romulus.[117] The presence of Haitian women then, broadened the reach of the organization, extending its focuses beyond Canada and the English-speaking Caribbean.

Françoise Ulysse was in fact in the audience at the Fourth National Congress of Black Women, and gave a speech addressing both Haitian and Diasporic issues. "To be a woman in North America is already difficult," she began, "but to be a woman and a Black immigrant can become a nightmare." "As a woman she must face the social and economic discriminations that exist against the women in our society." As she explained, "What is more, she undergoes a cultural shock resulting from the migration process."

[117] LAC, Impetus –The Black Woman: Proceedings of the Fourth National Congress of Black Women of Canada. Windsor, Ontario, 19-21 1977, Edited by Joella H. Gipson, PhD, 51.

Part of this adjustment includes living with "constant fear," as foreign-born women were kept unaware of their rights, "haunted by the specter of expulsion," making them "vulnerable to the exploitation of employers." Their problems were compounded by dependency on male partners, since, according to Ulysse, "The fear of being abandoned and obliged to take care of herself and her children along constitutes one of her worst nightmares." For these women migrants, the situation was even more complicated as "their husbands are often refugees or political exiles." On that point, Ulysse's husband, Edner, had been detained for 13 years in the Caribbean country, and as his wife reminded the audience, "It is the same for thousands of others." So what did she propose? "Only a new political thought will permit the Black woman to assume, in a positive way," Ulysse stated in her concluding remarks, "the differences of culture and way of living in North America."[118] Thus Haitian women's positionality was informed by socio-economic conditions in both Haiti and Quebec; and their activisms were shaped by the ideas and actions of political groups located in Haitian, Québécois, and in the case of the Congress of Black Women, Canadian national contexts.

Congress provided a space where Black women could discuss issues in manner that pertained directly to them. As we saw in Chapter 3, the Committee addressing birth control at the 1973 conference was prepared for serious discussion on the matter; however the conversation was deemed inappropriate, according to the report, "once the subject of 'Genocide' was raised from the floor."[119] Although presented in another forum, in *Collectif Paroles*, Adeline Chancy put forth a similar argument regarding the

[118] LAC, Impetus –The Black Woman: Proceedings of the Fourth National Congress of Black Women of Canada. Windsor, Ontario, 19-21 August 1977. Edited by Joella H. Gipson, PhD, 21.
[119] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds MG 31 H179 Volume 9, File 9-23, The Canadian Negro Women's Association, "Report of the First National Congress of Black Women 6-8 April 1973, Westbury Hotel, Toronto, Canada.

role non-governmental organizations played in Haiti. Chancy, more specifically, criticized a UNESCO study wherein the M. Célestin suggested that the source of the Caribbean country's infant mortality could in large be part be explained by over-population, caused by "la grande liberté des moeurs en matière sexuelles des couches populaires." This hypothesis, as Chancy emphasized, failed to capture the structural reasons behind high birth and death rates (in addition to evoking racist stereotypes concerning Black sexuality) such as poverty in an agricultural-based society.[120] Moreover, Chancy feared that the author's solution, that is, concerted family planning initiatives, specifically targeting the poor working and peasant classes, -essentially solving a problem through elimination- could be taken to its extreme, and result in forced sterilization "comme cela a été pratique en Bolivie, à Porto-Rico, dans les quartiers pauvres des Noirs des États-Unis, et sur les Haïtiennes en République Dominicaine." For Adeline Chancy, only equitable development policies would ensure healthy population levels, in conjunction with access to contraception. "Il s'agit là, à mon sens, de droits élémentaires à la personne," as she explained, referring to the latter, "c'est-à-dire le droit à une maternité librement consentie que doit garantir toute société démocratique."[121] Women's control over their own bodies, in other words, deserved the same safeguarding as Haiti's sovereignty and the two were related.

The sort of cross-cultural political linkages found in the Congress were, however, a rarity. According to Paul Dejean, the English- and French-speaking Black communities were not only institutionally distinct, but also tended to operate in different separate spheres, socializing in different milieus and generally not crossing paths in the

[120] Maythee Rojas, *Women of Color and Feminism* (Berkeley: Seal Press, 2009), 34.
[121] Adeline Chancy, "Médecine, politique, et l'année internationale de l'enfant à Port-au-Prince. La vision de l'UNICEF de la situation de l'enfant haïtien," *Collectif Paroles*, September 1979, 40-41.

workforce. Linguistic preferences contributed to the broader community dynamic, as English- and French-speakers regardless of race generally resided in opposing sides of the city. This did not mean that there was no common ground between Black Montrealers. In fact, both communities put forth a similar anti-racist critique.[122] Still, the challenges they faced in the work, housing, and judicial sectors did not necessarily result in organizational unity. The membership of the Congress of Black Women was therefore exceptionally heterogeneous in this regard. Moreover, the women's organization took a very public stand during the traumatic deportation crisis. On the occasion of the Second National Conference, held in Montreal in 1974, Congress members attended the trial of Haitians facing expulsion, defended by Congress member Juanita Westmoreland, and wrote a letter to the federal and provincial governments on their behalf. The position taken by the organization, as Dejean specified, was the English-speaking Black community's only official intervention during the ordeal.[123] Therefore, Haitian Montrealers were an integral component of the broader Black community where women, especially, through their work with the Congress of Black Women, asserted their place. As scholar Katherine McKittrick aptly puts it, "Black Canadian spaces and places speak to each other in ways that gesture to various historical, political, and social geographies

[122] See, for example, Esmeralda Thornhill, *La discrimination raciale dans le logement* (Montreal: Mouvement québécois pour combattre le racisme, 1978); Joseph J. Bataille, *Situation du logement des Haïtiens à Montréal-Nord* (Montreal: Maison d'Haïti, 1984); Le Mouvement Québécois pour Combattre le Racisme, la Maison d'Haïti, L'Union des travailleurs immigrants du Québec, La Commission des Droits de l'Homme, L'Association des Chiliens de Montréal, *Mémoire Présenté à la Commission Parlementaire sur la Charte des Droits et Libertés de la Personne* (Montreal: Mouvement québécois pour combattre le racisme, 1981); Paul Dejean, *Communauté haïtienne et racisme* (Colloque du CIDICHA: Ethnicité, racisme, et société. 10 November 1984).
[123] Dejean, *Les Haïtiens au Québec*, 99-102.

inside and outside the Canadian nation-state, and inside and outside multiple Black Canadian geographical locales."[124]

Although the pan-Canadian organization was bilingual from its inception, French-speaking Black women in Montreal still founded their own chapter in 1987, as differing linguistic preferences among activists interrupted the flow of meetings. According to Amanthe Bathalien, president of the organization, Haitian women found communication with other Black and immigrant communities difficult. Even after the Francophone chapter's establishment, the group had warm and friendly relations with Filipina women, for example, yet because the latter favoured English the relationship was short-lived. In response to the language barrier, French-speaking Black women from various ethnic and class backgrounds came together under their own section, the Ville-Marie chapter of the Congress of Black Women. While mostly Haitian and middle-class, the women's group still managed to attract people from manufacturing sectors as well as other countries. It was a multigenerational space, where women brought their children.[125] Despite a preference for French, Maison d'Haïti founder Yolène Jumelle, a colleague of Bathalien and the person who first introduced her to the pan-Canadian organization, assumed the presidency of the Congress in 1988-89 and was vice-president from 1984-88. Arriving to Canada in 1971, at the age of 27, Jumelle, the daughter of a murdered Haitian politician, was at the epicenter of the first wave of highly political Haitian emigrants.[126] Dorothy Wills, recounting her experience at a Congress of Black Women

[124] Katherine McKittrick, "Their Blood is there, and They Can't Throw It Out": Honouring Black Canadian Geographies," *Topia: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies* 7 (2002): 27-37, 31.
[125] Interview with Amanthe Bathalien.
[126] Dawn Williams, *Who's Who in Black Canada: Black Success and Black Excellence in Canada. A Contemporary Directory* (Toronto: D.P. Williams and Associates, 2001), 215-216; Mary McDougall, "Lives Lived: Yolène Jumelle, 68." *Globe and* Mail, 11 February 2013.

weekend conference with Jumelle and women from Edmonton and Vancouver, stated that "the moment we gathered in one room, our relationship became a lesson is what true sisterhood is all about."[127] For some women then, the language barrier could be overcome.

Haitian women's organizations were not limited to RAFA, the Point de ralliement des femmes d'origine haitienne or the Congress of Black Women. There was in fact a multitude of autonomous associations in Montreal, especially by the late 1970s and early 1980s. After having spent more than a decade in Quebec, Mireille Neptune-Anglade, for example, was one of the founding members of Fanm haysen an nou mouche (FANM), a group established in 1980 by eight professional Diaspora women. From here, FANM expanded to approximately twenty adherents, recruited from its membership's close, personal, and predominately middle-class, networks. Despite a concerted attempt to reach out to women from other social classes, the organization remained relatively homogenous, even if they discussed women's issues from a range of issues at their twice-monthly meetings.[128] Still middle-class, the Ralliement des infirmières haïtiennes was arguably more diverse in this regard, consisting of over 150 nurses and auxiliary nurses. The organization reached out Haitian Montrealers, attempting to overcome the poor health care service they received, due, in part, to communication difficulties or visa regulations. For example, a 25-year-old Haitian woman was unable to go to New York to procure an abortion, as reported in a 1977 *Plurielles* article.[129] The Point also sought to

[127] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds MG 31 H179 Volume 8, File 8-13: "National Congress of Black Women. Concerns of the New Black Family," 1984 Conference Nov. 16-18, 1984, *Congress of Black Women: "Concerns of the New Black Family"* Prepared as the Keynote address for a one-day workshop at Dawson College. 26 October 1985.
[128] "Entrevue avec Fanm haysen an nou mache (FANM)," *Collectif Paroles*, March-April 1984, 17-20.
[129] "Éditorial. L'avortement: il faut poursuivre la lutte," *Plurielle*s, 1, 2 1977, 3-6.

establish links between professionals working in the Diaspora and in Haiti.[130] By the 1980s then, Haitian Diaspora feminism was undeniably multi-faceted, mirroring the community's broader dynamic, that is, the tendency to establish numerous organizations.[131] The mushrooming of women's groups in this decade coincided with the apogee of immigrant feminism.[132]

It was also in the 1980s that the Duvalier dictatorship began to crumble. Once democracy was restored to Haiti in 1986 many members of the Montreal community returned to their country of birth in order to contribute to the rebuilding process. The reasons for this choice were undoubtedly complex. As we can glean from Adeline's biography on Max, the Chancys decided to return to their country of birth out of a sense of duty. Their eldest son, for example, returned a few years before the fall of the dictatorship, because of the "education" he received from his parents. Despite their concern for his well being, he decided that his engineering degree would be put to better use in the Caribbean country.[133] But Myriam Merlet, active in the Montreal community, painted a slightly different picture:

> I got my degree in economics from Canada and studied women's issues, political sociology, and feminist theory. But while I was abroad, I felt the need to find out who I was and where my soul was. I chose to be a Haitian woman. I could not see myself forever a nigger in the United States, or an immigrant in Canada, or a stranger in Europe, I felt the need to be part of something. This could not be the black cause in the U.S., or the immigration cause in Canada. It

[130] "Le Ralliement des infirmières haïtiennes," *Collectif Paroles*, March-April 1984, 13-16.
[131] Rateau commented in an interview with the author on the community's tendency to form organizations with great enthusiasm.
[132] Becky Thompson, "Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave Feminism," 48.
[133] Chancy, *Profil: Max Chancy*, 31.

> could only be the cause of the Haitian people. Thus I decided to return to Haiti.[134]

For some then, Quebec society did not provide a sufficient sense of belonging or purpose. Whereas women participated in the overthrow of Duvalier, they mobilized shortly afterwards *as women*, staging a 30, 00 strong protest in Port-au-Prince on 3 April 1986, demanding jobs, political rights, the elimination of prostitutions and all forms of gender discrimination. At least fifteen women's organizations participated in the march, adhering to a range of political perspectives and representing citizens from all walks of life.[135] Symbolically, the demonstration, as Mireille Neptune-Anglade pointed out in *L'autre moitié du développement* not only coincided with her dissertation defense but also the death of Simone de Beauvoir, demonstrating the numerous influences shaping the activism of at least some Haitian women, especially those from the middle- and upper-classes. Still, Neptune-Anglade proposed another, culturally appropriate form feminism in her book, as "les revendications propres aux femmes en situation de pauvreté se coulent très mal dans le moule des féminismes de la richesse."[136]

With this rebirth, came a resurgence of women's activism. According to sociologist Carolle Charles, "The presence and rate of participation of diaspora women in most of the new Haiti-based groups was striking."[137] Nearly two thirds of the founding members of new groups like Solidarité Famn Ayisyen (SOFA, Haitian Women's Solidarity) and Kay Fanm (Women's House) had returned from outside Haiti.[138] Pointing to activist continuities across borders, Adeline Chancy, a leader in literacy work in

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[134] Beverly Bell, ed. *Walking on Fire: Haitian Women's Stories of Survival and Resistance* (Ithaca, NY: Cornel University Press, 2001), 217.
[135] Charles, Gender and Politics in Contemporary Haiti," 153.
[136] Neptune-Anglade, *L'autre moitié de développement*, 13, 18.
[137] Charles, "Gender and Politics in Contemporary Haiti," 152.
[138] Burton, "The Transmigration of Rights," 785.

Montreal, assumed the position of director of the National Bureau for Participation and Popular Education in Port-au-Prince. There, Chancy remained committed to women-centred political spaces, running a workshop on "the rights and role of women in Haitian development." For Chancy, overcoming gendered norms in the formal and informal education of women was integral to Haiti's future, as "la bataille démocratique exige la participation massive des femmes. Or l'idéologie sexiste est l'un des freins à cette participation." Pointing to an intellectual shift of sorts, Suzy Castor, the author of *L'occupation américaine en Haïti*, put forth an anti-colonial Marxist feminist analysis, promoting the establishment of autonomous women's organizations in order to "struggle WITH rather than AGAINST men."[139] Significantly, this seminar was partially funded by the Conseil du Statut de la femme du Québec and the Canadian International Development Agency.[140] It was also part of a larger push on the part of Haitian feminists to assert the integral role women played in national development and reconstruction.[141]

Attending the seminar organized by Chancy in Port-au-Prince, Suzanne Fontaine, a representative from the Conseil du Statut de la Femme, appeared to speak from the same starting point of respectful solidarity. Fontaine opened her speech on Quebec's feminist movement with the following words:

> Je viens vous apporter, dans le cadre de ce séminaire essentiellement, un témoignage d'amitié et de solidarité des femmes du Québec qui, depuis quelques années, ont fait des pas significatifs vers la conquête

[139] Suzy Castor, "Femme et participation sociale," In *Théories et pratiques de la lutte des femmes.* Séminaire de formation: Le rôle et les droits de la femme dans le développement haïtien. Port-au-Prince, 14-17 mai 1987, eds. Adeline Chancy and Suzy Castor (Port-au-Prince: Centre de Recherche et de Formation Économique et Sociale pour le Développement, 1988), 11-17.
[140] Adeline Chancy, "L'éducation: une bataille idéologique," In *Théories et pratiques de la lutte des femmes.* Séminaire de formation: Le rôle et les droits de la femme dans le développement haïtien. Port-au-Prince, 14-17 mai 1987, eds. Adeline Chancy and Suzy Castor (Port-au-Prince: Centre de Recherche et de Formation Économique et Sociale pour le Développement, 1988), 8, 25-30.
[141] Myriam Merlet, "Les droits économiques et sociaux des femmes," In *Forum Libre. Femmes et Démocratie et Haïti*, ed. Arnold Antonin (Port-au-Prince, 1989), 31-37.

> de leurs droits. Cependant, je ne viens pas ici, vous suggérer quoi faire ni comment le faire dans votre contexte particulier. Seules, vous savez quoi faire et comment le faire pour améliorer la situation des femmes dans votre pays. Croyez-moi, nous avons trop connu ca, au Québec, le « Bons Samaritains » qui « débarquent » et prétendent connaitre nos problèmes et surtout les solutions…[142]

The Conseil member therefore evoked an alternative national identity, pointing to how outsiders' paternalistic misunderstanding of Quebec society influenced her own feminist identity. These ideas were present in mixed spaces as well, demonstrating an openness to decolonize North-South relations on the part of French Quebecers. Whereas in the early 1970s, in an article published in *Relations*, Franklyn Midy encouraged progressive Quebecers to call into question their neo-colonial role in Haiti, in the same journal, nearly a decade later, the opening editorial, entitled "Jouons-Nous les Impérialistes?" interrogated the development narrative criticized by Midy.[143] Written with the help of Georges Anglade, the publication's contents demonstrated the product of a fruitful, and self-critical, intellectual exchange.[144] Similarly, Mireille Anglade was on the board of *Recherches féministes*, illustrating an incipient diversity within Quebec's intellectual circles.[145] Suzanne Fontaine, however, made no reference to racial exclusions within predominately White women's groups at home.

Haitian women's transnational activism continued, even after 1986. Although she remained based in Montreal, Marlène Rateau was a regular contributor to Haitian

[142] Suzanne Fontaine, "La lutte des femmes au Québec," In *Théories et pratiques de la lutte des femmes.* Séminaire de formation: Le rôle et les droits de la femme dans le développement haïtien. Port-au-Prince, 14-17 mai 1987, eds. Adeline Chancy and Suzy Castor (Port-au-Prince: Centre de Recherche et de Formation Économique et Sociale pour le Développement, 1988), 47.
[143] Franklyn Midy, "Dossier Canada-Haïti: présence canadienne et québécoise en Haïti," *Relations*, April 1973, 102-107.
[144] "Dans la Diaspora. La revue *Relations* et les six millions haïtiens," *Collectif Paroles*, July-August 1980, 21-22.
[145] See, for example, Mireille Neptune-Anglade, "Du travail domestique comme deuxième journée de travail des Haïtiennes," *Recherches féministes* 1, 2 (1988): 39-52.

political discussions in the post-Duvalier era, continuing a long-standing tradition. Rateau's presence in the press was to the point that "people," according the activist, "were surprised that she had not returned to Haiti."[146] For example, she put her background in nursing to good use, publishing an article on the links between gendered violence and AIDS in ENFOFANM, a Port-au-Prince based women's press.[147] Likewise, the Point de ralliement fought for its place on the community radio station in the early 1990s, hosting Pawòl Fanm, a Creole-language show geared toward Haitian women of all classes that continues to this day. With a popular education mandate, Pawol Fanm addresses a range of pressing issues, from health to education, reaching out to women who oftentimes possess weak French skills or do not have time to attend meetings held by women's groups. Moreover, the Radio Centre-Ville show in part attempts to rectify the ethnocentrism present in the Quebec media, where racial and ethnic minorities are severely under-represented or if they are present, are often of European provenance.[148] The show is so popular that Rateau regularly meets people who "recognize her voice." By pushing for their rightful within the community, moreover, women gained in leadership positions. As the current president of the Bureau of the Haitian Community, Marlène Rateau, working alongside Josette Jean-Pierre Rousseau, exemplifies the acceptance of women's civic engagement to the work done in the 1970s.[149] Similarly, Adeline Chancy left behind a rich legacy, even if she returned to her country of birth. More specifically, Marjorie Villefranche, heading the Maison d'Haïti, attributes her success to Chancy, as the older woman, twenty years her senior, served as her mentor

[146] Stroka, *Parolles de Negresses*, 67.
[147] See Marlène Rateau, "Violence, AIDS, and Education," In *Haitian Women: Between Repression and Democracy*, ed. Clorinde Zéphir (Port-au-Prince: ENFOFANM Éditions, 1991), 95-100.
[148] Rateau, "Pawol Fanm," 185.
[149] Interview with Marlène Rateau.

since the age of sixteen.[150] In short, Haitian Diaspora and anti-racist feminism continues to this day.

[150] Laurence Niosi, "Marjorie Villefranche. Le pouvoir de changer des choses," *Le Journal de St-Michel*, 1 March 2011; Martin Beauséjour, "Personnalités La Presse: Marjorie Villefranche," *La Presse*, 23 April 2012.

Chapter 6: Refuting Stereotypes: The Centro Donne Italiane di Montreal

Encouraged by the newly adopted Immigration Act of 1952, favouring family unification, and Canada's booming economy, Italians arrived by the tens of thousands. In total, more than six hundred and fifty thousand came to the country over the period of a century, yet almost seventy percent immigrated after the Second World War. Quebec alone received approximately one quarter of Italian immigrants, making Italians and their descendants the largest community in Montreal, after the English and French.[1] Due to their choice of English as the language of instruction for their children as well as their numerical strength, recent arrivals and their children were at the forefront of the Saint-Leonard School Crisis. The events surrounding the debacle were a microcosm for the language and school crisis of the 1960s and, in 1968, violence broke out between French and Italian Quebecers.[2] In the lead up to the enactment of Bill 101 in 1977, Italian Montrealers navigated the contentious debate around language. Although dominating the historiography to the detriment of fuller analyses, the fallout from the language debate provided valuable insights into many aspects of the Italian settlement experience.[3] In addition to leading to an institutional coming together in the form of, for example, the National Congress of Italian-Canadians, the mobilization against the abolishment of free choice in matters of education provoked the political fragmentation of the community. More specifically, young people, especially, founded new organizations, namely the Movimento Progressista Italo-Quebecchese (MPIQ), the Associazione di Cultura

[1] Claude Painchaud and Richard Poulin, "Italianité, conflit linguistique et structure de pouvoir dans la communauté italo-québécoise," *Sociologie et Sociétés* 24, 2 (1983), 90.
[2] John Dickinson and Brian Young, *A Short History of Quebec*. Fourth Edition (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 323.
[3] Paul-André Linteau, "Les minorités ethnoculturelles dans l'historiographie québécoise," In *Le Québec et ses minorités*, ed. Beatrice Bagola (Tubingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2000), 146.

Popolare Italo-Quebecchese (Associazione), and the Centro Donne Italiane di Montreal.[4]

Building on the resurgence of feminist activism in the province, as well as the establishment of self-consciously progressive groups, Italian Montrealers founded an autonomous women's organization. In 1978, a group of students associated with the Associazione di Cultura Popolare Italo-Quebecchese came together behind the Centre Donne Italiane di Montreal, a.k.a. the Montreal Italian Women's Centre or the Centre des femmes italiennes de Montréal. Serving as a meeting place for women of the community, the Centro Donne hosted many educational and consciousness-raising events concerning women's health, their place in the family, and the workplace. Although strongly influenced by the rising feminism in Quebec, the Women's Centre was more a particular response to the specific position of Italian women. As immigrant women, their needs were not quite met within the province's mainstream women's movement. Nor, however, were their needs addressed within the collectivity's male-dominated associations. In order to overcome their exclusion within both political spheres, young activists organized under the banner of the Centro Donne. Italian-Canadian feminism was not only a source of affirmation and integration, but it also enabled its proponents to successfully refute the prevalent stereotype of Italian immigrant women as apolitical or submissive. Indeed, historians of Italian immigrant women in North America have pointed to the "invisible" or "lost" history of their activism.[5] Therefore, this chapter will shed light on, as historians Donna Gabaccia and Franca Iacovetta explain, "perhaps the least understood aspects of

[4] I have made this argument elsewhere. See chapter 2 of Amanda Ricci, "From Acculturation to Integration: The Political Participation of Montreal's Italian-Canadian Community, 1945-1990" (M.A. Thesis, Université de Montréal, 2009).
[5] Jennifer Guglielmo, *Living the Revolution: Italian Women's Resistance and Radicalism in New York City, 1880-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 3.

Italian women's diasporic lives": "their role as resisters, protestors, and activists."[6]

In addition to contesting their subordinate place within the broader community, Italian feminists offered a critical analysis of Montreal society. In the 1950s and 1960s, Italian women, along with Greek women, were locked in some of the worst paying jobs in the city. Due to long hours on the factory floor compounded by household responsibilities, they rarely got the chance to improve their language skills, reinforcing their marginalization. As women of European provenance, however, they benefitted from favourable immigration policies and the structural advantages that came with a hold on whiteness, albeit a tenuous one.[7] The challenges faced by the community were mostly generational then, as younger Italians more or less entered the mainstream over the course of their lifetimes. Laura Sabia's (1916-1996) position at the head of the National Action Committee for the Status of Women was a case in point. This prominent leader consistently felt like a double "outsider," as she was made keenly aware of her immigrant background, her *nouveau riche* status, and her inability to conform to prevalent gender norms. [8] Even if she experienced feelings of Otherness, Sabia was evidently not impeded from assuming a prominent role in the resurgence of feminist activism, thus pointing to

[6] Donna Gabaccia and Franca Iacovetta, "Women, Work, and Protest in the Italian Diaspora: An International Research Agenda," *Labour/Le Travail* 42 (1998), 177. For more on Italian women's transnational activism, see Donna Gabaccia and Franca Iacovetta, *Women, Gender and Transnational Lives: Italian Women Workers of the World* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

[7] Franca Iacovetta, "Ordering in Bulk: Canada's Postwar Immigration Policy and the Recruitment of Contract Workers from Italy," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 11, 1 (1991): 50-80, 53. The American historiography is also instructive in this regard: See chapter 3, "The Racialization of Southern Italian Women," in Gugielmo, *Living the Revolution*, 79-109; David Roediger, *Working toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White: the Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (New York: Basic Books, 2005); Thomas Guglielmo, *White on Arrival: Italians, Race, Color, and Power in Chicago, 1890-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Mathew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (New York: Routledge, 1995). See also Gaia Giuliani and Cristina Lombardi-Diop, *Bianco e nero. Storia dell'identità razziale degli italiani* (Florence: Le Monnier, 2013) and Cristina Lombardi-Diop and Caterina Romeo, eds., *Postcolonial Italy: Challenging National Homogeneity* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 2-6.

[8] Laura Sabia, "'You Are Not One of Us': The Roots of My Militant Feminism," *Canadian Women's Studies* 8, 2 (1987): 32-36.

the relative institutional power wielded by people of Southern European background. In line with the demographics of the broader community, this chapter focuses on women that came out of the immigration wave of the 1950s and 1960s. The first section exposes the antecedents to the Centro Donne, the second discusses the women's centre activities, and the third section provides an overview of the 1982 *Femmes immigrantes, à nous la parole!* conference, an unprecedented gathering of immigrant women leaders. Indeed, the Italian Women's Centre, rather than fostering transnational ties with women in Italy, mobilized around the identity of immigrant women.

I. Antecedents

As Assunta Sauro, one of the original founders, explains in *Coraggio di sognare* (*The Courage to Dream*), a retrospective on the Centre, the Centro Donne Italiane was a merging of two groups. The first, Il Collettivo, consisted of young Italian Montrealers starting to reflect on women's issues. The student-run collective was associated with the Associazione di Cultura Popolare Italo-Quebecchese, a mixed, leftist group that aimed to address the "essential" issues facing Italians "at work, in school, in the neighbourhood, and within the family."[9] The second, the Associazione femminile di St-Michel, was made up of older women who met in a Church basement. Isa Iasenza served as the connection between Il Collettivo and the Associzione.[10] Chaired by Giuseppina Barbusci, the second organization was more representative of the Italian-born generation, in that, its membership tended to be older, unilingual, workers. Barbusci, for example, came to Montreal in 1957 from Abruzzo as an adult. Immediately upon arrival, she was hired by a

[9] See the inner flap of the January-February 1980 edition of the *Quaderni culturali*: *Pubblicazione dell'associazione di cultura popolare italo-quebecchese*.
[10] Interview with Assunta Sauro.

men's suit factory where she worked long hours and never fully learned English or French.[11] It women like these that Sauro had in mind when she explained the Centro Donne's genesis:

> We have to consider that during the 1970s in Quebec something was beginning to happen… People gathered and wanted to form groups with a specific purpose. And then various women's centres came into being. These centres fought for gender equality; equality at work, in politics, in the family and in society. We saw Francophones concerned with all these themes that affect women's lives and we asked ourselves: and our women, where will they go, who will take care of them? We decided to mobilize and do something as well.[12]

While the Centre's foundation can in part be attributed to the heady atmosphere of the 1970s, its leaders aimed to provide services to first generation immigrant women. "In order to overcome our destiny as "new immigrants," "new wives and mothers," and "second-class citizens," as Assunta Sauro outlined in the retrospective, "we felt the need to establish an autonomous women's centre where we could confront our needs, our anxieties, and our life experiences with other women who lived with the same social and family pressures."[13] In short, Italian-Canadian women sought to spearhead their own women's group, in order to more effectively "contribute to the lives of," in the words of Sauro, "our people."[14]

Thus the 1.5 generation, a group of people with hybrid identities and experiences as child immigrants, spearheaded the Italian Women's Centre. Their civic engagement, however, was in part informed by their elders' difficulty in establishing a foothold in

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[11] Giovanna Del Negro, *Looking Through My Mother's Eyes*: *Life Stories of Nine Italian Immigrant Women in Canada* (Toronto: Guernica, 1997), 37-40.
[12] Il Centro Donne Italiane, *Il Coraggio di sognare*, *1978-2003* (Montreal: Il Centro Donne Italiane, 2004), 36.
[13] "Femmes italiennes," *Des luttes et des rires de femmes. Bulletin de liaison des groups autonomes de femmes*, October-November 1978, 33-34. Reprinted in Micheline Dumont and Louise Toupin, eds. *La pensée féministe au Québec: anthologie*, *1900-1985* (Montreal: Les Éditions remue-ménage, 2003), 645-648.
[14] *Ibid*.

Montreal. In an interview with the author, Marco Micone, a playwright, Vanier College teacher and author of "Speak What," described young people's involvement with the Associazione di Cultura Popolare Italo-Quebecchese and the Federazione italiana Lavoratori Emigrati e Famiglie (FILEF) as a way to "revenge our parents."[15] Assunta Sauro similarly "felt" activism, because, after arriving to Quebec at the age of 7, she witnessed first hand the struggles of her parents and older siblings.[16] Indeed, Italian-language newsletters were rife with descriptions of the hardships newcomers faced in Montreal.[17] Whereas *Il Cittadino Canadese*, a newspaper with a more conservative outlook, rarely evoked women's concerns, to the point that one woman wrote to the editor, asking "Do we not exist?", leftist men seemed somewhat more aware.[18] In the words of labour activist Francesco di Feo, Italian women in the garment endured "exploitation at its maximum." Hours were typically long and gruelling, there was "no job-security, no days off, no holidays, no hygiene, lots of dust, 300 machines crammed one beside the other, no space to breathe, and the boss up there always watching women work."[19] Not only were they poorly paid, Southern Europeans rarely learned sufficient English or French, furthering accentuating their marginalization. Ethnic segregation in the workforce was one reason. Giuseppina Barbusci, for instance, described her time working at a men's suits factory, somewhat jokingly: "I learned Campobasso, Calabrese, Sicilian, Abruzzese-all types of Italian. I learned a word from each, except English or

[15] Interview with Marco Micone. For "Speak What," received as an immigrant response to "Speak White." See Marco Micone, Suivi d'une analyse de Lise Gauvin. *Speak What* (Montreal: Vlb Éditeur, 2001).
[16] Interview with Assunta Sauro.
[17] For Italians dying in workplace accidents, see, for example, Nicola Ciamarra, "Gli emigranti, queste povere vittime: sempre più numerosi i 'martiri del lavoro'," *Il Cittadino Canadese*, 2 October 1959, 2; "Un'altra vittima del lavoro: Salvatore Barbadoro perisce in un incidente," *Il Cittadino Canadese*, 18 December 1959, 1; ""Ancora vittime per la 'metropolitana' : le autorità locali apriranno gli occhi?," *Il Cittadino Canadese*, 18-25 December 1965, 12.
[18] "La Rubrica Gentile," *Il Cittadino Canadese*, 23 November 1951, 3.
[19] "An Interview with Francesco di Feo," *Ovo Magazine* 27/28 1977, 14-15.

French."[20] Until approximately the early 1970s, Italian women constituted the largest contingent of garment industry workers where they, along with Greek women, were the least unionized and, since employers systematically subjected them to intimidation, were kept this way.[21] Therefore, these publications put forth a critical narrative of the immigration experience where they refuted, as stated in one article, the "bourgeois ideals of integration" propagated by the established Italian leadership to instead promote "the unity of the exploited," that is, Montreal's multiethnic, multilingual working class.[22]

Leftist newsletters also brought to light the experiences of children of Italian immigrants. According to the Movimento Progressista Italo-Quebecchese and the Associazione, students of Italian origin faced the same challenges in the school system as their parents did in the workplace.[23] In an article entitled "School and the Children of Emigrants," the unnamed author outlined the ethnic and class biases omnipresent in the classroom: "School was where young people became conscience of their second-class status," yet rarely did a "political dimension" accompany this realization. Children did not learn "the causes behind the existence of ghettos and first and second class citizens." As a result, Italian youth were made to feel ashamed of their background, leading to deep-seated confusion and insecurity.[24] Assunta Sauro, for instance, evoked the difficulty she experienced adapting to a new country. Once she enrolled in a nearby English-language Catholic school, the young girl's teacher immediately called her "Suzanne." In an interview with the author, Sauro recounted that for years she was deeply embarrassed of her given name and that it not until university that she insisted that non-Italians refer to

[20] Del Negro, *Looking Through My Mother's Eyes*, 40.
[21] "La Donna italiana e la più sfruttata," *Il Lavoratore*, May 1971, 1.
[22] "CFMB: Radio Italiana," *Il Lavoratore*, 16 May 1970, 5.
[23] "La scuola contro i figli di operai?" *Quaderni culturali*, January/February 1980, 5.
[24] "Emigrazione e cultura: La scuola e i figli degli emigrati," *Il Lavoratore*, June 1971, 5-6.

her by Assunta.[25] Because of a hostile work environment, long hours on the job, and poor language skills, Italian parents, moreover, tended to perceive the school system, and the receiving society in general, with wariness, as it could take their children away from them.[26] This insularity only served to exacerbate the generational conflict inevitably present within the immigrant family.[27] Since the values present in the schools contradicted those emanating from the home, as Isa Iasenza, another Centro Donne founder, explained to a Francophone newspaper, young people were caught between two worlds. They either did not want to shed their roots out of an emotional attachment or could not do so in good conscious as they were aware of the sacrifices made in their name. And parents were fearful that their decision to emigrate would inadvertently tear the family apart.[28] Thus, Italians and their children were in a double bind, women especially, as generational conflict was frequently gendered. By the 1970s and 80s, however, young people started to find their voice.

The ideological underpinnings of the Movimento and the Associazione merit an aside, because of the scant attention they received by historians, the personal connections between the two groups as well as the latter's link to the early years of the Centro Donne. Overall, progressive Italian-speaking associations adhered to socialist ideologies, discussed the importance of unions, promoted the unity of workers across ethnic and linguistic lines, and demonstrated openness towards Quebec nationalism. They maintained, however, that immigrants faced a particular sort of oppression.[29] For

[25] Interview with Assunta Sauro.
[26] Franca Iacovetta, "Trying to Make Ends Meet. An Historical Look at Italian Women, The State and Family Survival Strategies in Postwar Toronto," *Canadian a*8, 2 (1987): 6-11, 9.
[27] "Il puntata," *Il Lavoratore*, February 1971, 5-6.
[28] Renée Rowan, "Féminin Pluriel. Portraits : Isa Iasenza," *Le Devoir*, 20 August 1984. Reprinted in "Noi e il femminismo," *Il Bollettino*, October 1984, 14, 16.
[29] "Gli immigrati nel Québec," *Il Lavoratore*, May 1970, 1.

instance, the Movimento took a divergent stance on language legislation than the newly-unified Italian organizations, arguing that the mobilization for a French Quebec was a "just demand" and an "integral part of the Québécois people's struggle for liberation."[30] Yet its membership tied the linguistic issue to broader socio-economic considerations, criticizing the economic elites' role in sowing discord within Montreal's multiethnic working-class. In *Il Lavoratore*, one author wrote, "The racist attacks against Italians in Saint-Leonard should not be viewed as an isolated incidents, but rather as premeditated actions with the objective of creating racial distinctions between workers." According to another article, the events masterminded by Robert Beale and Raymond Lemieux, that is, the riot that erupted in St. Leonard, were "greatly appreciated by their bosses," as they managed to pit Italians and French Quebecers against each other. Because of their shared socio-economic situation, the Movimento understood Francophone Quebecers and Italians as "class brothers," asserting that the French- and Italian-Canadian struggle was one and the same.[31] Indeed, the importance of collaboration across ethnic and linguistic lines appeared to be the consensus among Southern European labour activists.[32]

The Movimento, in particular, leveled scathing remarks at all factions of the "ruling class"-English, French, and Italian. In *Il Lavoratore*, *The Gazette* was disparaged for constantly evoking Italians' demographic weight, as if they could single-handedly determine the language spoken in Montreal.[33] The Parti Québécois, in large part "animated by the Francophone bourgeoisie," was accused of "instrumentalising the language question to divide workers," substituting socialism for a single-minded

[30] "Il problema linguistico nel Québec," *Il Lavoratore*, December 1971, 4.
[31] "Gli immigrati nel Québec," *Il Lavoratore*, May 1970, 1.
[32] See, for example, "Interview with Vasso Kessaris and Denis Adamou," *Ovo Magazine*, 27/28 1977, 9-11.
[33] "L'emigrante italiano," *Il Lavoratore*, January 1971, 2.

nationalism.[34] Speaking to the nascent class cleavage within the community, the Movimento also derided the Italian-language media for ultimately defending the notion of "social peace," by insinuating that immigrants should remain deferent simply because they were offered a job.[35] For these young people, there was a sense that an English-language education was not necessarily a ticket to success. Since more white-collar jobs demanded high levels of education, ambitious youngsters would not only have to speak English but also get a university degree. Once on campus, however, they found themselves in an extreme minority position, "surrounded by people who spoke a better quality English and were of higher social standing." The "possibilities of integration" for Italians at elitist institutions such as McGill "were practically non-existent." According to the MPIQ, they tended to only associate with other alienated peoples, namely French Quebecers, Greeks, and African-Canadians, as they were constantly reminded of their difference.[36] For instance, Aida Mastroanni, a Centro Donne member, started law school at McGill only to drop out due to her colleagues' insufferable "attitudes" and "Anglo-oriented racism." After a few more years volunteering at the centre, the Italian-born young woman returned to school, this time attending a Francophone institution.[37] With a university education then, came another set of perspectives.

Both Marco Micone and Assunta Sauro referred to the members of progressive groups as the community's "intellectuals," as they took a deeper look at socio-economic inequality and attempted to play a leadership role. The decision to operate within Italian-

[34] "Editoriale: *Parti Québécois*," *Il Lavoratore*, December 1971, 2; "Il problema linguistico nel Québec," *Il Lavoratore*, December 1971, 4.
[35] "CFMA: Radio Italiana," *Il Lavoratore*, May 1970, 5.
[36] "Emigrazione e cultura: La scuola and i figli degli emigrati," *Il Lavoratore*, June 1971, 5.
[37] Michiko Aramaki, "Family, Paesani, and Networks: Politics and Economy of Montreal Italians," (PhD Dissertation, McGill University, 1994), 64-66.

speaking settings was not only a question of advocacy, however, but also an issue of comfort level and shared experiences. In the 1970s, Sauro, for example, was very sympathetic towards and rubbed shoulders with French-speaking Marxist-Leninists. The long-time director of the Centro Donne recalled attending demonstrations and frequenting En Lutte!, where a brother and sister team came to her apartment to try to convince her to become part of the formation. Yet Sauro remembered the off-putting attitudes of some of its members, especially their attitudes toward postsecondary education. After finishing high school, Sauro entered the workforce immediately, doing administrative work for a private company. Consequently, she felt "cheated" out of a university education, and returned to school a few years later. Sauro stood by her decision to pursue a degree, greatly appreciating the sociology courses she took at Concordia. Some of m-l adherents she met, in contrast, deemed university "bourgeois," which, in her view, was a product of their middle-class backgrounds. As a child immigrant, she "always wanted to go to university." Moreover, as the youngest of seven, she watched her older siblings enter the workforce immediately upon arrival to Montreal, and thus wanted something more for her own future. She also felt removed from their atheistic politics. Though she distanced herself from the Catholic Church, Sauro did not feel compelled to ground her leftism in an anti-religious stance. Nevertheless, she was familiar, as evidenced here, with White radical Francophone politics and attributed the foundation of the Centro Donne, in part, to the heady atmosphere of the 1970s.[38]

Much has been written on Italian Montrealers and the language debate. Despite, in many cases, an English-language elementary and secondary schooling, 1.5 and second generation people generally functioned, at reasonably high levels, in English, French and

[38] Interview with Assunta Sauro.

Italian. In fact, all the 1.5 or second generation Southern Europeans the author interviewed were trilingual, commenting on their tendency to mix and confuse languages.[39] Similar to many Italian immigrants, Isa Iasenza, for example, spent her childhood in St-Michel and Montreal-North after arriving to Canada at age 5, speaking English at school, French on the streets, and Italian at home. When interviewed regarding her parents' choice of an English-language education, Isa Iasenza responded "it was automatic…it was a time when it was like that." She still spoke virtually accent-free Québécois French, however, presumably due to a childhood spent in East Montreal, and, after attending McGill, Iasenza became a social worker with the Centre des services sociaux du Montréal métropolitain.[40] Overall then, younger Italian Montrealers, or at least the ones in this study, moved in both French and English social spheres. Moreover, their experiences with Anglo Montreal were classed, as were those of other Southern European communities. After graduating from Rosemont High School, Danae Savides, for example, who will come up again as an active feminist in the Greek community, attended McGill University, where she felt academically unprepared and "lost herself." She then transferred to Concordia, where she did much better, majored in sociology, and co-founded the Greek Students' Association and, later, the Women's Committee of the Greek Workers' Association.[41] Concordia then, with a reputation for being the "immigrant school," made for a more comfortable environment for this community

[39] Interviews with Assunta Sauro, Marco Micone, Danae Savides and Pina di Pasquale. For more on Italian Montrealers' trilingualism, especially their tendency to mix and confuse languages, see Francine Tardif, Gaétan Beaudet and Micheline Labelle, *Question nationale et ethnicité: le discours de leaders d'origine italienne de la région de Montréal* (Montreal: CRRIR, Département de sociologie, Université du Québec à Montréal, 1993), 17-19.

[40] Renée Rowan, "Féminin Pluriel. Portraits : Isa Iasenza," *Le Devoir*, 20 August 1984. Reprinted in "Noi e il femminismo," *Il Bollettino*, October 1984, 14, 16. Iasenza was interviewed through her work with the Centre jeunesse de Montréal. One does not remark a heavy accent. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aSXa_5HJW68.

[41] Interview with Danae Savides.

leader.[42] In other words, Italians or Greeks were not part of the same Anglosphere as, for example, the Montreal Women's Liberation Network. In addition to the challenges that came with coming to a country at a young age, however, Italian women continued to experience difficulty carving out an equal place within the larger community into the 1970s, and even the 1980s.

Indeed, there appeared to be very little room for discussion on gender inequalities in the Italian-language press. *Il Cittadino Canadese*, for instance, published several articles ridiculing the women's movement in both Canada and in Italy.[43] As journalist Michele Pirone wrote, "The feminist movement is in many way 'a youthful fever'." Referring to women's protests in Rome, he continued, "After a while women will leave the streets to find a job...and a husband."[44] In another article, Claudio Antonelli maintained that French Quebecers were exaggerating the challenges women faced in Quebec. Compared to other societies, the journalist argued, North Americans had relatively little work to do and, more importantly, women elsewhere did their duties "without complaining."[45] Therefore, the Centro Donne provided a means to support Italian women morally and practically outside the other, male-dominated organizations. In the view of Assunta Sauro, the more conservative leadership, in particular, "controlled the Italian community and reinforced a reactionary and sexist ideology against women."[46] Though far less hostile, the Associazione di Cultura Popolare Italo-Quebecchese similarly elided women's concerns, prompting the founding of Il Collettivo. From here,

[42] Interview with Danae Savides.
[43] M.T., "Parità di sessi e nudismo," *Il Cittadino Canadese*, 6 April 1978, 4; Italo Istria, "12.000 'Yvette' al Forum: il femminismo ha stancato," *Il Cittadino Canadese*, 16 April 1980, 1-2.
[44] M.T., "Parità di sessi e nudismo," *Il Cittadino Canadese*, 6 April 1978, 4.
[45] Claudio Antonelli, "L'anti-« faccocratico", ovvero l'inversione dei sessi: i nuovi educatori," *Il Cittadino Canadese*, 28 June 1978, 1 and 10; Claudio Antonelli, "Le femministe propongono: una società senza sessi," *Il Cittadino Canadese*, 22 November 1978, 1 and 4.
[46] Dumont and Toupin, *La pensée féministe au Québec*, 645-648.

the approximately six women involved, after hearing about the possibility of a government grant, got together in the basement of one woman to pitch the project. The women's collective, though they were in part "in agreement" with what they referred to as the more "traditional" aspects of the community still felt the "need for change." They wanted the Italian community to benefit from the larger push for gender equality, and saw founding a women's centre as a way to "give back," helping immigrant women acquire "emotional," "social," and "economic" autonomy. With the know-how, these women were successful, founding the Centro Donne Italiane in 1978. With the merging of two groups, Il Collettivo and the Associazione femminile di St-Michel, the Centro Donne managed to join younger and older women from the beginning.[47]

II. Centro Donne Italiane di Montreal

At first, the Centro Donne was located on St-Michel Boulevard, then Christophe Colombe, and later moved to Fleury Street in Ahuntsic in the 1990s. Its location in Italian neighbourhoods allowed for its success, attracting the women who lived nearby. Speaking about the need for a women-only space, Assunta Sauro recounted the long hours on the job, the "double duty," and the difficulty of adaption. Whereas men socialized in coffee shops or bars, women did have any available social outlet. Due to poor language skills, moreover, first generation Italians did not have access to other, English- or French-speaking women-centred services. For the younger women, however, the foundation of the centre came with certain sacrifices. These women, students or recent graduates, renounced their social lives in order to give their "heart and soul" to the project. They needed to incorporate the Centre, establish an administrative council, and,

[47] Il Centro Donne Italiane, *Coraggio di sognare*, 7, 36; Interview with Assunta Sauro.

most importantly, define its objective. The latter was the hardest, as each founder had its own vision. The group was divided between women who saw the Centre as a basis for radical feminism versus others who wanted to focus on providing services to a particular demographic. On the centre's 25th anniversary, Sauro recalled the "passion" and the "idealism," as well as the "enormous amount of work, dedication, enthusiasm and love for the feminist cause."[48] In the end, the Centro Donne's leadership tried to combine both the radical feminist and social services approach to the organization, aiming to increase Italian immigrant women's "participation in the social and political life of Quebec." With culturally specific programming, the founders promoted the "emancipation" and "autonomy" of Italian women, furthering their "adjustment" to Quebec society. In service of the community, the Centre's mandate was to create a meeting space, in order "break the isolation" and "loneliness" experienced by immigrant women. They also sought to promote "consciousness raising" and links with women of other backgrounds.[49] Organized as a collective, the Centro Donne was "autonomous" and "autogestito" (i.e. under worker management).[50]

From 1978 to 1985, the Centro Donne developed its expertise in becoming a source of information and assistance for Italian-speaking women. The centre offered government-sponsored English and French language lessons, organized a legal clinic, and provided one-on-one informal counselling services. It held a series of public events, including two conferences respectively entitled *Ruolo e problemi delle Donne immigrate nella nostra società* in 1978 and *Violenza fatta alle donne* in 1981, as well as the first International Women's Day celebration in the Italian community on 8 March 1981. The

[48] Il Centro Donne Italiane, *Coraggio di sognare*, 33, 36, 37.
[49] "Domenica, 27 Gennaio 1985, alle ore 13.00," *Il Bollettino*, January 1985, 5.
[50] Il Centro Donne Italiane, *Coraggio di sognare*, 27.

Women's Centre also published a mini-survey, *La donna italiana a Montreal*. With a commitment to feminism, as well as worker's rights, the Centro Donne discussed health, body consciousness, pornography, feminism and the workplace. Members also attended a protest organized by the FTQ and the Canadian Labour Congress in Ottawa in 1981, as well as the 1982 Sommet populaire held by the Conseil Central de Montreal de la CSN.[51] Shortly after the official establishment of the Centre, Assunta Sauro, by then, a recent Université du Québec à Montréal master's graduate, took a job up North, in James Bay, staying in the Cree community for a number of years. Sauro confirmed that the treaty destroyed the community's way of life. Upon her return to Montreal, she was happy to see that an Indigenous person replaced her. More research needs to be conducted, however, on the presence of White Quebecers on Cree territory and the role of these development workers vis-à-vis (or maintaining) settler colonial structures.[52] Meanwhile, the Centro Donne got its first newsletter, *Il Bollettino*, off the ground. Published from 1983-1988, *Il Bollettino* contained Italian-language articles, with the occasional piece in English or French. According to its first issue, "We need to reflect more on ourselves, on the place we occupy in our community and in the world that surrounds us. In this context, our newsletter can become a tool, a means to communicate in writing what we live, feel, and desire to all the other women that read it."[53]

Thus it was in the pages of *Il Bollettino* that Italian-speaking women were exposed to the ideologies embraced by the Women's Centre founders, as well as subversive analyses of the community to which they belonged. Sometimes going no further, the monthly newsletter simply wrote in black and white what most women surely

[51] *Ibid*.
[52] Interview with Assunta Sauro.
[53] "Care Lettrici," *Il Bollettino*, October 1983, 2.

felt. In an article entitled "The Italian Canadian Woman," one woman wrote that in her view, it seemed that "according to the Italian family, women were important only for procreation, only to be a wife and mother." Upon marriage, a woman was supposed to "lose her own identity, ignore her own thoughts and emotions." Speaking to the difficult process behind emancipation, the unnamed author referred to the "modern woman, who today is in search of herself and leaves home, freeing herself above all from the chains of an abstract ideology. It seems easy, however in reality the experience is traumatic. Courage seems to be the only way to continue down the chosen path, because the psychological struggle is the hardest battle." "The victim of her own altruism," as she continued, "the Italian woman losses a sense of her own importance for the benefit of others. Sometimes she feels like she is a prisoner of her own thoughts." The author stressed the importance of treating daughters and sons equally, as the role of women in society evolved and hence the necessity of opening her eyes to a "complex world." *Il Bollettino* put forth an internal critique without, however, a judgmental or condescending attitude. Men were not "othered" as backwards or inferior in comparison to the Canadian-born.[54] Rather, this Centro Donne member acknowledged that the "domineering" attitudes of Italian fathers, stemmed from their "low status" in broader Montreal society, and hence the "dangers" this posed to physical and mental health of women.[55]

Indeed, a number of articles addressed Italian women's emotional well-being where depression and isolation were openly talked about. In one article, for example, the author posed the question, "How many of us have mornings where we wake up and ask ourselves: is this it? Soon after we feel guilty, full of rage and anxiety, accompanied by

[54] Karen Dubinsky and Franca Iacovetta, "Murder, Womenly Virtue, and Motherhood: The Case of Angelina Napolitano, 1911-1922," *Canadian Historical Review* 72, 4 (1991): 505-531, 531.
[55] "La donna italo-canadese," *Il Bollettino*, October 1983, 9.

the following question: What's happening to me?" "In general, women close in on themselves," as this author wrote, again anonymously, "They don't talk to anyone about their difficulty, because they feel embarrassed and because they think they are alone in feeling dissatisfied."[56] In another article, entitled "Women and Health: Solitude," the author asserted that loneliness, whether "occasional," "chronic," or "existential," can lead to depression, or daydreaming where women fantasize about satisfactory relationships.[57] What impeded women from reaching out? According to *Il Bollettino*, they were unable to form healthy relationships, because, after they returned from work, "exhausted," "taciturn," women had to cook, clean and get ready for the next day. There was always something waiting for them, "either in the kitchen or the bedroom."[58] Since the Centro Donne adhered to the International Wages for Housework Campaign, a movement with Northern Italian origins, several articles by Mariangela di Domenico and Antonella Perzia denounced housework within the larger framework of capitalism, where women's free labour in the home served as the uncompensated base for the industry economy. The authors also encouraged to "stop feeling guilty" and stressed the need for an equitable division of household labour, the latter a "woman's right."[59] In other words, *Il Bollettino* contested the male-centric image of the community presented by, for example, *Il Cittadino*, putting forth another view of emigrant life in Montreal.

In 1984, *Il Bollettino* published a number of articles on Catholicism, as Pope John Paul II was set to come Montreal. This visit, as stated in the opening editorial of the

[56] "Riceviamo," *Il Bollettino*, October 1983, 11.
[57] "La Donna e la salute: La solitudine," *Il Bollettino*, November 1983, 7.
[58] "Riceviamo…Parliamoci," *Il Bollettino*, November 1983, 13.
[59] Mariangela di Domenico, "Il lavoro casalingo: perspectives d'analyses," *Il Bollettino*, July-August 1984, 5-6; Antonella Perzia, "La ripartizione dei compiti," *Il Bollettino*, July-August 1984, 11. The International Wages for Housework Campaign came up in an interview with Assunta Sauro.

October issue, "did not leave the Centro Donne indifferent," where members "denounced the negative influence that the Catholic Church had on women."[60] Indeed, the Women's Centre supported women's right to free contraception and abortion on demand, publishing its official position in the same issue. The newsletter stated that these matters should remain in the hands of women rather than the State, the Church or the medical establishment. More specifically, the Centre sought the greater diffusion of information in order to avoid unwanted pregnancies, free access to birth control, the abolishment of articles 251 and 252 from the penal code, and increased medical access for immigrant women on temporary work visas.[61] On the next page, however, Antonella Perzia authored an article, asking if procreation was the only reason for sexual relations where she argued against the notion that sex was "dirty." The Centro Donne member regarded intimate relations as a source of pleasure, pointing to women's "God given" ability to enjoy them. She maintained that denying women to use contraception would be equivalent to banning medicine, pointing to the nuanced discourse around these issues for Catholic women.[62] In another article, Perzia argued that it was in fact possible to reconcile "feminism" and "faith." In this view, sexism within Catholicism was a reflection of male chauvinism in a patriarchal society, not vice versa. God would not have created woman as an unequal and thus, to subordinate His creation, could be regarded as sinful. Some Centro Donne members then, went against the prevailing notion of the time, according to Perzia, "where the majority of self-identified feminists weren't believers and the believers weren't

[60] "Care lettrici," *Il Bollettino*, October 1984, 3.
[61] "La posizione del Centro Donne di Montreal sul contraccezione e sull'aborto," *Il Bollettino*, October 1984, 10.
[62] Antonella Perzia, "Lo scopo del sesso è 'solo' la procreazione?" *Il Bollettino*, October 1984, 11.

feminist." [63] They were also aware that the majority of the community's women were practicing Catholics, at least to a degree, and hence chose to work within this framework.[64]

Breaking the code of silence surrounding abuse, *Il Bollettino* openly addressed the issue, attempting to convince the community's women to do the same. The newsletter provided advice to battered women, telling them to go to the doctor and seek legal advice.[65] In one article, "Family Violence," the author provided basic information, explaining that domestic violence cut across ethnic, religious and socio-economic lines. Pointing to the informational role played by the Centro Donne, *Il Bollettino* informed its readership that spousal abuse was a criminal act, rather than the fault of the victim, and that denouncing the aggressor to the police did not necessarily result in incarceration. In the same article, the author encouraged women to talk about what happened behind closed doors and stated that, if needed, the Women's Centre could help find temporary refuge or legal assistance.[66] In fact, Centro Donne intervention workers accompanied Italian-speaking women to court or to the doctor. Assunta Sauro recalled locking up the centre in order to serve as a translator in these settings for battered women. She frequently dealt with the aftermath subjected to women who signed forms they did not understand. To this day, a trilingual lawyer comes to the Women's Centre once a week to provide free legal advice.[67] More than providing advice or a ready ear to the victims, however, the Centro Donne engaged in prevention work with the broader Italian community. In 1997, for example, the centre initiated a roundtable on domestic violence,

[63] "Le due 'F' – Femminismo e fede – Alleate o nemiche?" *Il Bollettino*, October 1984, 7.
[64] "La donna e la chiesa," *Il Bollettino*, October 1984, 5.
[65] "La violenza coniugale," *Il Bollettino*, September-October 1987, 5.
[66] "Violenza familiare," *Il Bollettino*, November-December 1987, 11.
[67] Interview with Assunta Sauro.

televised on Tele-Italia. Afterwards, the Women's Centre received a number of phone calls asking for more information. *Il Corriere Italiano*, an Italian-language newspaper, published a number of articles on the issue, at the insistence of the Centro Donne.[68] Regardless of the problem, the administration strove to foster a culture where seeking assistance was no longer viewed as shameful.[69]

Generational tension was openly acknowledged in *Il Bollettino*, and steps were taken to rectify the situation. The Centro Donne organized activities for young girls, stressing the importance of good relationships with parents and friends, as well as the value of self-esteem and education.[70] With the aim of promoting dialogue, the women's centre geared their programming in this area towards older women. Giuseppina Barbusci, for instance, organized a discussion session in order to explicitly address mother-daughter relations.[71] In conjunction with the Federazione delle Associazioni Molisane, the Centro Donne held a workshop in order to discuss a range of issues, namely family, work, and child-raising. Parents were encouraged to embrace the tactics of "communication" and "comprehension" rather than authoritarian approaches. These strategies were thought to be a means to ease the cultural differences between mothers and daughters.[72] Indeed, young people were in conflict with their parents, including their mothers, over socializing, dating, and the ability to leave the house. For girls especially, their parents' mentality prohibited North American-style dating and socializing.[73] The Women's Centre aimed to provide avenues so young women could seek advice, because most "had no one

[68] "Attività del Centro Donne: Violenza coniugale nella communita italiana," *L'altra faccia della luna*, Summer 1997, 5.
[69] "Mot de la directrice," *L'altra faccia della luna*, Autumn 2002, 6.
[70] "Progetto per ragazze italiane di Montreal-Nord," *Il Bollettino*, October 1983, 10.
[71] "Café Rencontre," *Il Bollettino*, October 1987, 8.
[72] "Colloquio federazione," *Il Bollettino*, February 1988, 2.
[73] Carolina Eleazzaro, "Seconda generazione," *L'altra faccia della luna*, September 2006, 4.

to talk to."[74] In the view of Maria Morabito, writing in the 1990s, Italian women in Montreal were placed under significant family pressure regarding marriage, lifestyle, and tradition. With divorce, for example, came stigmatization and alienation. They were raised by stricter than average parents, whose parenting techniques were out of step with those of mainstream society.[75] The effects of immigration therefore played out at even the most intimate levels of family life where women were often the ones adversely affected.[76] Since the Centro Donne was multigenerational, its membership was able to at least try to productively work through these differences.

The Centro explicitly aimed to foster a women's culture, one of self-reliance and moral support. Numerous information and educational sessions were held, addressing everything from literacy to unions to legal issues.[77] As we saw in the previous chapter, Isa Iasenza was part of the *Projet multiethnique de Saint-Léonard*, an initiative that involved the Italian, Haitian, and Vietnamese communities.[78] Through the Italian-language press, the Centro Donne publicized its health promotion initiatives, from menopause to family planning.[79] In order to attract the women of the community, the

[74] Emilia Di Lullo, "Riflessione sul Centro Donne," *Il Bollettino*, September 1984, 12.
[75] Maria Morabito, "Madre e figlia: Due generazioni in conflitto," *L'altra faccia della luna*, October 1996, 3.
[76] Loretta Baldassar and Donna Gabaccia, eds. *Intimacy and Italian Migration: Gender and Domestic Lives in a Mobile World* (New York: Fordham University, 2011), 12.
For more on Italian Canadian attitudes stemming from emigration, feelings of threat and disrespect, and consequential tend towards social conservatism see "Cosi la penso, se vi pare!: Differenza tra gli italiani in Canada e gli italiani in Italia," *Il Bollettino*, March-April 1988, 14.
[77] "Comunicato: integrazione alfa verso l'autonomia," *Il Bollettino*, November 1983, 6; "La donna e il lavoro," *Il Bollettino*, September 1985, 12.
[78] "Diaspora. Le projet multiethnique d'alphabétisation de Saint-Léonard," *Collectif Paroles*, June/July/August 1982, 26-30. Iasenza frequently working with the Haitian community. See Renée Rowan, "Féminin Pluriel. Portraits : Isa Iasenza," *Le Devoir*, 20 August 1984. Reprinted in "Noi e il femminismo," *Il Bollettino*, October 1984, 14, 16.
[79] "Sessione di menopausa al Centro Donne," *Il Cittadino Canadese*, 12 March 1980, 15; "Conferenza organizzata dal Centro Donne," *Il Cittadino Canadese*, 21 May 1980, 18; "Taccuino sociale: Centro Donne Montreal," *Il Cittadino Canadese*, 15 October 1980, 18; "Il Programma della Salute preparato dal centro donne," *Il Cittadino Canadese*, 5 November 1980, 18; "Attività del Centro Donne: la violenza subita alla donna," *Il Cittadino Canadese*, 4 February 1981, 9.

centre organized gatherings, called *Café Rencontre.* The weekly meetings, held in Italian, were conceived as a means for housewives to "leave the four walls" of their homes, "chat" while having coffee, and discuss subjects "pertinent" to them. Guess-speakers were invited in order to share advice on, for example, personal empowerment or sexuality. Women were allowed to "break the ice in a safe environment" as these were taboo topics within the community, particularly the latter.[80] In addition to regular activities, the Centro Donne celebrated International Women's Day every year on March 8th, which, over the years, proved to be a popular event.[81] In a 1985 article, "March 8th…Our Day!," the author wrote that "for us women, especially for us feminists, this date is extremely important: its symbolic for the evolution of the status of women." Every year, the Women's Centre named a committee to organize the celebration, taking the opportunity to reflect on the condition of women. The yearly event enabled the Centro to "take stock of the current situation, resting for a few hours in order to look at the accomplishments and celebrate together." Overall, the Centro hoped to promote a message of solidarity, fostering ties between Italian women.[82]

Thanks to the current administration, the author had the good fortune of conducting a focus group with seven long-time attendees of the Centro Donne. The latter were representative of the first generation, in that, they arrived to Montreal as adults,

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[80] "Café rencontre," *Il Bollettino*, November 1983, 15; "Café rencontre," *Il Bollettino*, June 1984, 17; "Café rencontre," *Il Bollettino*, October 1985, 16; "Café rencontre," *Il Bollettino*, September- October 1987, 8; "Café rencontre," *Il Bollettino*, June 1984, 17.

[81] "Noi e il femminismo: le strade, la notte, donne senza paura," *Il Bollettino*, October 1983, 6; "Noi che non vogliamo ammazzare," *Il Bollettino*, November 1983, 3; Antonella Perzia, "Editoriale: il Decennio delle Donne," *Il Bollettino*, January 1985, 3; "L'otto marzo – La Nostra Giornata!" *Il Bollettino*, March 1985, 3; "La giornata internazionale della donna," *Il Bollettino*, March-April 1988, 16; "8 marzo Giornata Internazionale della Donna: la marcia di protesta," *L'altra faccia della luna*, May 2004, 5; "Ricchi e poveri!" *L'altra faccia della luna*, December 2004, 3; "Marcia mondiale delle donne," *L'altra faccia della luna*, March 2005, 3.

[82] "L'otto Marzo..La Nostra Giornata!" *Il Bollettino*, March 1985, 3.

between the mid-1950s and the early 1970s.[83] The positive effects of the centre had on their lives were not only obvious but also unanimous. Ninetta, for example, said she "spends more time at the Centre than at home." Now in Ahunsic, the Centro Donne is a short walk from her house so she goes there as often as possible. Another woman, Maria, expressed the "fun times" she spends there, the "good company" she keeps by attending its activities. Maria first came to Centre to take an English class and then eventually got involved in all of its programmes, from protests against austerity, to anti-domestic violence movements, to fundraising for Centraide, to social events. Arriving to Montreal in 1968 at the age of 17, Maria seemed younger than most of the other women. She nevertheless drove over an hour and half, on a weekly basis, to get to the Centre, demonstrating her commitment to the organization. She also stressed the "personal development" she experienced by taking on a leadership role. Nearly 80, Eva came to centre for assistance during a difficult time in her life and then kept attending because she was so impressed by the leadership's work. She and another regular member, Maria, worked together in the garment industry for over 15 years and even though they are not related consider each other "sisters." Dora, especially, stressed the friendship aspect and the moral support she received there, the latter helping her leave a troubled marriage. Eva echoed these feelings, stating that, sometimes, moral support is all one needs to make major life changes. In general, the women were eager to share their stories, often speaking all at once, recounting the pleasure, camaraderie, happiness and sense of engagement they got through the Women's Centre.

[83] The author thanks Carolina, Josie and Pina for setting up the focus group. It should be noted that the consent form was translated into Italian for the purposes of this part of the study.

As one woman said, "We have so many stories." There is no single story of the Italian emigration experience. Yet, in a group setting, we notice a common narrative emerge on the part of this generation. All stressed the difficulty of their early years in Montreal, evoking the "sacrifices" (a word that came up over and over) they made for the well being of their families. For example, many women recounted their experiences in the garment industry where many said they worked 8am to 8pm, making, at the time, 55 cents an hour. If every there was an opportunity to work longer, as Eva said, she was "always the first to raise her hand." They also mentioned going on strike on occasion, however the women who talked about labour rights sounded distant and disconnected from the union. They also, however, mentioned the fact that their children had jobs- the latter generally all-important for Italian Montrealers- houses and children of their own and thus implied that their emigration was worthwhile. Sad and painful experiences were referred on a number of occasions during the group interview but, as Eva said, "We're still here." Of course, this is simplistic. The power of this narrative, especially regarding financial security, was such that Assunta Sauro brought up that, even more than domestic violence, poverty remained a taboo topic among Centro Donne participants. There was a time when the Centro received food stamps from a charitable organization but Sauro eventually had to give them to other people in the neighbourhood, because women's centre's members refused to take them out of misplaced sense of shame, the kind that stemmed from not "having made it" abroad.[84] In addition to the aura of stability, many interviewees emphasized the importance of cultural maintenance. Several women, for instance, spoke with pride at transmitting Italian language skills to their children and grandchildren. These women then, emphasized their successes.

[84] Interview with Assunta Sauro.

From the beginning until now, the Centro Donne demonstrated a commitment to broader feminist principles. The Women's Centre's adherence to the Regroupement des centres des femmes du Québec in 1992 and participation in the La Marche des Femmes contre la Pauvreté, "Du pain et des roses" in 1995 allowed for a political inclusion of sorts.[85] Over the years, Women's Centre mobilized in favour of poverty-reducing measures across Canada, attending rallies in Quebec City and Ottawa.[86] Similarly, Centro Donne members denounced the sexism they came across the Italian community, where Antonella Perzia, for example, wrote a letter to the editor of *Il Cittadino Canadese* in the 1980s after the newspaper published a questionable article.[87] The transformations engendered by the centre were also personal. The Centro Donne's programming, as evidenced by the focus group, effectively broke immigrant women's isolation, providing a women's-only space, one where participants were comfortable and motivated to attend. Domenica Casola, for example, "found comfort, kindness, and lots of encouragement" at the "remarkable" Centro Donne, whose staff assisted her in "learning to love herself" and acquiring "self-confidence."[88] Both the participants and the founders gained valuable lessons in self-empowerment. Writing in the 1980s, Isa Iasenza editorialized that, "The opening and organization of Centro Donne Italiane was for me – like for many others -the realization of a dream, a desire, a will to create something for myself and the Italian women of Montreal." According to this co-founder, her involvement led to vital "personal-growth," "knowledge of the Italian community," "political experience with

[85] Il Centro Donne Italiane, *Coraggio di sognare*, 29.
[86] "Le donne italiane e la marcia contro la povertà," *L'altra faccia della luna*, October 1995, 6; "Marcia mondiale delle donne 2000," *L'altra faccia della luna*, October 2000, 4; "La pagina del Centro: Manifestazione a Québec," *L'altra faccia della luna*, Spring 2003, 15.
[87] Antonella Perzia, "L'America ancora non e delle donne," *Il Bollettino*, September 1985, 18.
[88] Domenica Casola, "Freedom to Fly," *L'altra faccia della luna*, March 2005, 7.

regards to organizing, planning, contact with the public etc.," "a feeling of belonging to something outside her family and her job," and "so many other things impossible to put into words."[89] Feminism then, was a deeply affective experience.

Both the written and oral sources indicate that the Centro Donne Italiane overall success was due to the positive image it held in the minds of the women of the community. The Women's Centre was loosely defined as a place to "belong," receive "advice," "increase personal autonomy," "overcome difficulties," and "discuss freely among women."[90] Participants considered the Women's Centre a "big family,"[91] and described working and coming there like being at "home."[92] Like their counterparts in the United States then, Italian-Canadian feminists, in the words of literary scholar Edvige Giunta, were successful in "remaking the very communities they defied and escaped."[93] These ideologies of home and belonging are reminiscent of Donna Gabaccia's notion of an Italian diasporic culture, where "home" has been regarded as a "face-to-face community –not the idea of a people rooted to a place, but the place itself."[94] Indeed, there has been a scholarly discussion regarding whether Italians emigrants constitute a Diaspora, as circulatory migrations connected villages of origins with workplaces worldwide.[95] While family and cultural ties linked Centro Donne members to their place of birth, we do not remark, however, a sustained sense of transnational feminism on the part of this organization. Although there was the occasional article in *Il Bollettino* on

[89] "Isa Iasenza, membro C.A," *Il Bollettino*, September 1984, 16-17.
[90] Assunta Sauro, "Cos'é un Centro Donne?" *L'altra faccia della luna*, October 1996, 2.
[91] Maria Grazia Iannazzo, "Testimonia," *L'altra faccia della luna*, September 2005, 12.
[92] Il Centro Donne Italiane, *Coraggio di sognare,* 49.
[93] Edwige Giunta, "Where They Came From: Italian American Women Writers as Public Intellectuals," in Philip Cannistraro and Gerald Meyer, eds., *The Lost World of Italian-American Radicalism: Politics, Labor, and Culture* (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 301.
[94] Donna Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 191.
[95] *Ibid*., 9, 60.

happenings in Italy, when, for example, a women's political party was formed in the country,[96] Italian feminist theory was seemingly never referred to, perhaps due to its inapplicability to the lives of immigrants. The latter, according to gender studies scholar Vincenza Perilli, held up an essentialist definition of womanhood, making differences between women difficult to conceptualize.[97] For historians interested in transnational activism, the *Federazione italiana Lavoratori Emigrati e Famiglie*, an international labour organization founded in Rome in 1967 by Carlo Levi, could prove useful towards analyzing post-World War II Italy as an "emigrant nation." Members of Montreal's multigenerational FILEF, consisting of both students and workers, read *Nuova Unità*, the organ of the Italian Communist Party, hence demonstrating the internationalizing of these ideas and their influence on some Italians abroad.[98]

In fact, the Centro Donne primarily made links with other immigrant women in Montreal. In the 1990s, for instance, the women's centre hosted a conference on family violence with Greek and Portuguese organizations, Bouclier d'Athéna and the Centre d'aide à la famille portugaise.[99] In an interview with author, Assunta Sauro described the "similar cultures, problems, and ways of doing things."[100] Although perhaps influenced by political ideas emanating from Italy, as evidenced by the Centre's momentary adhesion to the International Wages for Housework Campaign –indeed, Maria Rosa Dalla

[96] "Notizie dall'Italia. Un partito di quali donne?" *Il Bollettino*, April 1985, 15.
[97] Vincenza Perilli, " 'Sexe' et 'race' dans les féminismes italiens," *Les cahiers du CEDREF* 14 (2006) : 105-143.
[98] Interview with Marco Micone; Mark Choate, *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).
[99] "Il lavoro del Centro Donne per l'anno 1995-1996: un bilancio," *L'altra faccia della luna*, October 1996, 5. For more on Greek women's organizations, namely the Hellenic Women's Association, see "Tassia Helen Giannakis: mieux intégrer les Québécoises d'adoption," *La Gazette des femmes*, November-December 1989, 24.
[100] Interview with Assunta Sauro.

Costa published an article on the links between reproduction and emigration,[101] Italian Montrealers tended to mobilize around the immigrant women identity.[102] The desire to make connections across community lines appeared to be the case for the Centro Donne. Indeed, members of the Italian Women's Centre as well as the Maison d'Haïti were well represented in the ranks of the Collectif des femmes immigrantes du Québec.[103] In August of 1983, more specifically, 75 women working within various immigrant organizations attended a general assembly in order to officially establish the organization, dedicated to the building of a "new and Francophone" Quebec society. As stated in the opening lines of its founding document, "Des femmes immigrantes, il en est peu question, que ce soit au sein du Mouvement des femmes ou ailleurs. Nous nous sommes constituées en collectif parce que immigrantes nous-mêmes, nous ressentions le besoin de nous regrouper pour agir." Despite an important contribution, immigrant women remained "inconnues, presque invisibles." In November of the same year, the Collectif, headed by Aura Bizzari, opened its doors at 6865 Christophe Colomb. From the beginning, the collective had three objectives: foster solidarity between immigrant women, improve their living conditions, raise awareness of the specific problems facing this demographic as well as create ties with French Quebecers.[104] Rather than background then, members were united by common cause.

In short, Italian women seemed to be more comfortable in immigrant setting in

[101] Maria Rosa Dalla Costa, "Reproduction et emigration," In *Le foyer de l'insurrection: textes sur le salaire pour le travail meneger*, ed. Collectif l'Insoumise (Geneva: Collectionf L'Insoumise, 1977), 44-85.
[102] Donna Gabaccia, "Is Everywhere Nowhere? Nomads, Nations, and the Immigrant Paradigm of US History," *Journal of American History* 86, 3, The Nation and Beyond: Transnational Perspectives on United States History: A Special Issue (1999): 1115-1134, 1126.
[103] Collectif des femmes immigrantes de Montréal, *Êtres immigrantes au Québec: des femmes s'organisent* (Montreal: Collectif des femmes immigrantes du Québec, 1985).
[104] Collectif des femmes immigrantes de Montréal, *Êtres immigrantes au Québec: des femmes s'organisent* (Montreal: Collectif des femmes immigrantes du Québec, 1985).

Montreal than in seeking out links with their country of birth. When Aura Bizzari, the coordinator of the Collectif, attended the Third UN World Conference on Women, held in Nairobi in 1985 on the part of French-speaking immigrant women, she, ironically in her view, realized her Canadianess. Reporting in the *Les cahiers de la femme*, Bizzari wrote:

> Paradoxalement, il a fallu que je vive ce Forum pour découvrir mon sentiment d'appartenance au Canada. Car pour moi, aller à Nairobi signifiait aussi rencontrer d'autres femmes venues d'Italie et me situer vis-à-vis du mouvement des femmes de là-bas. Nous avons discuté de nos luttes, nos revendications…Et voila ce qui devenait de plus en plus évident: après quatorze ans de vie ici, je n'étais plus l'Italienne d'autrefois et je ne me sentais pas "en famille" avec mes cosoeurs d'Italie. Tout en ne reniant surtout pas mes origines et en gardant mon accent, ma réalité est beaucoup plus proche de celles des femmes québécoises, canadiennes que de celles des femmes italiennes. Et cela a été pour moi une découverte…"[105]

More research needs to be done, however, on the connections, or lack thereof, between Italian feminists and emigrant women. Given what we have seen in other chapters, for the moment, we can point to the inherent differences between economic and postcolonial migrations, the latter conditioning newcomers' rapport with both the receiving and sending societies. Perhaps, Italy's postwar status as a democratic country reinforced the importance of local, rather than transnational, political ties.[106] By the 1980s then, Italian-Canadians joined multiethnic and multiracial initiatives, as part of the move to spearhead, most notably, the landmark conference, *Femmes immigrantes, à nous parole!*

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[105] Aura Bizzari, "Immigrante au Canada, Canadienne en Italie, simplement femme à Nairobi," *Canadian Woman Studies/Les cahiers de la femme* 7, 1-2 (1986): 178-179.

[106] For a counter-example see Franca Iacovetta's article on an anti-fascist activist. "Betrayal, Vengeance, and the Anarchist Ideal: Virgilia D'Andrea's Radical Antifascism in (American) Exile, 1928-1933," *Journal of Women's History* 25, 1 (2013): 85-110.

III. *Femmes immigrantes, à nous la parole!*

In response to political and demographic changes outlined in this dissertation, the discourses around difference shifted in Quebec. In 1981, the provincial government formulized its policy regarding diversity and immigration, publishing *Autant de façons d'être québécois.* The document asserted Quebec's role as a receiving society in its own right, emphasizing the French language as a marker of belonging. *Autant de façons d'être québécois* was published shortly after the enactment of the Charter of the French Language in 1977, and was in fact the precedent to the province's policy of interculturalism, a form of "diversity management," to use the terminology of Raffaele Iacovino and Charles-Antoine Sévigny, similar but distinct from federal multiculturalism. The publication enacted a number of important anti-racist measures, promoting, for example, anti-discriminatory hiring practices in the civil service.[107] As part of the provincial government's increased interest in inter-ethnic relations, the Ministry of Immigration and Cultural Communities created the Table de concertation des femmes immigrées in 1981, bringing together the Conseil du statut de la femme, the Centre d'information et de référence pour femmes, the Ligue des femmes, the Centre social d'aide aux immigrants, the Association personnel domestique, the Fédération des femmes du Québec and the Centro Donne Italiane. The umbrella group organized a conference, *Femmes immigrantes, à nous la parole!*, in order to "create common solutions to specific problems." The mostly foreign-born organizers wished, not only to have their voices heard, but also that the perspectives fostered by such a gathering result in concrete policy

[107] Raffaele Iacovino and Charles-Antoine Sévigny, "Between Unity and Diversity: Examining the 'Quebec Model' of Integration," In *Quebec Studies: Quebec Studies for the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Stéphan Gervain, Christopher Kirkey, and Jarrett Rudy (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2011), 250; Micheline Labelle, *Racisme et antiracisme au Québec. Discours et déclinaisons* (Montreal: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2010), 6.

changes.[108] Indeed, the meeting minutes indicate disappointment vis-à-vis *Autant de facons*, where on one occasion the attendees made a page-by-page list of its shortcomings. According to the Table de concertation, in other words, there was still much work to be done in matters of socioeconomic equality.[109]

During the summer of 1981, the Centro Donne Italiane partook in a series of meetings in order to plan the conference. Isa Iasenza, Antonella Perzia, and Iva Salerio represented the centre on these occasions, hammering out the details alongside other women's groups. During these meetings, participants raised questions, such as, "How to overcome the language barrier? How to ensure proper representation from all communities?"[110] The conference's working document outlined the procedure of the conference, where, for example, workshop leaders were expected to verify the French-language ability of each attendee and, if needed, ensure assistance with translation from another participant. Similarly, animators were to "respect language difficulties," "the rhythm of the participant," "slow down the conversation if necessary," "summarize regularly to ensure comprehension," and "foster the participation of all people present."[111] When Adeline Chancy attended one of the meetings, representing the Comité d'implantation du Plan d'action à l'intention des communautés culturelles (CIPACC), the Haiti House founder was also unhappy to see the lack of funding available for

[108] Colloque Femmes immigrées, à nous la parole, *Femmes immigrées, à nous la parole! Actes du colloque, Montréal, 4, 5, et 6 juin 1982* (Montreal: Direction des communications du Ministère des communautés culturelles et de l'immigration, 1983), 52.
[109] BANQ Vieux-Montréal, Fonds Huguette Lapointe-Roy 1998-04-002/9, File: Femme Immigrante (Table de concertation),"Rencontre des participantes à la Table de concertation sur les femmes immigrantes du 23 avril 1981."
[110] BANQ Vieux-Montréal, Fonds Huguette Lapointe-Roy 1998-04-002/9, File: Femme Immigrante (Table de concertation), "Rencontre des participantes à la Table de concertation sur les femmes immigrantes du 6 avril 1981."
[111] BANQ Vieux-Montréal, Fonds Huguette Lapointe-Roy 1998-04-002/9, File: Table de Concertation. Femmes immigrantes, "Document de travail du colloque."

simultaneous translation. Nevertheless, Chancy was in agreement with the Table de concertation regarding the necessity of limiting the languages of the gathering to French and English. She reiterated her interest in the conference planning, requesting copies of the Table de concertation's meeting minutes.[112] Thus increased state funding arguably enabled immigrant women to encounter each other in a more sustained fashion. The discourses and activities they planned, however, called into question dominant narratives of inclusion and citizenship.[113]

About a month before the conference, the Table de concertation had an extended conversation about panel chairs, debating whether a representative of the Fédération des femmes du Québec should co-preside in order to demonstrate collaboration between immigrant and French Québécois women. After a long conversation, attendees decided on the original format, as they believed that immigrant women might feel more comfortable if they led the conference.[114] Indeed, Italian women, like other immigrant women, experienced a degree of distance vis-à-vis their Montreal-born counterparts. As Assunta Sauro explained to *Des luttes et des rires des femmes*, "Québécois feminists have to overcome the barriers of ignorance, prejudices, and folkloric stereotypes they hold towards immigrant women, understanding the actual conditions of their lives and jobs.[115] When attending FFQ meetings, moreover, Sauro remembered only socializing with other

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[112] BANQ Vieux-Montréal, Fonds Huguette Lapointe-Roy 1998-04-002/9, File: Table de Concertation. Femmes immigrantes, "Compte rendu de la réunion du 18 décembre 1981 de la Table de concertation."
[113] For more on how ethnic elites used multiculturalism see, Franca Iacovetta, "Immigrant Gifts, Canadian Treasures, and Spectacles of Pluralism: The International Institute of Toronto in North American Context, 1950s-1970s," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 31, 1 (2011): 34-73.
[114] BANQ Vieux-Montréal, Fonds Huguette Lapointe-Roy 1998-04-002/9, File: Table de Concertation. Femmes immigrantes, "Compte rendu de la réunion sur la Table de concertation des femmes immigrées du 26 avril 1982."
[115] Dumont and Toupin, *La pensée féministe au Québec*, 645-648.

immigrant women's groups, listing, for example, the South Asian Women's Centre.[116] However, in comparison to other immigrant women, specifically women of colour, Italians and other Southern Europeans seemed to wield greater power within the broader women's movement. While hardly scientific, Danae Savides appeared to be the only name of non-Anglo, Franco or Jewish consonance, save the Quebec's Native Women's Association's Marthe Gill-Dufour in the early 1980s, on the lists of the FFQ's administrative council.[117] The presence of Savides and the Centro Donne within the Table de concertation perhaps indicated the relative ease at which Southern Europeans moved in these predominately White, Francophone or Anglophone feminist spaces. Race matters then, for immigrant women like others.[118]

The conference, held from the 4th to the 6th June in 1982, was an unprecedented gathering of immigrant women leaders. The Table de Concertation sent out invitations to any association claiming to assist immigrant women, thus including the Association of Muslim Women at the University of Montreal and the Congress of Black Women, as well as multi-ethnic associations, such as the *Mouvement québécois pour combattre le racisme*, and immigrant organizations, for example the Haiti House and the Greek Workers' Association. According to the conference proceedings, 198 women attended, from 32 "nationalities" and 52 non-governmental organizations. Whereas 14 of these women declared Québécois as their nationality, the largest pluralities went to women claiming Italian or Haitian background. Attendees discussed the place of immigrant women in the family, in the workforce, and in Quebec society. By the end of the three

[116] Interview with Assunta Sauro.
[117] "Conseil d'administration," *Bulletin de la FFQ*, July 1980, 3.
[118] Ruth Frankenburg, *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness* (London: Routledge, 1993), 11.

days, participants made 110 recommendations to the Ministry of Cultural Communities and Immigration, proposing improved French language training, protection in the workforce, reinforcement of minimum wage laws, recognition of foreign diplomas and qualifications, and more rigid anti-discrimination measures. The conference proceedings, written entirely in French, provide a wealth of information on gathering. Still, "no written document," as explained in the publication, "could translate the joyous atmosphere and the intense work conducted over three days by the participants and the organizers." For these women, the 1980s, rather than being a time of regression or stagnation represented another form of feminist activism, this time based on the category of immigrant women.[119]

These sorts of state-funded, multiracial initiatives provided community-based activists with a wider audience. Danae Savides, a member of the Table de concertation des femmes immigrées and the Conseil du status de la femme (CSF), gave the welcoming address. Born in Egypt to Greek parents, Savides came to Montreal at the age of 11, describing herself as a "hybrid." After protesting against the Vietnam War in high school, Savides was launched into activism after a right-wing military junta took power in Greece in 1967. Because her family was outside of Greece, she could oppose the regime without fear of reprisals. From anti-junta activism, she got involved with the Greek Workers' Association and within this organization formed a women's committee, as she decided that the best way to help her compatriots would be to get involved in social justice work in Montreal.[120] From there, Savides frequented the Communist Party, even though she considered herself more of an anarchist, and eventually became a member of the Ligue

[119] Colloque, *Femmes immigrées, à nous la parole*, 9.
[120] Jacqueline Blouin, "Comment briser l'isolement des immigrantes? Entrevue avec Danae Theodorakopoulos, membre du CSF," *La Gazette des femmes*, February 1982, 8-9.

des femmes, a Marxist women's group. As a "talker," Savides was elected the Ligue's delegate to the meetings of the Fédération des femmes du Québec. There, as she recounted jokingly to the author, she learnt how to "hold her knife and fork properly." Yet Savides looked back on her time with the umbrella organization fondly, especially her role in instituting paid maternity leave in 1979.[121] In fact, she claimed that in all her years of activism, this was the only occasion when her political work had a direct impact on her own life. Because she was pregnant at the time, Savides was then able to take a year off to take care of her first of two daughters. Shortly afterwards, the Greek Montrealer was appointed to the Conseil du Statut de la femme (CSF), hence travelling between Montreal to Quebec City.[122]

In an interview with the author, Danae Savides spoke positively of her experiences with the CSF, however mentioned the maternalistic attitudes she encountered. She was also very much aware that oftentimes she served as the "femme immigrante de service."[123] Nevertheless, Savides persisted; convinced her presence could make a difference. To this end, she stated the following in her opening remarks, at *Femmes immigrantes, à nous la parole!*: "Le stéréotype qui circule sur la femme immigrée est celui d'une femme travaillante mais timide, sans initiative et parfois complètement soumise à son mari. Celles qu'on rencontre qui ne reflètent pas cette image, on les classe comme des exceptions." Although she felt the need to bring together foreign-born women under one organization, as she explained, Savides recognized the particularity of each community's needs at the 1982 conference, specifying that the

[121] FFQ, *Mémoire sur l'avant-projet de loi sur les services de garde à l'enfance* (Montreal: Fédération des femmes du Québec, 1979).
[122] Interview with Danae Savides.
[123] Interview with Danae Savides.

problems faced by Southern Europeans were much different than those confronted by Vietnamese or Latin American women. She also signalled Black immigrant women's triple jeopardy, demonstrating at least awareness on behalf of White foreign-born women of their own racial privilege.[124] Pointing to the importance of representation, Madeleine Valois, the Conseil's secretary, mentioned during her opening address that within this feminist lobbying group, Savides continually made sure that immigrant women's needs on the agenda. In her words: "Je peux vous assurer qu'elle s'agit vraiment comment porte-parole des nouvelles Québécoises au sein du Conseil. Lorsqu'on a tendance à oublier les aspects spécifiques de votre situation, elle s'empresse de nous rappeler à l'ordre.[125] Given the under-representation of immigrant women within mainstream feminist groups, however, the presence of Southern Europeans, albeit still in a minority position, perhaps indicated that they were favoured over women from other backgrounds.

A number of politicians were at the conference as well, giving speeches welcoming delegates and touting the benefits of such a gathering. Pauline Marois, at the time the Minister for the Status of Women, stressed the right of women to difference, and the right of immigrant woman to their cultural difference, proclaiming that diversity was "enriching for everyone." Gerald Godin, immigration minister, evoked his role as a listener, stating that "personne mieux que vous ne peut transmettre au gouvernement et aux divers organismes et institutions du gouvernement des propositions concrètes pour résoudre les problèmes que vous vivez." He mentioned the affirmative actions measures his ministry took to rectify the under-representation of all women, including immigrant women in the civil service. To this end, Godin signalled the presence of Adeline Chancy,

[124] Colloque, *Femmes immigrées, à nous la parole*, 27-30.
[125] *Ibid*, 38.

in the audience during his speech, and her work as a member of the Comité d'implantation du Plan d'action à l'intention des communautés culturelles to ensure that these positive measures were adopted. From a discursive standpoint, Godin's address provided an indication of the shift in self-conception on the part of government authorities vis-à-vis the boundaries of the nation. Significantly, the immigration minister purposely adopted an all-encompassing rhetoric, evoking the "80 nations that make up the population of Quebec." He described the province's ethnic communities in effusive terms, affirming: "Ce qui me frappe toujours, c'est que les immigrants et les immigrantes représentent, on peut dire, les plus beaux joyaux du trésor humain du Québec."[126] The flowery, inclusive language used by Godin contradicted the lived experiences of many of the women in attendance. By hosting *Femmes immigrantes, à nous la parole!*, however, participants were able to modify to narrative, ever so slightly, in a direction more suited to demanding changes at the state level.

The conference was divided into four workshops: immigrant women in the family, in the workplace, in the community, and in Quebec society. In the first session, participants highlighted the difficulty allophone women face in accessing information on family services, women's "double duty," and the marital problems that arose from starting over in a different cultural setting. For the latter, they pointed to the increased possibility of domestic violence, on one hand, and the isolation that came with divorce in a foreign country, on the other. Building off their experience in community settings, attendees proposed to the Minister of Social Affairs and Justice to find a way to maintain family unity.[127] In an interview with the author, Danae Savides explained her divergences

[126] *Ibid*, 38-39.
[127] Colloque, *Femmes immigrées, à nous la parole*, 52, 53.

with French Quebecers on this issue, mentioning that she worked with battered women who, while they wanted their husbands to stops hitting them, did not seek divorce. Rather than making feminism ideological, she explained, Savides advocated listening to women, paying attention to what they wanted.[128] Indeed, as we have seen throughout the dissertation, immigrant women put forth an alternative discourse on the family. In another setting, also in the 1980s, the Congress of Black Women's Yolène Jumelle argued in favour of the multigenerational family, as the most "authentic" and "satisfying" social structure. In both its "heterosexual" and "homosexual forms," the family served as a bulwark against "a dehumanizing modernity," especially in highly "individualistic" industrialized countries. In order to avoid alienation, as Jumelle specified, immigrant families attempted to maintain their culture of origin, resisting the social norms emanating from the State and the school system.[129] Immigrant women then, walked a tightrope.

Femmes immigrantes, à nous la parole!'s recommendations, however, provide ample evidence as to why the tightrope was so thin. In fact, many of the issues discussed throughout this dissertation were evoked in the workshop on the family. For example, attendees sought the means to improve literacy rates within their communities. They asked the Ministry of Education to provide anti-racist training to teachers as well as students, and they sought assistance in finding housing for single mothers. To the Ministry of Health, participants advocated family planning and free abortion on demand. However, they suggested that employees meet with men and women separately, and in their language. Finally, they appealed to the women's movement, asking White

[128] Interview with Danae Savides.
[129] Yolène Jumelle, "Les structures sociales de la famille haïtienne," In *African Continuities/L'heritage African*, eds. Simeon Waliaula Chilangu and Sada Niag (Toronto: Terebi, 1989), 246, 253-255.

Francophone women's organizations to increase the presence of immigrant women within their ranks. They hoped to see the Table de concertation expand, to include more associations.[130] Many of the same themes carried over to the workshop on the workplace. Participants emphasized the lack of resources available to allophones, the majority of whom were women, pointing to the barriers faced by those who spoke neither French nor English. They also demanded that employers recognize foreign qualifications, practice affirmative action and improve conditions in the garment industry.[131] Similarly, they hoped that the government would put into place the means to ensure adequate working conditions for domestic workers, hiring women from the appropriate communities to serve as liaisons, and work to diffuse information on worker's rights in a wide range of languages.[132]

These questions crystallized in the last two workshops on immigrant women vis-à-vis broader society. Firstly, participants made sure to stress that they were speaking on behalf of themselves, and not their entire communities. That said, there were two discernable tendencies, where, on one hand, some participants, especially recent arrivals, aimed to maintain their culture of origin, whereas others demonstrated openness and flexibility. On the whole, however, attendees believed that were perceived in negative terms by their Montreal-born counterparts, and received a cold welcome. Moreover, they felt isolated. This sentiment was compounded by the role they played within their own families and communities, that is, as "cultural guardians." They criticized the mainstream media, for under-estimating the presence and contribution of immigrants, as well as "ethnic media" outlets, for perpetuating a traditional view of womanhood and making it

[130] Colloque, *Femmes immigrées, à nous la parole*, 53-57.
[131] *Ibid*., 59, 60, 63
[132] *Ibid*., 64.

all the more difficult for women to participate in community organizations.[133] Participants recommended, among others, state-sponsored, subtitled television programmes to educate the general public on immigrant women from various countries, curriculum reform to eliminate racial stereotypes, and a popular education programme in order to explain immigration in its "historical context."[134] Throughout the conference, delegates were also able to discuss issues of a more personal, subjective nature. Some women, for example, shared that even if they were born in Montreal, they still felt like immigrants as they were treated as such by broader society, whereas others mentioned that they were constantly reminded of their foreignness. Notions such as "freedom of speech" were highly relative, because once immigrants explained their "real problems," they were treated as "ungrateful." In sum, there was the general impression that foreign-born women had to be "twice as good as Québécois women," and "four times as good as Québécois men" to do well in the workforce.[135]

Sources indicate that these women found the conference liberating, as they were able to speak on their own behalf about the problems they faced in their adopted country. As reported in the *Le Devoir* by Renée Rowan, well known for writing on feminism in Quebec, some attendees felt like first-class citizens for the first time since arriving to Montreal.[136] Because the two groups rarely had the opportunity to interact and discuss their common problems, participants hoped to see another conference, this time, one conceived to build bridges between immigrant and Québécois women.[137] In anticipation

[133] *Ibid*., 65-66.
[134] *Ibid*., 68, 69, 73.
[135] *Ibid*., 70, 72.
[136] Renée Rowan, "Les immigrées veulent une autre rencontre, avec des Québécoises," *Le Devoir*, 8 June 1982. Reprinted in Colloque, *Femmes immigrées, à nous la parole*, 173.
[137] *Ibid*., 58.

of such a gathering, a number of attendees, as reported in the FFQ's *Petite Presse*, adhered to the Fédération des femmes du Québec. As Huguette Lapointe-Roy wrote, "Nous désirons leur souhaiter une bienvenue toute particulière car elles sont une richesse pour la communauté québécoise." "Certains dossiers 'chauds' à la FFQ," as she explained, "sont apparus encore plus brulants pour nos compatriotes d'autres origines."[138] *La Vie en Rose* and *Communiqu'elles* covered *Femmes Immigrees, à nous la parole!* as well, describing the numerous barriers faced by immigrant women in the province.[139] Indeed, during the conference, participants suggested that the CSF's *Gazette des femmes* publish articles on women from other backgrounds.[140] In the months following the conference, however, Maria Antonietta Simoncini and Benedetta Del Balso, reported in the Associazione's *Quaderni Culturali* regarding how they were still waiting for many of the recommendations to take effect, wondering what happened to resolutions when they passed into politicians hands, especially in the 1980s, an budget cuts and austerity, when immigrants were once again perceived as "job stealers."[141] Nevertheless, as evidenced by the Femmes d'ici et femmes d'ailleurs conference organized a year after, immigrant women started to make their needs to broader society, as well as the mainstream women's movement.[142]

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[138] Huguette Lapointe-Roy, "Femmes immigrées, à nous la parole!" *Petite Presse*, February 1983, 17.
[139] "A l'ombre des Québécoises," *La Vie en Rose*, September-October 1982; "Femmes immigrées, à nous la parole!" *Communiqu'elles*, July-August 1982. Reprinted in Colloque, *Femmes immigrées, à nous la parole*, 190-195.
[140] Colloque, *Femmes immigrées, à nous la parole*, 67; See, for example, "Une place pour les femmes des communautés culturelles," *La Gazette des femmes*, September-October 1983, 27; "Le Collectif des femmes immigrants de Montréal." *La Gazette des femmes*, July-August 1985, 31.
[141] Marie Antoniette Simoncini and Benedetta Del Balso, "Colloque sur les femmes immigrantes: changement ou faux espoirs?" *Quaderni Culturali*, 1982, 20.
[142] AFEAS, *Femmes d'ici, femmes d'ailleurs* (Montreal: Association féminine d'éducation et d'action sociale, 1986).

From the beginning until today, the Centro Donne Italiane experienced difficulty collaborating with other Italian associations. Both the past and current directors pointed to the lack of comprehension between them and the male-dominated Italian leadership. The *Corriere Italiano*, however, constituted an important exception in this regard. The newspaper regularly advertised for the centre.[143] Despite an increasingly mainstream status, moreover, progressive Southern Europeans, men and women, maintained a vested interest in immigrant rights. In the words of labour activist Francesco di Feo, speaking in the 1980s, "Today it is the Haitians, yesterday it was the Portuguese, before them it was the Italians, and before them others still."[144] Accordingly, *Quaderni Culturali* translated an important *Collectif Paroles* article, "L'émigration haïtienne, un problème national," into Italian, the latter explaining the neo-colonial political and economic forces at play behind the massive exodus of Haiti's citizens.[145] And Danae Savides, currently the director of the Centre d'intercultures de Laval, who, even after nearly six decades in Canada, still refers to herself as an "outsider," makes sure to only hire immigrants, and work with immigrant-run firms through the organization she directs, because "who else will hire them?"[146] Antiracism then, was frequently defined through the immigration experience, a discourse with possibilities as well as limits. Furthermore, some Italian community leaders deplored the apparent lack of concern their counterparts held toward

[143] Interview with Asssuta Sauro and Pina di Pasquale.
[144] "An Interview with Francesco di Feo," *Ovo Magazine*, 27/28 1977, 14-15.
[145] "L'emigrazione haitiana, un problema nazionale," trans by Cristina Bassi. *Quarderni Culturali*, April-June 1981, 23-26.
[146] Interview with Danae Savides.

more recent newcomers less fortunate than them, pointing to the role the community played in the maintenance of White power and privilege in Montreal.[147]

Indeed, by the 1980s, Italian immigrants and their children acquired a degree of financial security. In 1982, for instance, *Quaderni Culturali* interviewed Italian women who had lost their jobs during a recent wave of textile factory closings. Even though they were affected by the economic downturn, these women were mothers of adult children, men and women who could, or who were already working in the tertiary sector. A woman's lay-off, in other words, did not result in the family's destitution. Their Haitian and Vietnamese colleagues, in contrast, were much more likely to have school age children, and therefore every factory closure meant someone in the community was living an even more precarious existence.[148] Moreover, Italian and Portuguese garment workers were known to favour women from their own communities in hiring practice and the allocation of work, pointing to the relative advantages acquired with a longer stay in the country.[149] Simply put, the position of Southern Europeans in the urban landscape evolved, as Italian Canadians developed a different, egalitarian rapport with broader society while still safeguarding linguistic and cultural specificities.[150] These changes were reflected in the Centro Donne. Currently, the centre is seeking to reach out to the second- and third-generations. While a number of monthly activities, such as self-

[147] Micheline Labelle, Martin Goyette and Martin Paquin, *Intégration économique: le discours de leaders d'origine italienne de la région de Montréal* (Montreal: CRRIR, Département de sociologie, Université du Québec à Montréal, 1993), 47.
[148] Benedetta del Balso, Michele del Baso, Giovanna Spadafora, Sylvie Taschereau, Maria Triguerio, "Dossier. Tra lavoro e disoccupazione. Operaie italiane nell'industria dell'abbigliamento," *Quaderni Culturali* 1, 3-4 (1982): 3-8, 4.
[149] Micheline Labelle, *Histoires d'immigrées : Itinéraires d'ouvrières Colombiennes, Grecques, Haïtiennes et Portugaises de Montréal* (Montreal: Boréal, 1987), 168, 210, 222.
[150] See Da Rosa, V.M.P and R. Poulin. "Espaces ethniques et questions linguistiques au Québec: à propos des communautés italienne et portugaise," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 18, 2 (1986): 143-149.

esteem workshops, are geared toward this demographic, the administration is in the process of trying to determine the needs of these younger women. Mainly for funding purposes, furthermore, the Centro Donne Italiane changed its name last year to Centro donne solidali ed impregnate/Centre des femmes solidaires et engagées. Consequently, the Centro Donne, though still trilingual and Italian, demographically speaking, is in name not attached to a particular community.

Conclusion

This dissertation examined the fractious nature of women's politics in Montreal, as the site of two competing White settler nationalisms. These nationalisms were not an equal footing nor did they achieve anywhere near the same recognition, as illustrated by the fallout from the 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms debate. To the chagrin of major women's organization such as the Fédération des femmes du Québec, Quebec has yet to sign this piece of legislation.[1] Premier René Lévesque opposed the Charter, as it did not protect or honour the province's special rights and distinctiveness. The perception of betrayal on the part of Ottawa vis-à-vis French Quebecers haunts federal-provincial relations to this day. Stated otherwise, Quebec has yet to be included into the Canadian federation on its own terms. For reasons such as these, questions of race and indigeneity remain fraught in Montreal. The past weighs on the present for White Francophones, as the inhabitants of a subordinated settler society. Many of the issues discussed in this dissertation, however, continued well into the 1980s and extend into our present. Although the discursive terrain shifted with the enactment of multiculturalism and interculturalism shifted, anti-racist battles continue to demand attention. Rather than summarizing the major findings of the project then, this conclusion comments on the events of the 1980s with an eye to these questions, that is, race, gender, language, and settler colonialism.

In this dissertation, we saw links between activists such as Anne Cools and Marlene Dixon, Thérèse Casgrain and Mary Two-Axe Earley, as well as Madeleine

[1] FFQ, *Mémoire présenté à la commission sur l'avenir politique et constitutionnel du Québec* (Montreal: La Fédération des femmes du Québec, 1990).

Parent and women's groups of all stripes. Moreover, the Point de ralliement des femmes d'origine haïtienne received assistance from White Francophone feminists, the Haiti's House's Femmes Patriotes attended Berlin's International Women's Year Conference as part of a Quebec-based delegation, the Quebec Native Women's Association maintained close, strategic ties to the Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ), and the Centro Donne Italiane di Montreal eventually became part of the Regroupement des centres des femmes du Québec in 1992. Also, many women in this study attended the FFQ's meetings, making the organization an important point of encounter between Indigenous women, immigrant women, women of colour, and their White, Montreal-born counterparts. With a liberal understanding of gender as well as race, moreover, the FFQ's understanding of feminism pushed its leadership to intervene on behalf of Jamaican domestic servants facing deportation, Kahnawake women facing forced eviction, and foreign-born women constructed as legal dependents vis-à-vis Canadian immigration law.[2]

When compared to the other groups in this study, however, both the FLF and the FFQ presented a feminism that did not fully account for, among other things, racial discrimination. Theirs was a race-blind feminism, placing Black women and Indigenous women, in particular, in a minoritized, marginalized position. In fact, compelling, and arguably more sustaining, cross-cultural solidarities occurred outside of predominately White, Montreal-born organizations. The Congress of Black Women, with its Haitian presence and Francophone chapter, exemplified coalition politics. Congress also reached

[2] http://www.ffq.qc.ca/a-propos/qu'est-ce-que-la-ffq/historique/. "Telegrammes," *Bulletin de la FFQ*, September 1978, 5. For more see Erica Lawson, "The Gendered Working Lives of Seven Jamaican Women in Canada: A Story about 'Here' and 'There' in Transnational Econmy," *Feminist Formations* 25, 1 (2015): 138-156.

out to Indigenous women and Black communities in general included Indigenous peoples in their anti-racist analyses. The QNWA, as well, was a multinational space, with women from all First Nations in Quebec. Similarly, immigrant women increasingly came together by the 1980s. For example, the *Femmes immigrantes, à nous la parole*! conference provided an unprecedented forum for foreign-born women. Despite a general turn to conservatism and backlash then, multiracial feminism flourished in the 1980s and into the 1990s, pointing to a re-periodization of the so-called "second-wave" women's movement.[3] Much more research needs to be conducted, however, on the rapport between White women and women of colour within these organizations.

In short, the Quebec Native Women's Association, the Congress of Black Women, the Maison d'Haïti, the Centro Donne and all the parallel organizations within which women were involved and valued, were self-affirming, self-recognizing political homes, sites of resistance, and social milieus. In a sometimes cold and unwelcoming environment, marginalized women from various walks of life fostered their own sense of belonging. The organizations they spearheaded were not separate from the Canadian, Québécois, and Montreal women's movements but rather part of its internal dynamic. "Minority" histories, when made visible, are often mistakenly read as particularistic or narrow. Yet, as we have seen here, marginalized women's feminist discourses were in fact more all-encompassing, deeper analyses of social inequalities that included but were not limited to sexism. In particular, Indigenous women's calls for anti-partriarchal decolonization and Black women's thinking through of "race-gender-class" as well as

[3] Becky Thompson, "Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave Feminism," In *No Permanent Waves. Recasting Histories of U.S. Feminism*, ed. Nancy A. Hewitt (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 48. This is Becky Thompson's argument as related to the United States, however it this assertion in line with my findings as well.

overseas imperialism called into question the very structural foundations of Quebec and Canada. No discussion on feminism then, can exclude the needs and priorities of women on the margins and still call itself radical. Tellingly, members of these organizations reached out to other women who shared their social location. Should the study take on another form, the author, at the risk of sounding presumptuous, hopes to conduct more oral histories in order to further uncover the coalitions between marginalized women, as they help us to productively understand differences between women, both historically and into our present.

After the failure of the final First Ministers' Conference on Aboriginal Self-Government in 1987, Indigenous peoples' organizing entered a new stage. In this fateful year, chiefs from across Canada officially endorsed the concept of direct action to assert their land rights and sovereignty.[4] During the constitutional debates, it should be noted, the Quebec Native Women's Association consistently submitted briefs stressing the importance of gender equality and self-government.[5] Assembly of First Nations lawyer Mary Ellen Turpel, however, opposed the Native Women's Association of Canada during the 1992 constitutional process, demonstrating the ongoing debate among women vis-à-vis legal issues.[6] For Kahnawake Mohawks, the ongoing constitutional matters were paired with the Oka Crisis of 1990. Although beyond the scope of this epilogue - and by no means done justice here - the events at Kahnesatake and Kahnawake spoke to

[4] Geoffrey York and Loreen Pindera, *People of the Pines: The Warriors and the Legacy of Oka* (Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, Ltd., 1991), 279.
[5] QNWA, *Federal-Provincial Conference: Aboriginal Constitutional Matters. Statement by the Quebec Native Women's Association on Aboriginal Self-Government*. Toronto, Ontario, June 5-6, 1985 (N.P., 1985).
[6] Jo-Anne Fiske, "The Womb is to the Nation as the Heart to the Body: Ethnopolitical Discourses of the Canadian Indigenous Women's Movement," *Studies in Political Economy* 51 (1996): 65-95, 72.

much broader questions on land, membership, and nationalist discourses. From the beginning, women were involved and even led the blockade in defence of their territory. In the words Audra Simpson, "They did this regardless of blood quantum, clan or reserve."[7] Indeed, women on both sides of the debate on article 12(1)(b) defended the Mohawk communities' stance during this tumultuous summer. At the time a public servant in Ottawa, Kahn-Tineta Horn, for example, went behind the barricades.[8] Regardless of which side of the latter they were on, women played a commanding and essential role. Once the community started to experience food shortages, the Quebec Native Women's Association set up a depot in Montreal, which was quickly swamped by donations. Due to the lack of provisions, Kahnawake's restaurants became communal kitchens where women volunteered to cook and deliver food to the warriors, and men made trips from kitchen to kitchen in all-terrain vehicles, picking up the meals and driving them to the barricades.[9] These are only a few examples, highlighting the extent to which Indigenous women were willing to go to defend their lands and communities.

By melding anti-racist with anti-colonial concerns, Black women, in particular, continued their long history of transnational engagement well into the 1980s. Although beyond the scope of this dissertation, a few women in this study, as we saw with Aura Bizzari in chapter 6, traveled to Nairobi in 1985 to attend the 3rd UN World Conference on Women. In fact, a record 40 percent of these participants were women of colour and

[7] Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham: Durham University Press, 2014), 50.
[8] York and Pindera, *People of the Pines*, 377.
[9] *Ibid.*, 238, 271; *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance*, DVD. Directed by Alanis Obomsawin (Montreal: National Film Board of Canada, 1993).

immigrant women.[10] Representatives from the Congress of Black Women and the Ad Hoc Committee of Haitian Women commented on the empowering effects of the Kenyan gathering, and how this positively influenced their activism back home. As Glenda Simms stated in the Congress newsletter: "The women of the Third World … made us proud to be part of an international sisterhood. Most importantly, they affirmed the strength of the black women and the legacy of their foremothers. As we move forward to the next decade, we can take pride in our accomplishments individually and collectively. We can continue to invoke our ancestral spirits in our efforts to gain justice and equality in the Canadian society." The president of the Congress of Black Women also wrote that, "The challenge of Nairobi is for North American women to recognize their role in the elimination of inequalities at all levels –the unequal relationships between men and women, the inequalities between those who have and those who have not; the inequalities within nations, and the unequal economic and political relationship that pit nation against nation."[11] The Ad Hoc Committee of Haitian Women, consisting of Diaspora women from Montreal and New York, similarly commented on the arrogance and ethnocentrism exhibited by Western feminists.[12] "Global feminism" then, remained a sharply divided, yet very real, phenomenon.

[10] Ruth Roach Pierson and Marjorie Griffin Cohen, *Canadian Women's Issues*. Volume 2, Bold Visions (Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1995), 369. The author has yet to come across a comparable statistic for Indigenous women.
[11] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 2, File 13: Congress of Black Women of Canada (Dorothy Willis delegate to the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women March 1987) (2-13) *Congress News* Vol. 1 No.1 January 1986, "From the President."
[12] Le comité ad hoc des femmes haïtiennes, *La femme haïtienne en diaspora* (Montreal: Centre international de documentation et d'information haïtienne, caribéenne, et afro-canadienne, 1986), 5.

By the 1980s, many of the women in this study engaged more directly with governmental authorities, in addition to maintaining close ties with community-based organizations. This dual involvement was not without tensions. Shortly after her term ended with the CIPACC,[13] Adeline Chancy, for example, expressed her dissatisfaction with the end results. In a policy brief written on behalf of the Haiti House in 1984, Chancy criticized the provincial government's action plan in matters of integration as it relied upon a "neutral," "asceptized" terminology where "ethnic groups" were referred to as "cultural communities, erasing all racial connotation." More specifically, *Autant de façons d'être Québécois* made no overt reference to racial prejudice, avoiding the word "racism" or even "Black." For Chancy, this choice was not "innocent." Rather it reflected "a minimizing if not a negation of problems stemming from interracial relations." The challenges relating to integration, or lack thereof, were identified as the result of "language barriers or cultural barriers." Never once, as Chancy specified, was racial discrimination mentioned, a reality that affected Indigenous populations and "the so-called visible minority communities, especially the Black populations" and by extension Black women. The latter, according to Chancy, were subjected to "specific form of discrimination." The publication's elision of racism consequently raised the ire of the Montreal Regional Committee of the Congress of Black Women, whose president, as Chancy wrote in the same report, denounced the complete absence of the Anglophone Black Quebecers and their struggles, in particular. Adeline Chancy therefore stressed the importance of "naming racism" in the same brief."[14]

[13] *Comité d'implantation du Plan d'action à l'intention des communautés culturelles*.
[14] Adeline Magloire Chancy, *Faut-il nommer le racisme?* (Montreal: Centre international de documentation et d'information haïtienne, caribéenne, et afro-canadienne, 1984), 1-8.

As we know, individuals can hold "multiple identities" simultaneously, however it is not entirely coincidental that Chancy, a Francophone, was involved in anti-racist measures at the Quebec-level, whereas Dorothy Wills, a prominent member of the predominately English-speaking, National Black Coalition of Canada and the Congress of Black Women in the 1970s, sat on the Canadian Consultative Committee for Multiculturalism, also in the early 1980s. Nevertheless, their critiques were strikingly similar. More specifically, Dorothy Wills purposely and consciously described Canadian society as "multicultural/multiracial." At a 1985 conference, however, Wills presented a paper where she argued that "visible minorities" remained "invisible Canadians" in multicultural rhetoric. For Wills: "We feel that it is only when the term multicultural/multiracial is used that the entire Canadian population is acknowledged and described." Referring to section 27 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Wills wrote, "In its strictest sense, multiculturalism can be effectively practiced in a monoracial environment. Yet, we know that Canadian society is not only multicultural, but has been multiracial for several hundred years. So, we worry about the omission."[15] Black peoples and people of colour therefore disappeared from official forms of pluralism, the latter ostensibly anti-racist.

This "narrative transfer," to use Lorenzo Veracini's terminology, occurred under multiculturalism as well as interculturalism and hence harkens back to David Austin's concept of "narratives of power."[16] These logics were particularly insidious via-à-vis

[15] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 8, Folder 36, "The Evolving Status of Non-White Minorities in Quebec: Visible or Invisible Presence by the Year 2000? Delivered to the 13th Congress of the International Society for Intercultural Education, Training, and Research 15-21 May 1987; LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 8, Folder 17, "Visible Minorities –Invisible Canadians?" by Dorothy Willis, paper presented to the Child Welfare League of America Conference June 12-14, 1985.
[16] David Austin, "Narratives of Power: Historical Mythologies in Contemporary Québec and Canada," *Race Class* 52, 1 (2010): 19-32.

Indigenous peoples. Whereas Quebec's policy "collapses indigenous autonomy within exogenous alterity" by ignoring settler colonialism and denying the historical and contemporary presence of people colour, Canada's strategy accomplishes the same misrepresentation.[17] In the words of Sherene Razack, "If Aboriginal peoples are consigned forever to an earlier space and time, people of colour are scripted as late arrivals, coming to the shores of North America long after much of the development has occurred."[18] Or as Adeline Chancy wrote in her 1984 brief, "Si bien qu'un lecteur non averti serait en droit d'imaginer qu'il n'existe pas de population noire au Québec. La référence qui y est faite aux Haïtiens, population d'immigration récente, ne saurait suffire à rendre compte de la réalité complexe des communautés noires au Québec et au Canada."[19] The Fédération des femmes du Québec along with other women's groups also expressed their discontent with federal multiculturalism, for reasons, discussed at great length in other venues, related to French Quebecers' self-conception as a nation rather than an ethnic group.[20] Because they are not explicitly anti-racist ideologies then, multiculturalism and interculturalism did not provide the means for the major discursive shift necessary for decolonization or racial justice. White Francophones also occupied a tenuous place in multicultural rhetoric, even if Quebec's legislation in matters of integration and on the ground reality left many dissatisfied.

Overall then, anti-racist battles, though operating on a different discursive terrain, were by no means over after the enactment of official multiculturalism and

[17] Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 43.
[18] Sherene Razack, *Race, Space, and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2002), 3.
[19] Chancy, *Faut-il nommer le racisme?*, 2.
[20] Kenneth McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada: The Struggle for National Unity* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997), 117-136.

interculturalism, and women continued to play an integral on these fronts. For instance, Dorothy Wills entered the public debate on the rapport between the police and marginalized communities in Montreal, advocating for sensitivity training and increased representation.[21] By highlighting change, as well as continuity, Wills, who as we saw in chapter 3 was involved in the 1960s battle to integrate the taxi industry, weighed in on the same problem in the 1980s.[22] Université de Montréal sociologist Selma Bilge ties the macro- and micro-aggressions directed toward people of colour to broader issues linked to national belonging in Quebec where questions such as *Where are you from?* or the practice of racial profiling delineates insiders and outsiders. [23] Significantly, accentless European descended Montrealers of recent immigrant extraction were spared these indiginities, pointing to their inclusion in the nation(s) both in terms of the material reality of daily life as well as at the state-level, with the enactment of interculturalism and multiculturalism. The streets of Montreal then, remain contested. Language politics continue to shade all aspects of life, as bilingualism is an important lever of social mobility. The category of Francophone, however, was and is now increasingly multiracial, highlighting the need for deeper analyses on social inequality in the metropolis.

[21] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 8, File 8-2, Dorothy Wills, "Panel Discussion-Finding Solutions Together-Police and Minorities in Montreal." Hotel du Parc, 3625 Avenue du Parc, 5-6 December 1985.
[22] LAC, Dorothy Wills Fonds, MG 31 H179 Volume 5, File: National Black Coalition of Canada –Dorothy Willis' address to the NBCC 1982, 1984 "Keynote Address, University of Winnipeg, Prepared and Delivered by Dorothy Wills, June 1984."
[23] Silma Bilge, " '…alors que nous, Québécois, nos femmes sont égales a nous et nous les aimer ainsi': la patrouille des frontières au nom de l'Egalite de genre dans la 'nation' en quête de souveraineté," *Sociologie et sociétés* 42, 1 (2010): 197-228, 200.

Questions regarding racial discrimination carried into the women's movement. The Collectif des femmes immigrantes, for example, placed racism in the taxi industry and housing sector squarely on the agenda, perhaps because of its strong Haitian cohort.[24] Still, multiracial organizing–and from here we can extrapolate- took considerable work and negotiation. For instance, Anna Caputo, a community organizer of Italian extraction, asserted that immigrants, should they unify, had the potential to constitute a "third force." She listed a number of groups, including the Collectif.[25] While certainly, or even potentially, well intentioned, this sort of rhetoric elided differences. In another feminist milieu, Glenda Simms, the President of the Congress of Black Women in the mid-80s, objected to the use of the terms "immigrant and visible minority women" within the National Action Committee on the Status of women, arguing that it did not adequately foreground the problem of racism.[26] Furthermore, White immigrant women within this organization reportedly refused to accept leadership from women of colour.[27] In short, the category of immigrant women was inherently divided and unstable.

There was still a sense of "nous" and "les autres," as exemplified by the controversy surrounding Lise Payette's *Disparaitre*. "Les autres," however, were now understood as people of colour. The documentary implied that the Quebec nation was

[24] Adeline Chancy, "Femmes immigrantes et politiques gouvernementales," *Collectif Paroles*, March-April 1984, 25-26. Prejudice in the housing and taxi industry was major focuses of the Haitian community's anti-racism. See, for example, Collectif des femmes immigrantes du Québec, *Compte-rendu du rassemblement des femmes immigrantes du Québec* (Montreal: Collectif des femmes immigrantes du Québec, 1990), 22-24.
[25] Anna Caputo, "Tendances au regroupement des communautés ethniques," In *Animation et culture en mouvement: fin ou début d'une époque?*, eds. Paul Bélanger, Benoit Lévesque, Réjean Mathieu, Franklyn Midy (Quebec City: Les Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1987), 137-141.
[26] Cited in Mary-Jo Nadeau, "The Making and Unmaking of a 'Parliament of Women': Nation, Race and the Politics of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women" (1972-1992)," (PhD Dissertation, York University, 2005), 278.
[27] Ghila Stroka, *Femmes Haïtiennes: Paroles de Négresses* (Montreal: Éditions de La Parole Métèque, 1995), 118.

losing ground within the Canadian federation, not only vis-à-vis the English-speaking majority, due to its low birth rate, but also because of insufficient measures to assist immigrants in learning French. While couched in terms of language, it relied heavily on racist imagery and underlying messages. Once Payette was appointed as the figurehead to the Les 50 heures du féminisme conference, organized by Relais-Femmes to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of suffrage legislation, a number of immigrant groups threatened to boycott. The decision was not reversed, pushing these women to refuse to participate.[28] The Payette controversy juxtaposed against, for example, the presence of women in leadership positions at the Maison d'Haïti, makes one wonder if women of colour did not have better luck working through gender issues in anti-racist settings rather than multi-racial, women-only settings. In fact, women all over North America may have had this experience.[29]

In part as a response to the Payette debacle, the Collectif des femmes immigrantes organized a conference, entitled *A la recherche de l'équité raciale.* The organization saw the gathering as a well-thought out approach to contemporary tensions. The tone was conciliatory, as the Collectif promoted dialogue, striving to create a climate where immigrants, people of colour and French Quebecers could engage in frank and meaningful discussion. Indeed, over 200 people from a range of backgrounds attended the conference, coming as representatives of organizations and as individuals.[30] In an eloquent address, Juanita Westmoreland-Traoré, speaking as the president of the Conseil

[28] Diane Lamoureux, "The Paradoxes of Quebec Feminism," In *Quebec Questions: Quebec Studies for the Twenty-First Centur*y, ed. Stéphan Gervais, Christopher Kirkey, and Jarrett Rudy (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2011), 316.
[29] Maythee Rojas, *Women of Colour and Feminism* (Berkeley: Seal Press, 2009), 27.
[30] Collectif des femmes immigrantes, *A la recherche de l'équité raciale: compte-rendu du colloque tenu les 19 et 20 mai 1990 à l'Université du Québec à Montréal* (Montreal: Collectif des femmes immigrantes du Québec, 1991), 8, 12.

des communautés culturelles et de l'immigration, evoked her friendship with Madeleine Parent, who she referred to as one of her "spiritual guides" and as someone who she frequently phoned for advice. By first stressing the importance of mutual understanding, the experienced human rights lawyer then broached the topic of tension within the women's movement, explaining, "Nous ne pouvons pas toujours, nous en tant que femmes des communautés culturelles, séparer nos appartenances en tant que femmes et en tant que membres des groups ethniques, culturels, et confessionnels. C'est-à-dire que nous avons au fond, une identité multiple et en même temps une identité simple." Therefore, Westmoreland-Traoré hoped that participants would be able to share and exchange their diverse experiences with the goal of forwarding the struggle for racial justice.[31]

After Juanita Westmoreland-Traoré, Madeleine Parent took the stage on behalf of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. True to her labour roots, Parent asserted that racism did not benefit the general population but rather capitalist interests, as a divided workforce made for weak resistance to exploitation. Significantly, Parent outlined the dispossession of Indigenous peoples, where they were pushed out from the best, most valuable land, that is, along the St. Lawrence, after the European conquest. Parent also referred to the battle to amend article 12 (1)(b), indicating her close ties to Kahnawake and the Quebec Native Women's Association. She stated that "Dans cette Loi sur les indiens, on a statue que la merveilleuse égalité entre les hommes et les femmes qui existait chez les tribus aborigènes devaient disparaitre." In the same speech, Madeleine Parent tackled the acrimony surrounding "Femmes en Tête," expressing her

disappointment over the lack of cultural sensitivity exhibited by the organizers.[32] Anti-racist White women such as Parent therefore had a key role to play in feminist spaces. While the Collectif believed that certain struggles should be led and defended by immigrant women, its members sought ties with their Montreal-born counterparts, in a manner, however, that respected the differences between them.[33] The same conclusions could be extended to Indigenous women as well as marginalized women from all walks of life. In part in response to these tensions, the Fédération des femmes du Québec adopted the *Québec féminin au pluriel* platform. While not a paradigm shift, the conference nevertheless started a critical process of self-reflection, the latter necessary for any veritably inclusive social movement. [34]

This period in Quebec and Canadian women's history has been the subject of numerous documentaries, popular histories, and some scholarly research. However, very few of these accounts fully portray the contributions of Indigenous women, Black women, women of colour, and immigrant women from a range of countries to the resurgence of feminist activism or other social movements. It goes without saying that much more research needs to be done in this regard. In our current neo-racist, neo-liberal era, writing a critical history of this period is imperative in order to avoid the instrumentalization of "feminism" for dubious purposes or White feminist apathy in the

[32] Collectif, *A la recherche de l'équité raciale*, 14-16.
[33] Collectif des femmes immigrantes du Québec, *Femmes immigrantes du Québec: L'enjeu des années 90*. (Montreal: Collectif des femmes immigrantes du Québec, 1990), 70.
[34] Lamoureux, "The Paradoxes of Quebec Feminism," 316; Colette Beauchamp, Rosette Côté, Sylvie Paquerot, *Forum pour un Québec féminin pluriel* (Montreal: Éditions Écosociété, 1994); For example, the FFQ conducted a consultation in 1993 where a representative from the Centre haïtien d'action familiale stated the following, "Les femmes des minorités culturelles sont très courtisées à l'heure actuelle, on se sent parfois utilisées. Je ne vois pas de contenu (pour nous) nulle part." See BANQ-Vieux Montréal, Fédération des femmes du Québec, P587, S8, SS3, D1, Michèle Roy, "Synthèse de la consultation de la Fédération des Femmes du Québec. Printemps 1993," 7.

face of racial and colonial oppression. For immigrant women, the logic of integration, seemingly immune to thinking about structural barriers and institutional racism, remains insidious. The latter, it seems, are caught between combatting sexism and propping up racialized understandings of patriarchy.[35] In fact, while historically both related and distinct, settler and imperial colonialisms appear to be moving closer together, as exhibited by current, gendered debates on the Islamic veil and blackface, combined with the federal government's inaction regarding missing and murdered Indigenous women.[36] Historians have a key role to play in understanding the changes and continuities between these two phenomena across time.

[35] Homa Hooftar, "The Veil in Their Minds and On Our Heads: The Persistence of Colonial Images of Muslim," *RFR/ DRF* 22, 3-4 (1993): 5-18, 13-16; Farida Osmani, "L'égalité pour toutes?: l'engagement féministe et les droits des immigrantes au Québec," *Recherches féministes* 15, 2 (2002): 141-151.
[36] For more on neo-racism as a postcolonial and transnational trope see Étienne Balibar, "Is There a Neo-Racism?" In *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, eds. Étienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein (London and New York: Verso, 1991), 17-28; Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*, 2.

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Marco Micone
Assunta Sauro
Pina di Pasquale
Vivian Barbot

b) Focus Group, hosted by the Centro Donne Italiane di Montreal

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