CONFERENCE CONNECTIONS:
IDENTITY, IDEOLOGY AND INSTITUTIONS
IN THE CONGRESS OF BLACK WOMEN OF CANADA (CBWC), 1973-2003

By

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Abstract

The Congress of Black Women of Canada (CBWC) is a social movement organization that has represented the interests of black women in this country for more than three decades at both the national and local level. While black Canadian feminist scholars have started to explore women's organizations, the CBWC's organizing efforts is missing from the feminist record. This study seeks to redress this gap by using an integrative black Canadian feminist synthetic and interpretive organizational model of movements to document the CBWC's identities, ideologies and institutions between 1973 and 2003. Focusing on its activities, this study uses organizational documents and semi-structured interviews with 22 organizational leaders and 5 rank-and-file members to analyze the CBWC's campaigns concerning discrimination, sexism, education, youth, immigration and the woman's movement. Given the CBWC's focus on black women and their families, understanding how its members used their identities, ideologies and institutions as critical categories to interpret their experiences is a particular concern. To this end, this study argues that the categories of identities, ideologies and institutions shapes the women's sense of themselves as mothers, activists, professionals and the CBWC's work against oppression. More importantly, at the heart of the CBWC's struggles for securing equality and social justice lay issues of great importance related to community development and social change.

The data confirm four key findings. First, the conferences of the CBWC are mechanisms or vehicles for establishing the priorities for empowerment and authentic community engagement. In actual and symbolic terms the conferences seek to establish the priorities of identities, institutions and ideologies. Second, the findings indicate that identities are shaped by institutions. That is, black Canadian women's consciousness is influenced by the family, community organizations and their own respective woman's movement. Third, the findings show that institutions mediate the impact of ideologies on identities. Institutionalization is the objectification of the ideological, in terms of both its content and emotion, providing a place for the projection of the collective through the manifold, ever changing interpenetrations of culture and consciousness. By formalizing representations ambiguity becomes attenuated. Moreover, institutionalizing a movement affirms and extends the ability of members to self express and self–actualize. Indeed, institutions are particular ways of structuring and articulating experience. As this study argues, an institution is linked to ideologies. The institution becomes just as ideological as identity. Fourth, this study demonstrates that the relationship between identities and ideologies is filtered through organizational structures. As the organization becomes more institutionalized with formal rules, divisions of hierarchy, specialization of tasks, the movement is perceived as more embedded. Although the original mission and vision are still in place, the focus on that which brings black feminists into the organization is gradually attenuated. In time, this situation presents itself as an opportunity to reposition and return the movement to its base. Therefore, this work addresses a critical gap in the literature on black Canadian women's organizations.

Dedication

For my mentor – Dr Livy Visano

Thank you for being the best advisor and teacher I have ever known. Many of the ideas for my theoretical framework and methodology were first articulated in your PhD dissertation and later your (1987) book, This Idle Trade, Concord: Vita Nova.

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Abbreviations

CANEWA	Canadian Negro Women's Association
CBWC/CONGRESS	Congress of Black Women of Canada
NCBW	National Congress of Black Women
NCC	National Congress Committee
NS	National Secretariat
CWC	Coloured Women's Club
BUF	Black United Front
HDSC	Hour-A-Day Study Club

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION: LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

In May 1972, Kathleen "Kay" Livingstone, Eugenie Allen, Aileen Williams and Verda Cook, members of the Canadian Negro Women's Association (CANEWA), met to discuss the organizing of a national conference that would provide a space of encounter regarding issues affecting black women and their families. In the next eleven months, these four women headed a steering committee called the national Congress of Black Women (CBWC). The purpose of the CBWC committee was to establish a theme for the conference, plan topics for the workshops and cultivate relationships with community leaders, organizations, activists and newspapers to publicize the event. In April 1973, these women launched the first national CBWC conference at the Westbury Hotel in Toronto. As will be detailed, at the conference workshops, delegates responded to black women's concerns by passing a number of declarations relating to education, immigrant female, black youth and education, race and gender issues. The conference concluded with the CBWC generating a series of resolutions that focussed on institutional and systemic changes that were needed in order to address interlocking systems of oppression in Canadian society. Building on the momentum created by the 1973 conference, these women worked tirelessly for the next three decades planning conferences, workshops and activities that promoted black Canadian feminist identities, ideologies, institutions and addressed topics of fundamental concern to black women and their families.

The Congress of Black Women of Canada (CBWC) is a national organization

with a socio-political and economic orientation. The CBWC continued with vigour throughout the 2000s. According to its constitution, the CBWC sought i) to provide a network of solidarity for black women in Canada; ii) to be a united voice in the defence and extension of human rights and liberties for black women in Canada; and, iii) to plan and implement programs that facilitate the intellectual growth, self-confidence, social responsibility, political action and economic independence of black women (Constitution, n.d., p1). This registered non-profit organization enjoys a network of local chapters in eight provinces. Since its inception, the CBWC is part of the woman's movement which included a broad spectrum of cultural organizations, women's groups, black feminists, the United Nations women's section, small businesses and community organizations. The organization has maintained a social network that extends beyond its membership and consists of approximately three hundred people across Canada who receives information related to human rights, health, racism, sexism, youth and employment through conferences, letters, phone call and email.

Indubitably, the CBWC is important to feminism and the women's movement for many reasons. Accordingly, this study proffers detailed evidence regarding the significance of the CBWC and its conferences. The organization was one of the few sparks that ignited the debates concerning the status of black women in Canada. The first national conference opened up long overdue spaces for black women to address their experiences with discrimination. Black women argued that many of the prevailing debates regarding the status of women including the need to lobby for government policies that would increase the representation of women in public life, failed to address their specific concerns. They championed the social justice concerns of their

communities as mothers, daughters, feminists, lawyers, educators and activists. The CBWC devoted an inordinate amount of time to a range of social and political issues from immigration, racism, sexism, police brutality, employment to health. Informed by the historical silencing of black women, from 1973 to 2003 the CBWC was determined to voice publicly both the legacies of their predecessors and mobilize the much needed political action to address contested issues about social justice, notably the lingering racism and discrimination in Canadian society.

Purpose

This study examines the identities, ideologies and institutions of the CBWC during the period of 1973-2003. Drawing on an analysis of the activities, the socio-political and economic contexts that shaped the organization's trajectory, I argue that the rise of the CBWC marked the beginnings of organized work among black women against exploitation. More importantly, at the heart of black women's struggles were issues of great importance to community development and social change. Within this narrative of a social organization of a movement, there are various forms that typically plot biographies and relationships. They included different features of:

(1) the initial "getting connected" or "becoming" stage which involves various aspects of exposure, exploration, entry (recruitment or induction), trial and initiation, or training and apprenticeship;

(2) the "staying connected" or "being" established in roles that concerns the maintenance of identity, achievement, stability and clarification and also advancement, promotion or specialization;

(3) the "disconnecting" or decline stage of a movement pursuit characterized by graduation, expulsion, termination, retirement as well as transformation, conversion or greater induction into another orientation (Visano, 1988). Sociologically, this work further delves into the above stages by exploring the impact of the contingencies of *identities*, *institutions* and *ideologies*. The social organization of a black Canadian feminist movement in terms of the above emergent and generic concepts enable a more precise inquiry into the prevailing units of analysis -- *actors*, *activities* and *setting* that provide a theoretical and substantive coherence to a number of research questions.

This dissertation addresses four sets of related questions. First, how did the CBWC emerge? What were the social and political events that influenced the development of CBWC (role of ideology)? Second, how connected was the activism of the leaders and rank-and-file membership of the CBWC with the aspirations of black women and their families (role of identity)? Third, what precipitated and predisposed the formation of a more formal organization (role of institutions)? How is the relationship between culture/ideology (first question) and consciousness/identity (second question) mediated by institutions? Fourth, how significant were the conferences beyond providing obvious empirical sites for connecting interests? How was this setting a catalyst for actors to come together, to discuss and act upon a plethora of pressing issues? Essentially, these four specific concerns are related to the following general question: What transformed the activities of CBWC members at different stages of the movement?

Conceptually informed by an integrative black Canadian feminist synthetic and organizational model of movements and methodologically drawing upon the

organization's documentary evidence, interviews with twenty- two organizational leaders and five rank-and-file members and participant observation, this study analyzes the identities, ideologies and institutions of the CBWC from 1973 to 2003. Focusing on the activities of the CBWC, as operationalized in the conferences, this study details the campaigns of black women in confronting relentlessly issues of discrimination, sexism, education, youth, immigration, sexuality and the woman's movement. An integrative black Canadian feminist synthetic and organizational model of movements is not only appropriate given the mandate of the CBWC with its focus on black women but also because of the contributions of black feminist thought in understanding how interlocking systems of race, class and gender are critical categories for interpreting experiences. More importantly, grounding the CBWC's struggles for securing equality and social justice is a commitment to authentic community development and social change, a praxis completely consistent with black feminist thought.

The CBWC's story has not been told and this dissertation seeks to rectify the lack of knowledge about a social history that mobilized Canadians from the perspectives of black women and their families. The detailed data demonstrate how the CBWC responded to the experiences of black women by providing remedies that strive to eradicate discrimination in education, employment, immigration and policing. Although the CBWC met substantial resistance and silence from various institutions as well as the government from 1973 to 2003, the organization succeeded in increasing participation among the members of their constituency and succeeded in using government consultations as a channel for influencing policy-making.

While a few studies of women's organizations mention the CBWC, they do not

provide detailed analyses of factors that motivated their activism (Agnew, 1996; Dua, 1999). The motivations of its leaders and general membership shape the identities, ideologies and institutions of the organization. Accordingly, this investigation examines the rich accounts justifying one's participation in the CBWC, a theme that has generally been overlooked in previous studies. The data provide striking evidence of the overwhelming opinion of black women who felt that the majority of women's and community organizations in Canada have failed to deliver their promise of greater diversity. As Roberta Hamilton (2004) notes:

> From the beginning, the women's movement in Canada was never a single organization, and much of it was never organized in the traditional sense ... Aboriginal women, black women and women in various cultural groups had formed organizations to serve their members, fight discrimination and gain state support for services. Increasingly women of colour revealed publicly the racist practices and assumptions that came cloaked in the language of universal sisterhood (p. 46).

Black women felt that the CBWC was attractive because it encouraged them to define their status and to think about how to use their participation as a means of defending that status.

Several reasons shape my interest in the CBWC. Black Canadian women have had a rich but unrecognized history of organizing movements. Historically they have participated in antislavery protests, mutual aid societies, benevolent associations, literary clubs and church organizations—all resisting oppression in Canadian society. I have consciously focused on how CBWC members countered racial and gender

ideologies that ignored the presence and contributions of black Canadian women's organizations. I addressed the possibilities that this failure reflected the misguided belief that to be Canadian was to be white and that research on women's organizations reinforced this image. The presence of the CBWC disrupted definitions of Canadianess, since it underscored how race and gender served as organizing principles of a society viewed by fugitive slaves, United Empire Loyalists, refugees and free blacks as a land of freedom. The CBWC, initiated as a movement and later as an institution, not only addressed fundamental issues of social justice but provided a programme of action. The CBWC became a consistent voice in a public sphere where many black Canadian women's organizations had ventured before.

The foci of black women's activities within a national organization addressed the bias in the literature about black organizations in Canada generally and about black Canadian women specifically. On the one hand, the social movement literature on black women tends to focus primarily on African American women. On the other hand, the studies on the Canadian women's movement pay no or relatively little attention to black women's organizations. This inquiry's focus is on a national organization where hitherto neglected groups of black women played a significant role. This study supports those attempts by contemporary feminists to establish the presence of a black Canadian feminist literature. To fill the existing gap in that area of scholarship, sociologists (e.g., Agnew, 1996; Calliste, 1996), historians (e.g., Bristow et al., 1994; Carty 1991; Cooper, 2002) and feminists (Brand, 1999; Dua, 1999; Robertson, 1999; Wane et al., 2002) have made initial inroads into exploring the lives and contributions of individual black Canadian women. Some black Canadian feminists have worked on giving detail to the

complexity of women's lives across various time periods, utilizing multiple theoretical frameworks and methodologies to demonstrate how black women have established a foundation for black feminist theory that acknowledges roots in Canada via the United States, South America, Europe, Africa and the Caribbean. While their research has made great contributions to our knowledge of black Canadian women's lives, black women's organizations have received less attention. In the case of the CBWC, while some researchers have discussed organizational activity by women of colour in several cities (see, for instance, Agnew, 1996; Dua, 1999; Flynn, 2003; Srivastava, 2002), the present study will go into much greater detail when comparing the CBWC with similar organizations and movements. Inspired by black Canadian scholars who have written about black women's experiences, this examination of the CBWC is fundamental to both black Canadian feminist scholarship and to a social history of an organizational movement mobilized by black feminists.

The following sections provides a literature review and a theoretical framework that grounds an analysis of the subsequent analysis of the internal dynamics (ideologies, identities, institutions, leadership, organizational structure, objectives) and external contexts (social and political landscape, economy, funding) that shaped the CBWC.

Literature Review

Women's Organizing in the Context of Social Movement Theory

To expand our discussion, this study draws on the literature on social movements and gender. Although linking gender to social movement theory is not a new phenomenon; it is an endeavour that reflects the interests of a growing community of scholars and a body of literature. Within the literature scholars accounting for the

development of women's movements have utilized four well-known models: classical, resource mobilization, political process and new social movements. Let us review the four frameworks[1] that explain the emergence and development of a social movement.

Classical Model

Classical social movement scholars linked social movements to non-institutional phenomena such as riots, crowds and mass hysteria (Smelser, 1962; Kornhauser, 1959). The model examines the irrational dimensions of social movements and frequently defines them as temporary aberrations to an otherwise stable social system. In this sense, the irrational dimensions or grievances developed from a shared perception that a group was being denied some opportunity or rights. Newly articulated grievances are generally the focal points around which movements were organized. Initial grievances were frequently elaborated upon and new grievances often emerged as movements evolved. In other words, the emphasis of these models is on the underlying structural conditions and resulting social-psychological states assumed to initiate movement activity while retaining notions of pathology and irrationality emphasized by early crowd theorists (Cress and Myers, 2004). These models tend to focus on totalitarian movements such as fascism and communism.

Writing in the 1950s, scholars applied the term *classical* to describe models that analyze the origins of social movements as attributable to the existence of grievances, value conflicts or as a breakdown in the social structure (Kornhauser, 1959; Smelser, 1962; Gurr, 1970). Critics argue that the classical model concentrates on the

[1] Although this section does not provide an exhaustive list of the theoretical and empirical topics, it examines scholarly studies of women's participation in social movements with a selection of the themes that researchers tend to emphasize regarding the origins of the women's movement.

psychological motivations of individuals or the dysfunction of the social system at the expense of the political, organizational, ideational, network/structural and cultural dimensions. To this end, the classical model makes a number of assumptions about movement emergence. Due to the constraints of this study, this inquiry examines four assumptions about social movements as: (1) homogenous entities; (2) spontaneous and non-institutional; (3) the result of structural contradictions in the social system; and (4) the consequence of individual discontent (Loftland, 1997; Cohen, 1985).

The classical model does not make a distinction between different types of collective behaviour. The difficulty is that social movements, crowds and panics are regarded as interchangeable forms that can be conceptualized according to the same explanatory logic (Cohen, 1985). Also, the model assumes that collective action is spontaneous, unstructured and non-institutional. The problem is that action is devalued as reactive behaviour, incapable of strategic rationality and isolated from the conflicts it seeks to express. Movement scholars argue that what varies widely from time to time and from place to place are political opportunities (Kriesi, 1995). Social movements are more closely related to the incentives they provide for collective action rather than to underlying social or economic structures (McCarthy et al., 1996). Movements create opportunities for themselves or others. They do this by diffusing collective action through social networks, by forming coalitions of social actors and by creating the political space for similar movements and counter movements. The model assumes that collective action is the direct result of the structural contradictions and strains between the major institutions or the resulting dysfunction of the social system that serve as the

catalyst for this form of behaviour. This form of behaviour causes a state of anomie that in turn may promote collective action.

The classical model offers a description of reality without devoting much attention to the structural origins of conflicts which subsequently emerge in particular movements. Social movement participants solve this problem by responding to the political opportunities through the use of known forms of collective action by mobilizing people within social networks and through the shared cultural understandings (Meyer and Allen, 1997). The causes of collective action are attributable to the psychological differences and the motivations of individuals who are experiencing various forms of discontent. By locating the source of the strain in individuals, the challenge is to explain the transfer of individual discontent into collective action. The model does not go far enough. Newly articulated grievances are generally the focal points around which movements are organized but these grievances alone constitute insufficient conditions to cause social movements (Klandermans, 1997).

Scholars working in this tradition tend to apply a modified relative deprivation model to the women's movement. Jo Freeman's (1975) study *The Politics of the Women's Liberation A Case Study of an Emerging Social Movement and Its Relation to the Policy Process* examines the mutual relationship between public policy and social movements. She argues that the same conditions that form a social movement have a direct impact on policy. That is, individuals, affected negatively by the changes in social conditions and are not part of the policy process, organize themselves for political action. Thus, a social movement becomes a vehicle to influence policy makers directly as well as indirectly through social change. To illustrate this process, Freeman

uses a modified version of the relative deprivation model to examine how and why the women's liberation movement emerged in the mid-1960s and developed.[2] Her argument is that relative deprivation experienced by white, middle-class, college educated and professionally employed women precipitated the emergence of the women's movement. She draws on Ted Gurr's (1970, p. 13) concept of relative deprivation "a discrepancy between men's [sic] value expectations and value capabilities. Value expectations referred goods and external conditions that individuals believed they were entitled. Value capabilities are the goods and conditions they think they are capable of attaining or maintaining, given the social means available to them."

Freeman posits that value expectations and capabilities subsumed several ideas important to understanding how relative deprivation works in practice. Three concepts are crucial to Freeman's deprivation model: reference group, justifying myths and aggravation. A reference group "may not be a group at all, it may be a single person, an abstract idea or an unrealized standard. It is something to which people related their attitudes and judge their rewards" (Freeman, 1975, p.15). A reference group serves two purposes: it functions as a normative group for the person and it operates to provide the norms or standards by which to make comparisons in judgements and evaluations. These justifying myths refer to *ideology*. Individuals make comparisons to others and may feel relatively deprived in an abstract sense. Finally, aggravation relates to catastrophes such as natural disasters (floods, war and panic) or a slow accumulation of

[2] Freeman examined the general socioeconomic conditions as they changed over a fifty-year time period that created the potential for a social movement. The model was modified because Freeman examined "the inherited norms and values of the originators and the ways in which they influenced the movement's development, the internal dynamics of different groups and environmental influences as they affected the movement's activities. See Freeman, 1975, p.9.

grievances. Thus, Freeman's model included both psychological and objective conditions.

To Freeman, it is relative deprivation that explains the emergence of the women's liberation movement by white middle class, college educated and professional women. In general, "college women had greater expectations and lesser opportunity for realizing them" (Freeman, 1975, p.35). When women compared themselves to their reference group that consisted largely of their male and female classmates, colleagues and husbands in terms of age, education and employment, the women believe they experienced discrimination. While men occupy management-trainee positions, yet due to the highly segregated nature of the labour market, women are likely to experience continual aggravation as they apply for the kinds of occupations and income they expected to get with a college degree. Women are expected to work as secretaries, clerks or stay at home as wives and mothers. Men experienced upward mobility, while women trailed behind feeling a sense of injustice and very frustrated. The sense of anger that these conditions can generate is consistent with the relative deprivation model.

Early research on the black rioting of the 1960s has produced a rich body of case studies covering a range of issues concerning grievances. The grievances in the rioting literature is usually interpreted as economic deprivation, either blacks are relatively deprived to whites or absolutely deprived. The analytical constructs focus on income, unemployment and occupational status. The studies that focus on the absolute deprivation explanations for black riots state that the cities where black are economically impoverished are the cities with the worst rioting is problematic.

Spilerman's (1976) study illustrates that there is no connection between absolute deprivation and rioting. The studies supporting a rising expectation for black riots present similar difficulties in their interpretation. Spilerman (ibid) also found several indicators of black/white well being (the ratio of black to white median family income) to be unrelated to riot activity. Lieske (1978) argues that the same variables are important to explain rioting. However, the studies are difficult to compare because they provide different definitions of city populations, rioting indicators and time frames. Porter and Nagel's (1976) study use a curvilinear approach to black rioting. They argue that the relationship between inequality and discontent, "as partially indicated by rioting, is curvilinear-with the discontent the greatest where inequality [is] moderate" (ibid, p.6-7).

In order to demonstrate that the relative deprivation can potentially lead to the rise of the CBWC, the perspective must show how the relative deprivation that individual CBWC members experience becomes transformed into collective action leading to the CBWC's formation, and not assume that this condition will automatically exist. According to this study, the CBWC does not emerge as a direct result of relatively deprived individuals. The organization is the result of those segments of the Canadian society that are well organized and have the resources necessary to sustain the protest activity. This study maintains that it is the presence of a shared set of beliefs or frames and solidarity among black women in the cities throughout Canada that encourages these women to assign a common meaning to the specific socio-political context and events in their lives to collectively mobilize for change.

The central shortcomings of the classical perspective is that in failing to state

clearly the relationship between the external environment and the rise of social movements, they ignore the important factors that make social change possible in a society. Rather than focusing on the effects of relative deprivation, McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (1996) argue that the structural perspectives of the 1970s focus on the macrostructural level. The writers focus on comparing the cases in which the key determinants include the political context, the role of the state, movement organizations and the resources available to a group as the factors important in explaining the rise of social movements. The resource mobilization perspective offers such a possibility.

Resource Mobilization Model

Resource mobilization theory (RMT) indicates that social movements are rational collective efforts aimed at bringing about change, especially in terms of the decision and policies of political elites (Giugni, 2004). With these insights, scholars indicate that structural and strain-based models and produced a new focus on resource mobilization as a dominant model to explain movements and movement organizations in particular (Zald and McCarthy 1973; 1977; Zald and Ash, 1966). Resource mobilization theory emphasizes the complex dynamics of movement mobilization and the role of purposive activists (movement entrepreneurs as well as participants), organizations and the accrual and deployment of resources (money, membership) in processes of demanding change. This model reorients our understanding of movement activity as rational action by those excluded from "normal channels of voice and power and provided a conceptual lens for understanding the role of specific social actors" (Cress and Myers, 2004, p. 280). RMT suggests the need to examine social movements as: (1) movement organizations; (2) emphasizes the complex dynamics of movement

mobilization and the role of purposive activists (movement entrepreneurs as well as participants); (3) engage in the accrual and deployment of resources (money, membership); and, (4) weigh the risks and rewards of participation in processes of demanding change (McCarthy, McAdam and Zald 1996; Gamson, 1995; Jenkins, 1983; McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Oberschall, 1973).

What does a resource mobilization model say about the formation of the women's movement? In their book, *Feminism and the New Right Conflict Over the American Family*, Pamela Johnston Conover and Virginia Gray (1983) use a resource mobilization model to analyze the rise of the women's movement to understand the role symbolic politics and issues played in the dynamic processes linked to social movements. Individuals join social movements not because of irrational fears[3] but rather as a result of the following factors: interests, existing organizational ties and personal principles of supporters, the political entrepreneurs (leadership), forces outside the movement (government, media, other groups), issues and strategies of action. External factors have a substantial influence on mobilization that either help or hinder the movement. The main point of their argument is that collective interests, existing group loyalties (solidarity) and individual interests motivate individuals to join social movements. Likewise, both the conceptualization of a movement as well as the issues upon which a movement is focused is vital to understanding the goals, strategies and success of a movement. Finally, political entrepreneurs (movement leaders), external agents (government, mass media, other groups) have the "potential to facilitate or repress an emerging social movement" (ibid, p. 27). Therefore, rational action

[3] Conover and Gray stated that the resource mobilization perspective was not without its weaknesses-its relative neglect of emotions and feelings. See Conover and Gray, 1983, p.198.

combined with pre-existing communication network supportive of the women's movement, issues and external support gave rise to the women's movement.

This perspective utilizes the resource mobilization model and interest group theory to accomplish two goals. The first goal was to explain the origins, mobilization and organization of various feminist and New Right groups in opposition to the ERA and the feminist movement in general. The second goal is to illustrate how abortion and ERA issues were key to understanding both feminist movements and the New Right (countermovements).

In their book *Women's Rights The Struggle for Equality in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, Nancy E. McGlen and Karen O'Connor (1995) use a resource mobilization model. This study is a critical and comprehensive analysis of the women's movement during three periods the early movement, the suffrage movement and the current women's movement in an effort to examine respective accomplishments in the areas of politics, economic and the family. They argue that the current women's movement arises due to "outside resources[4], a communication network linking the potential leaders of the movement[5] and a sense of collective outrage that is sparked into activity by the publication of Betty Freidan's *The Feminist Mystique* in 1963[6]" (Costain, 1992,

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[4]These external resources included: African American's success with the Civil Rights movement, increasing educational opportunities for women and younger women with children working outside the home, urban and campus riots, assassinations of national leaders, the Vietnam War and the protest against it. These external events provided the fertile ground for the rise of the women's liberation or movement and countermovements such as the New Right.

[5] The communication network draws on two different branches of the women's movement, organizations that included the National Organization for Women (NOW), National Women's Party. In addition, there are also antifeminist organizations led by Phyllis Schlafly, leader of the STOP ERA Movement, fundamentalist churches, the religious right, the secular new right and the Pro-Family Movement.

[6] In 1963 Betty Freidan coined the term the Feminist Mystique to describe the main ideology of the 1950s. According to Friedan, the feminine mystique argued that women's true vocation is in fulfilling their roles as mothers and wives. This mythology is perpetuated by the media, advertisers and social scientists that resulted in a general feeling of dissatisfaction on the part of many women when they failed

p.8). In other words, the movement emerges by using the incremental extension of equal treatment to women and the legislative gains of the Civil Rights movement to add protection to women. Consequently moderate groups from the Civil Rights movement and women's communities joined forces with the new women's movement providing the resources to sustain it.

Important pioneering work on the women's movement in this vein is the work of Gelb and Palley (1996) on equity, McCann's (1994) study on legal mobilization, black women's roles in the civil rights movement (Collier, 2001), women in the civil rights movement (Crawford, 1990) and black political mobilization (Morrison, 1987).

According to RMT, a social movement organization (SMO) is a vital resource for social movements. A SMO is defined as a complex formal system that develops to administer the goals of the social movement. Thus, the social movement organization is not identical to the social movement. The two differ, according to theorists, in recruitment (Oberschall, 1973), increasing success of participation (Morris, 1984), ongoing confrontations between challengers and opponents (Tilly, 1999) and the development of the social movement sectors (Zald, 1996). The strength of this analysis is that it demonstrates that there is a high level of organization indicative of social movements.

Social movements involve conscious actors making rational decisions. Social movement actors have an essential role to play in the mobilization of collective resources on which action is found. Yet the model of the rational actor has attracted criticism for its hyper-rational assumptions about the movement participants and for its

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to find housework gratifying. Friedan argues that the demystification of this process lay in giving women the opportunity to participate equally with men within American society.

individualistic orientation to what is essentially a collective process (Zald, 1992). The difficulty is that the model simplifies the role of grievances, emotions (Taylor and Whittier, 1995) and de-emphasizes the role of ideational factors in general. For the same reason, although the resource mobilization is inattentive to the role of collective *identity* in movements, submerged networks (Melucci, 1989) and it has done little to acknowledge the internal diversity of many movement groups.

Scholars argue that access to and control over resources is important to social movement activity. Collective action requires resource aggregation that in turn requires some minimal form of movement organization without which protest will not occur. In this sense, social movements must draw on people, materials, ideas, opportunities and conventions to co-ordinate and sustain action. The argument is that the model pays less attention to structural issues to explain movement origins through the changes in the availability of resources and subsequent analysis ignores this level. Systemic power relations and structural inequality are ignored by this approach (Canel, 1992; Mueller, 1992). Without such a structural theory, the resource mobilization framework can say little about group interests, the stakes of conflict or even the resources themselves are defined prior to collective action. Therefore, the resource mobilization model ignores the macro-structural-historical context and has limited its analysis of collective action. Zald (1996) argues that the resource mobilization theory must address issues related to the class structure, epochal cultural crises or macro-theories of change.

McCarthy and Zald (1977) indicate that the survival of social movements is dependent on the role of external resources like the government, foundations, wealthy elites or moral constituents who financially support movement activities. For the same

reason, the role of leaders and entrepreneurs is critical because they often function as fundraisers seeking to create a sustained flow of resources into the social movement organizations. These tasks have in turn promoted a "high degree of professionalization in the leadership of SMOs; many leaders essentially have entire careers as professional organizers or entrepreneur leaders of SMOs" (ibid, 1977). While this approach tells us about the number of moderate, reform oriented movements in the middle-class base - it is less informative about social movement communities (Buechler, 1995) or loosely structured collective action (Oberschall, 1993).

Finally, the risks and rewards of participating in a social movement play a significant part in the analysis of the mobilization processes (Oberschall, 1973; Klandermans, 1984). Based on a rational actor model, individuals are viewed as weighing the relative costs and benefits of movement participation and opting for participation when the potential benefits outweigh the anticipated costs. This aspect of the model relies on Olson's (1965) logic of collective action and his emphasis on collective, selective, purposive influencing an actor's decision to participate in a movement. Olsen's theory argues that members remain committed to the movement because it is rewarding to do so. The participant's ability to weigh the costs and benefits implies choice and rationality at some level. However, when the movement's goals take the form of public goods that cannot be denied to non-participants, the free rider dilemma is created because it is individually rational for each actor to let others win the goal and then share the benefits without the costs. In response to the free-rider dilemma, organizations may offer selective incentives for active participants that can be withheld from nonparticipation (Olsen, 1965). Scholars criticize this logic because the

collective, moral, purposive or solidarity incentives often motivate people to join movements even if they could theoretically "free ride" on the efforts of other (Fireman and Gamson, 1979).

The difficulty is that the RMT model is unable to explain why individuals participate in social movements in the absence of selective incentives and tends to overstate the importance of selective incentives. Scholars address this problem by arguing that it is crucial for individuals to grapple with how the mobilizing potential of a movement is to be attained. Oberschall (1993) argues that given the multiplicity of factors between the value of the goals and its realization, the goal is so valuable that it is enough to motivate individuals to join. Theorists make a distinction between those willing to participate in different forms of action (Klandermans, 1984) and in low and high-risk activism (McAdam, 1988). Scholars argue that due to the divergent cost-benefit ratios, participation in a movement may be due to maintaining one's personal satisfaction that can increase the participant's willingness to join (Fireman and Gamson, 1979).

The resource mobilization perspective argued that the key to understanding the identities, institutions and ideologies of the CBWC was in knowing that the women are drawn into the organization by virtue of their involvement in community organizations. The community organizations serve as the networks out of which the CBWC emerges and which the organization uses to gain access to the levers of power. The more resources it has at its disposal and the more opportunities for collective action, the better the CBWC can respond to the power struggles in a closed and coercive political system. The resource mobilization perspective argues that what is important to the

identities, institutions and ideologies of the CBWC are internal factors groups involved, money, skills; and external factors state, finances that affect the success or failure of the organization. The consequences of black Canadian women's organizing are that resources are used as the tools of social change.

The resource mobilization perspective's attention to resources has significant implications for examining the CBWC, as discussed above. If examining the CBWC's pre-established organizational base, the resource mobilization perspective indicates that the organization's success in initiating social protest is dependent on the availability of resources that make it possible to support and sustain an organized demand for change. The pre-established networks serve two main purposes. First, they contribute to creating the preconditions for mobilizing labour and they provide the proper context for the elaboration of the specific ideologies of the organization. Second, the presence of the pre-established networks also provides an informal setting for group interactions and it facilitates the development of the relationships among women in the CBWC. The informal setting allows for the development and transmission of culture and the transformation of group ideas into the action required for mobilizing.

In brief, the resource mobilization perspective suffers from a number of weaknesses. The main weakness of the perspective is its inability to focus on the social movements that are rooted in an ongoing struggle involving long term social transformation (McAdam, 1982) and not just arising at a specific historical juncture due to the availability of resources in a given context. Furthermore, the resource mobilization perspective is unable to identify the role of elites and the role of the social movement's mass base in the generation of insurgency (ibid, p.35), or demonstrate how

the mass base of the politically powerless groups provide the foundation from which social change is possible. Therefore, the resource mobilization perspective tends to underestimate the resources of mass-based movements to effect significant social change. A more critical analysis is needed that examines the relationship between identities, institutions and ideologies resources and the broader external environment these women seek to change to properly address the CBWC.

Political Process Model

In the context of the emergence of the resource mobilization model, scholars began to recognize the importance of dynamics beyond mobilization and participation to the targets of activists. Bringing the state back in was a vital concern for political process (or political opportunity) theorists who emphasized the *institutional* structure in which a movement operated and that influenced or inhibited the emergence, tactics and outcomes of challenges (Tilly, 1978; McAdam, 1982; Morris, 1984). The studies by scholars emphasizing social movements as interactions between states and activists provided the foundation for what has become known as the contentious politics perspective (Cress and Myers, 2004). Thus, the recent literature has placed "dynamics of contention" between challengers and the state at the center of theorizing and empirical work (MCarthy, McAdam and Zald, 1996).

This section begins by characterizing the claims of the political process model in terms of (1) political opportunities; (2) mobilizing structures and (3) framing processes. The political process model is based on the following traits. First, most political process models focus on the political opportunities available in a given context. The term describes the political institutions, arrangements and processes that

distinguish one political context from another or that change in some crucial fashion (McAdam, 2001). Therefore, the model examines those factors that contribute to successful mobilization when opportunities are available. Yet the model is criticized for its tendency to adopt a kind of political reductionism (Melucci, 1989). In effect, theorists of the political process model have paid very little attention to the fact that many contemporary movements (of youth, women, homosexuals, or ethnic minority groups) seem to have developed within a political context and in a climate of cultural innovation at the same time.

Second, the development of belief or frame (Snow and McAdam, 2000) is an appropriate strategy as organizers project and mediate news of external events to encourage political mobilization. Frame analysis refers to the interactive, collective ways that movement actors assign meanings to their activities in the conduct of social movement activism. It involves movement organizations reaching people who already share their orientation to the world through public efforts and organizational outreach to let people know that there already exist a group that shares their views on a given issue. Therefore, a movement's frame appeals to deeply held values and beliefs in the general population and links those values and beliefs to movement issues. The problem is that although Tilly (1995) offers a model of tactical innovation, political process models do not provide an understanding of the choice of tactics used by participants. The issue of tactics raises two questions: how do activists choose the tactics they do? What are the differential effects of tactical choice? For example, when does non-violent protest produce the outcomes that activist desire?

Third, political process analysts make mention of mobilizing structures. Similar to the resource mobilization model, collective action is brought about by integrated, skilled, intelligent, organized, sectors of a group. Therefore, analysts emphasize the mobilization and allocation of resources by movement actors in the context of opportunities and constraints imposed by the social and political environment. The problem is that within states claims-making takes place in different venues, and challengers' choices of venues are dependent on the nature of the rules, *institutions*, norms, procedures, and alliances well below the broad level of the state (Meyer, 1999). Political process analysts need to address the ways states can channel conflict or dissent into particular political institutions and how movements conduct changes over time as a result.

This emphasis on social movements as interactions between states and activists provided the foundation for what has become known as the contentious politics perspective. Thus, the recent literature has placed "dynamics of contention" between challengers and the state at the center of theorizing and empirical work (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 1996; 2001).

The contentious politics project is an inclusive longer-term trajectory of social movement scholarship. It has subsumed rather than displaced resource mobilization and political process approaches (although certainly with some modifications), and incorporated cultural elements usually associated with framing processes and collective identity concepts (Taylor and Whittier, 1992; Melucci, 1989). According to Tarrow (1998, p.23):

> Contentious politics is produced when political opportunities broaden, when they demonstrate the potential for alliances, and whey they reveal the opponents' vulnerability. Contention crystallizes into a social movement when it taps embedded social networks and connective structures and produces collective action frames and supportive *identities* able to sustain contention with powerful opponents. By mounting forms of contention, movements become the focal points that transform external opportunities into resources. Repertories of contention, social networks, and cultural frames lower the costs of bringing people into collective action, induce confidence that they are not alone, and give broader meaning to their claims. Together, these factors trigger the dynamic processes that have made social movements historically central to political and social change.

Proponents of a synthetic model relying on examining the relationship between external contexts and internal organizational dynamics have stressed the role of organizations and more broadly mobilizing structure.

One of the defining features of the contentious politics approach is the wide umbrella under which it organizes so many important ideas developed in recent decades. Thus, it is somewhat ironic one chief emerging criticism in response to the contentious politics perspective has been criticisms of empirically exclusivity and conceptual restrictions (McAdam, 2002). These criticism rooted in new social movements theory (Buechler, 2000) argue that the focus of much contemporary

movement activity has shifted from targeting the state, to focusing on change in other organizations, institutions and the broader culture.

McAdam (2004) explores this recent intellectual trend in sociology and the social sciences. This aim involves a desire to explore possibilities for theoretical synthesis across nominally distinct structural, cultural and rational approaches to the study of collective action. McAdam (ibid, p.208) further argues that it seems "valid to chart a more synthetic course and to ask how, in this case, insights from a structuralist, rationalist and culturalist perspective might be combined to yield a fuller understanding of social movement dynamics." Whittier (2002) develops a synthetic model that I explore in this chapter.

In her book *Inviting Women's Rebellion A Political Process Interpretation of the Women's Movement*, Ann Costain's (1992) argument is that the political process model has the capacity to show "how rapid, nonincremental changes in public policy can take place when a number of external factors are conducive to groups that are presenting a challenge to government." It helps to explain why multiple movements emerge during the same historic periods. The model's emphasis is on resources, the political system, pre-existing accumulation of resources and the psychological aspects of movement identification. Social movements are therefore "the actions of excluded groups to mobilize sufficient leverage to advance collective interests through noninstitutionalized means" (ibid, p.12). The emphasis is on the structure of political opportunities within American society.

Costain notes that the formation of the National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1966 is vital to pressuring the government to develop policy concerning

women. NOW acts as an umbrella organization that is able to mobilize diverse constituencies – older and younger branches, traditional and radical organizations- to draw on their resources, develop strategies and tactics, awareness, protest and lobby Washington for equality rights. Congress responds with the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in 1972 and the government's focus on equality issues. The ERA is the main issue that enables women's groups to mobilize, develop a constituency, build public support and demonstrate significant political power.

The decline of the women's movement is linked to three main issues, the alternative agenda that focused on women as a group with special needs, the decline of the ERA and the Ronald Regan Administration. Simply stated, Regan opposes the ERA and abortion rights. While NOW pursues its own agenda, the organization is noticeably absent from national politics for the most part; NOW supported the ERA, abortion rights, a national women's party and gay and lesbian rights. Costain argues that NOW's inability to address issues concerning the special needs agenda and its urgency to pass the ERA left it in a vulnerable position where the movement was without federal aid, and struggled to gain support for child care, parental leave and reproductive rights issues in light of the government's inability to ratify the ERA.

Belinda Robnett's (1997) book *How Long? How Long? African-American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights* incorporates elements of the political process model (PPM) described above. Yet Robnett's model provides us with a "womanist" black feminist perspective that includes both men and women. It examines the internal dynamics of social movements by focusing on the rise of the Civil Rights movements in the South and its decline from below by 1966. Robnett's critical examination of the

formal organizations, formal and informal leadership and grassroots mobilization of the Civil Rights era is quite informative. She finds complex interactions to analyze the way regional culture, race, gender, class and education shapes leadership possibilities, roles and experiences. It involves a conceptual narrative, and a focus on social action and social agency, one that is temporal, relational, institutional, material and macrostructural. Her thesis is concerned with the role of African-American women leaders in the Civil Rights movement which has been overlooked in favour of African American men. She argues that the diversity of experiences of African American women leaders is underemphasized in favour of monolithic treatments of their gender and race. To advance this argument, Robnett examines the period 1954-1965 as a time of heightened Civil Rights movement activity. She demonstrates how the intersection of race, class, gender and culture are the institutions that shape the organizations (CORE, SNCC, WPC, MIA, NAACP, SCLC and MFDP) [7] and outcomes of the movement. She examines the differences between community bridge leaders, professional and community bridge leaders to show how their different experiences shape the women's participation in the movement, explaining by explaining how social movements are gendered and the interactions among black activists. Thus, Robnett demonstrates that gender and race are significant factors to account for individual identity and collective identity.

Research on the women's movement adopting a political process approach include work on the church and military (Katzenstein, 1998), women and minority

[7] Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Women's Political Council (WPC), Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP), Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP).

social change strategies (Minkoff, 1995), and social movements and interactions among the state (Katzenstein and Mueller, 1987). Other recent work examines the relationship between gender, globalization and social movements (Smith, 1997), gender and social movements (Kuumba, 2001), gender differences and activism (McAdam, 2001). While Basu's (1995) work on mapping transnational social movements and Alvarez's (1990) work on the effects of transnational organization on local feminism are helpful, they do not use a political process or social movement approach.

New Social Movements

New social movement theorists maintain that contemporary social movements are pre-eminently normative challenges to structural transformations including a shift towards a post-industrial society and the emergence of new information technologies, rather than efforts to secure economic or political power (Touraine, 2001; Melucci, 1996). Accordingly, the "newness" of the putatively new social movements consists of such things as a greater emphasis on societal totality, values, action forms, constituency, culture/symbolic forms of resistance and group or collective identity (Rucht, 1996; Larana et al., 1994; Pichardo, 1997; Klandermans, 1995; Canel, 1992). The environmental movement, peace movement, the Civil Rights movement, gay rights, the feminist movement and alternative non-consumerist lifestyles are often portrayed as umbrella groups representing a synthesis of new social movements aimed at a broad and general social liberation.

In her book *Personal Politics The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left*, Sara Evans (1980) provides a historical overview

of the roots of the women's liberation movement in the 1960s. Evans states that in many ways women did not participate equally in the movements and it is this fact that ultimately increased women's awareness of the discrimination they faced and shaped their skills as political activists that enabled them to mobilize to support their own causes. To this end, Evans explores how the consciousness of women is shaped by the disillusionment of women especially in terms of having their work minimized by the behaviour of men. In the Civil Rights movement women are assigned to safe jobs with risks associated with registration and other projects undertaken by men. While in the New Left organizations, specifically, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), women perform either clerical work or community organizing; men did not have jobs but took the credit for the women's work. Most important, very few women assume public roles of national leadership. As a result of these experiences, many women "stepped outside of the assumptions on which they had been raised to articulate a radical critique of women's position in American society" (ibid p.212). The actions of these women led to the rise of the women's liberation movement.

Ethel Klein's (1984) book *Gender Politics* provides an analysis of the emergence of the feminist movement as a result of women's need to cope with a rapidly changing world that has left them economically and emotionally vulnerable. Women are brought together out of a sense of injustice, personal frustration and the overall need to change the inequities in the treatment of women. Women were responding to the following injustices: a divorce rate that left them economically disadvantaged, increasingly longer hours in the workforce, a double burden of home and work responsibilities and a prolonged life that allows them to be productive long

after the years of child rearing. A feminist consciousness emerges from women's reactions to these experiences. The rejection of women's traditional group definition causes women to appraise their circumstances. These changes have redefined what it means to be female in a post industrial society and have produced in women a political consciousness and willingness to express concerns in the political arena. In short, Klein's book details how industrialization changed domestic employment, motherhood and marriage.

New social movements assume an element of a societal totality that in turn generates the context for collective action. Although theorists differ on the nature of this societal totality, they attempt to theorize a historically specific social formation as the backdrop for contemporary forms of collective action. In this sense, if the capitalist market, bureaucratic states and instrumental rationality define the modern and post-modern society, new social movements are *ipso facto* historically specific responses to these features of the modern and post-modern condition. The values or the primary orientation of the new social movements incorporate a defence and restoration of endangered ways of life by addressing issues of quality of life, equal rights, individuals' self-realization, emancipation and human rights (Habermas, 1987). Activities of new social movements are characterized by an open, fluid organization, an inclusive and non-ideological participation and greater attention to social than economic transformations. In this sense, new social movements make extensive use of organized forms that are decentralized, egalitarian, participatory and small-scale (Melucci, 1989; Gusfield, 1994; Mueller, 1994). For these movements, the organization is less about a strategic tool than a symbolic expression of movement values and member identities.

A diffuse social base characterizes the constituency of new social movements. Some scholars suggest that new social movements are grounded in some fraction of the new middle classes (Eder, Staggenborg and Lawrence 1995; Offe, 1985). Other scholars argue that new social movement can no longer be defined by the class structure since the problems it encounters are not limited to a specific social stratum. Rather, new social movements involve other statuses such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age or citizenship that are central in mobilizing new social movements (Dalton et al., 1990).Scholars have further noted that even these statuses are less important than the ideological consensus over movement values and beliefs. For all of these reasons, the social base of these movements is presumed to be more complex than in older and more conventional class based activism (Buechler, 1995).

Interestingly, new social movements emphasize the role of culture and symbolic forms of resistance accompanying or in lieu of more conventional political forms of collective action (Cohen, 1985). For many new social movements, this encapsulates their philosophical rejection of the instrumental rationality of advanced capitalist societies and its systems of social control and co-optation (Buechler, 1995). This cultural emphasis rejects the conventional goals, tactics and strategies in favour of the new identities, meanings, signs and symbols. In this sense, the ability to frame or symbolically enact new ways of organizing social relationships is intrinsically a strong challenger to dominant social arrangements (Whittier, 1995; Melucci, 1989). Finally, new social movements place a premium on the notion of collective identity in social protest. The focus on collective identity reflects the uncoupling of social protest from the class structure as well as the multiplicity of identities in late modernity. Scholars

argue that the ability of individuals to participate in social protest is linked to their ability to define an identity in the first place (Gusfield, 1994). This places a premium on the social construction of collective identity as an essential part of contemporary social activism or the mobilization process (Buechler, 2000).

The assumptions of the new social movement theory have been subject to considerable scrutiny and criticism. The "newness" of new social movements, for instance, overstates its novelty (Plotke, 1990), ignores their organizational predecessors (Tarrow, 1998) and mistakes an early position in a cycle of protest to a new type of protest (ibid). Scholars argue that the model ignores longstanding historical cycles of cultural critique (Brand, 1990) and misinterprets a generational phenomenon as a categorical shift in collective action (Johnston et al., 1994). The most severe attacks have come from the historical studies of nineteenth century labour movements (the quintessential old movements) which contradict the so-called distinctive features of new social movements (Calhoun, 1995). Although defenders attempt to specify the newness of new social movements (Dalton and Kuechler, 1990; Eder and Lawrence, 1995; Offe, 1990), many concede that there is more continuity between supposedly old and new movements than this terminology implies (Johnston et al., 1994; Larana et al., 1994).

Melucci (1996) describes the contemporary societies as highly differentiated systems which invest increasingly in the creation of centers of action. At the same time, they require the integrating and extending of control over the motive of human action. According to his model, the social movements try to oppose the intrusion of the state and the market into the social life. They reclaim the individual's identity and the right

to determine his or her private and affective life against the omnipresent and comprehensive manipulation of the system. Unlike the worker's movement, the social movements do not limit themselves to seeking material gain but challenge the diffuse notions of politics and of society. New actors of this movement do not ask for an increase in state intervention to guarantee security and well being but instead defend personal autonomy and resist any expansion of political-administrative interventions.

Melucci further rallies against the idea of the reification of new social movements. He points out that the movements of all kinds are not unified actors. Movements are the multipolar action systems that go through a continual phase of construction and reconstruction. Focusing on the loose and interpersonal movement networks, rather than on movement organizations, Melucci says that these movements mobilize followers by establishing a close identity between the individual's needs and collective identity. His work stresses the cultural aspects of new social movements and their contrast with the more material preoccupations of old movements - like the labour movement. But he gives more attention to the processes of the formation of new collective identities and is more interested in the cultural significance of new social movements than in their structural origin.

What can the new social movement approach say about the environmental movement? The environmental movement (peace/ecological movement) is comprised of groups ranging from the conservative or at least moderate conservative organizations to radical organizations that are not adverse to direct confrontations with the government. Parts of the movement are well established and are able to take advantage of the growing public interest to become very prominent and increase membership. The

movement not only accommodates several organizations but rather supports single-issue initiatives against the construction of a particular road, a runaway pipeline, against large-scale urban development projects and against soil or water pollution. For the environmental movement, influencing concrete policies is of central importance to the members who seek to tighten air pollution laws, for example, stop the nuclear power program, or prevent a local construction project from proceeding.

In so far as the focus of the environmental movement is on the established political system, it cannot ignore the mechanisms, rules and results of the system. But if the opportunities for conventional lobbying either do not exist or are consciously abandoned, the environmental movement is primarily tending towards a policy of mobilizing organizations and broad coalitions, organizing information and campaigns and petitions, influencing polls, mobilizing for mass demonstrations and acts of civil disobedience. Compared with these actions, the environmental movement argues that the immediate changes in the social roles, lifestyles and consumer behaviour are of minor importance. Such behavioural changes may demonstrate the honourable intentions of the environmentalists *vis-à-vis* the public but they will hardly create a strong impression with the state.

Nella Van Dyke, Sara Soule and Verta Taylor (2004) question state-centered conceptualizations of social movements. They insist that not all of the contemporary social movements regard the state as the target of their claims. Identity movements such as the women's and gay and lesbian movements are geared specifically toward cultural change and identity recognition through expressive actions and alternative institution building. In pursuit of these goals, they target cultural norms, institutions, professional

authority, public opinion and beliefs. The key contributor of this approach for the women's movement is Huber's (1973) study of the women's movement and the unplanned result of the technological changes that transformed women's work and child care responsibilities. Other studies examine submerged networks, collective identities, and interpreting grievances (Mueller, 1992) and cultural dimensions of collective protest (Polletta, 1997).

The new social movement model, however, is incapable of accounting for the intricacies of the identities, institutions and ideologies affecting the CBWC. Although the CBWC's organizing around racism and sexism exhibit some of the characteristics of the new social movements suggested by Melucci, its demands around discrimination are not generated only by cultural conflicts. Black women are able to utilize the instruments of the political system to address some of their concerns. Their distinctively institutional focus would eliminate them as part of the anti-systemic movements.

In conclusion, this section examined four perspectives: the classical, resource mobilization, political opportunity and new social movement all of which provide different assumptions about the emergence of social movements. In many ways these theories are juxtaposed as the countervailing frameworks and all four models exhibit fundamental shortcomings with respect to the concept of movement emergence. This discussion of the emergence of social movements highlights how variations in patterns of mobilization may be explained in reference to identities, institutions and ideologies that are privileged as the explanatory factors.

Feminist Literature

Feminist scholarship on movements provides a different yet important focus on women's activism. Unlike the emphasis in the social movement literature in delineating the dynamics of individual activism, feminist writers and activists are keenly interested in examining the various ways in which structures and circumstances of women's lives afford them the opportunity and motive to engage in collective action. How then are issues and concerns about women's participation in movements addressed by feminist scholars? Stated differently, how do feminists define women's movements?

Briskin (1999, p.5) argues that focusing on the notion of organizing and "mapping" allows for the "various relationships between women's movements and women's organizations and between feminism and women's organizing to emerge." Thus, the notion of the women's movement must not be essentialized, but understood as a process. The primary problem for the analysis of gender and movements must be understood within the context of how identities, institutions and ideologies provide the basis for action. What becomes apparent is that the women's movement is heterogeneous with different histories that must be incorporated. Women are not presented as a cohesive group; women constitute a community/population with distinct historical origins and different class positions. Working along the same lines, Roth's study (2003) explores women's activism according to women's rights and the women's issues.

The development of academic feminism also ignited a renewed interest in women in women's rights and suffrage movements (Chafetz and Dworkin, 1986).

Feminist research has focused on women in labour movement (Milkman, 1985; Kessler-Harris, 1981), grassroots organizing by working and lower class women (Bookman and Morgan, 1988; Sacks, 1988), state (Brodie, 1996), nationalism, regionalism, anti-racism (Hamilton, 1996), organizations and women's movements (Ryan, 1999; Tyyska, 1998; Abrahams, 1996; Backhouse and Flaherty, 1992; Wine and Ristock, 1991), individual activism and leadership (Cable, 1992; Herda-Rapp, 1998; Irons, 1998; Sack, 1988). The theories about women's participation in movements demonstrate that far from being passive, women have been actively organizing. One weakness of the literature is that feminist scholars do not theoretically distinguish women's movements from other types of social movements (McAdam, 1992). The difficulty is that the feminist scholarship has not examined the intersection of gender/race/class in considering the connections between movements and the societies in which they organize (Whittier, 2002).

To address this limitation in the literature, feminist scholarship has started to account for the relationship between the intersection of race/class/gender in social movements among community activism (Naples, 1998), mixed race organizations (Ostrander, 1999), female activists (Barnett, 1996; White, 1999; Aptheker, 1982). In mixed-gender setting, feminist scholars argue that the experiences of women in movements are different for women due to "gender role expectations, specifically the responsibilities that women have in reproducing daily life" (Roth, 2003, p.4). The scholarship indicates that women are instrumental behind the scenes running the office and have not been given the opportunity to emerge as leaders (Robnett, 1997; Barnett, 1996).

In conclusion, feminist scholarship has contributed immensely to our understanding of the dynamics of collective action, the variety of aims, agendas and goals that characterize women's organizations in struggle. The critical differences among movement participants affect the ability to mobilize movements. Underlying these issues is the assumption that gendered hierarchy, class and racial constraints shape the structure of the women's movements and define the nature of the activist participation. Premised on the belief that women comprise a diverse group that need further analysis, these studies pay very little attention to the influences of identities, institutions and ideologies on black Canadian women's organizations. As social phenomena, social movements are wide and diverse enough to provide a broad umbrella under which a variety of participants may coalesce. It is therefore interesting to study identities, institutions and ideologies in an organization like the CBWC.

The Prior Tradition of Black Canadian Women's Organizations[8]

Between 1973 and 2003, the CBWC provided space for its members to claim their womanhood—a struggle at the national level that started with an encouragement for women to challenge the public and private arenas in which invisibility and misrepresentation are usually manifested. However, CBWC members were neither the first black Canadian women to define womanhood on their own terms, nor the first to organize against the oppression. The CBWC represents one of many forms of resistance in the long history of organizing that dates back to North American slavery.

The earliest organizing efforts among black Canadian women were linked to the

[8] In writing about this early tradition, this inquiry is grateful for the work of Peggy Bristow (1993), Rella Braithwaite and Tessa Benn-Ireland (1993) and James Walker (1985) for illustrating the rich heritage of black Canadian organizational movements. They have been instrumental in forging a comprehensive appreciation of the legacy of benevolent societies, clubs, literary societies and churches that served as the backbone of local, provincial and national organizations.

work of black Loyalists or African Americans who "rejected the slavery endorsing American Revolution in support of the British pledge of land and liberty" (quoted in Clarke, 2002, p.328). When Susannah (Susana) Smith, who once lived in Virginia and Nova Scotia wrote a letter dated 12 May 1792 to Sierra Leone's colonial authorities, she was one of the first black women organizers. In her letter she requested soap, noting that "we (her family) ar not fit to be sean for dirt (sic)" (ibid, p.328). Although she is requesting soap for her family, she is writing about the colonial authority's treatment of black Canadians and is providing them with an argument to treat them as their equals.

Black Loyalist men and women organized a boycott of farms in Nova Scotia and lobbied to move to Sierra Leone (Walker, 1985) rather than lead lives of perpetual and hopeless servitude. Numerous violent measures were instituted to keep black Loyalists docile. They were forced to give hard labour over long workdays for basic sustenance. In spite of their powerlessness and desperate conditions, black Loyalists found ways to resist their oppressive experiences and maintain a sense of community life. As examples of enormous bravery, several protest rallies and economic boycotts were organized in 1792 (ibid).

Several black Canadian women's benevolent societies were organized in the 1840s. The purpose of the Queen Victoria Benevolent Society was to help women who "could not work, were sick or otherwise were not engaged in a profession, trade or occupation" (Bristow, 1993, p.151). In 1854 a group of black women established the True Band Society (TBS) to encourage activists, parents and community organizations to support refugees, resist racism and improve the quality of education for children in Amherstburg, Ontario. By 1856 there were thirteen TBS chapters in south-western

Ontario (ibid).

Other organizations took on a variety of forms. Examples include the Ladies Union Aid Society formed in 1878 in Chatham, Ontario (ibid) and the Coloured Women's Progressive Association founded in 1880 by Mary Ann Shadd for the purpose of fighting for women's suffrage and equal rights throughout Canada (Braithwaite & Benn-Ireland, 1993). Many black women's organizations of this period were connected to churches, with members teaching in Sunday schools, serving in women's auxiliaries and participating in missionary work. The Home Missionary Society, the Busy Gleaners Club and Frederick Douglas Club are examples of "organizations started by church women for young single black women" (Bristow, 1993).

Black Canadian women organized many clubs to provide community assistance. Ann Packwood was an active participant in the Coloured Women's Club (CWC). As president, activist Anne Packwood used the CWC to provide bursaries for black Canadian students (with assistance from the Union United Church), to support soldiers returning from the Boer War and to perform other types of charitable work in Montreal.

The Eureka Club was founded by a small group of black women in Toronto in 1910. The Club motto, "Not for ourselves, but for others," was a motivation for women to participate in such activities as assisting with rent and hospital bills, delivering food and awarding scholarships. Other examples of local community-oriented organizations were The Women of the Well (1914), the Sunshine Club (1916), the Women's Charitable Benevolent Association (1919), the Phyllis Wheatly Club (1922) and the Toronto Negro Coloured Guard Women's Association.

Founded in 1934, the Hour-A-Day Study Club was active on issues concerning

children's education and employment. Its mandate was to encourage black women to improve their lives by reading one hour per day. While the Club concentrated on cultural and educational issues, it took a conciliatory approach involving education, coalitions and past experiences to address racist incidents in Windsor, Ontario. In contrast, the CBWC relied on a mix of educational workshops, lobbying and litigation when asking for federal and provincial support in actions against racism and the many forms of societal discrimination experienced by black Canadian women.

The Canadian Negro Women's Association (CANEWA), established in 1951, had a dual social-political orientation. In response to notorious racist events, Kay Livingstone, Verda Cooke, Aileen Williams and Eugenie Allen organized Canada's first Black History week (Hill, 1996). Livingstone mobilized CANEWA's membership by organizing the Congress of Black Women of Canada in 1973, building on national organizing efforts initiated by the National Black Coalition of Canada, the United Negro Improvement Association, Black United Front, NAACP and other organizations, some of which were based in other countries. Against this backdrop, the CBWC pressed for better jobs and promotions for black Canadian women and mobilized their membership and their families to fight discrimination throughout the country. To be a CBWC member was to be a part of this tradition of community building, activism and collaboration with other organizations that shared common, not uniform, experiences of oppression. Their efforts spotlight the tenuous nature of life for black Canadian women in the twentieth century.

Black Canadian or African Canadian?[9]

During the nascent stage of this research, I realized the significance of employing appropriate language in defining the organization. Consistent with the manner in which CBWC members self identified as black Canadian women, I utilized the term "black Canadian" as opposed to "African Canadian." Black Canadian refers to important aspects of their positionality - for example, race, class, gender, sexuality, among other markers of their relational positions. The concerns of black Canadian women were located in specific socio-political and economic contexts of Canadian society. The concept of blackness provided a sense of urgency and importance to CBWC campaigns and demonstrated a political connection based on the social, political and structural location of African ancestry. Note that I will also use the terms "Caribbean," "African" and "African American" to mark differences among certain populations. However, when directly quoting CBWC members, I will incorporate the terminology they use to identify themselves.

Along these same lines, I use the terms "Chinese" and "Aboriginal Peoples" when referring to those groups of women who have historically been subjected to racist and sexist oppression in Canada. To reiterate, I took into consideration ranges of differences within these groups based on culture, for example, used the terms Chinese and Aboriginal Peoples in order to avoid essentializing these categories. The latter's reductivism tends to vitiate an analysis based on a shared historical and contemporary experience of racism, sexism and other forms of oppression.

To repeat, when I began to study the identities, institutions and ideologies of the

[9] In writing about using appropriate language, this inquiry used Karen Flynn's (2003) discussion to structure this section.

CBWC, I eagerly turned to both the social movement literature and the feminist literature to facilitate my understanding of the actors, activities and the setting. This section addresses the question of finding an adequate framework to examine the CBWC. If black women's activism varies according to the socio-historical context and the geographical location, then it was important that I positioned the discussions of the CBWC in the context of a specific timeframe and a particular history. In particular if the CBWC was influenced by the socio-political context, then it is interesting to compare the CBWC with other frameworks to see which perspective best explains the identities, institutions and ideologies of the organization. I argue that the integrative black Canadian feminist synthetic and organizational model of movements provides the best framework to examine the CBWC's activities because it acknowledges the different context and history of oppression and resistance that took place in Canada. Black women's activism was not only shaped by a history of oppression and exploitation in Canada, but also by "a dissatisfaction with the politics of settlement organizations and the women's movement" (Agnew, 1996, p.135).

Black Canadian Feminist Literature Review: 1850s - 1970s[10]

For over a century, feminists have argued that sex for women of colour did not constitute the primary form of oppression and exploitation (Wane 2002; Dua, 1999; Agnew, 1996). Within the black Canadian feminist literature, this became self-evident as much scholarly effort went into identifying, questioning and charting black women's history of resistance in Canadian society. The first wave of Black Canadian feminists examines the 1850s to the 1970s, to analyze the lived experiences of black women as a

[10]See Dua, Enakshi. 1999. "Canadian Anti-Racist Feminist Thought: Scratching the Surface of Racism" in Scratching the Surface Canadian Anti-Racist Feminist Thought. Toronto: Women's Press.

starting point for their feminist analyses. Their approach to feminism is to use their lived experiences with racism to deconstruct the hegemonic forces that shape the lives of black Canadian women and their communities and to disrupt the set of social, political and economic processes that racialized Canada. By challenging racism or the exercise of power that is rooted in the socio-political and economic developments in Canadian society in which one group exercises power over another, the black Canadian feminists are challenging the suffragist's failure to identify racism as an issue for feminist mobilizing. The suffragists also perpetuated the prevailing racist stereotypes of the women's movement as a white woman's movement and their claims for gender equality were often premised on "the project of making Canada white" (Dua, 1999, p.12).

Black women and men have a long history of activism in Canada and Calliste's (1987) study examines the racist practices of employers and white workers to prevent black workers from organizing labour unions like the Brotherhood of black porters (quoted in Dua, 1999, p.12). Bristow et al. (1994) write that black women such as Mary Ann Shadd wrote extensively about education, racism, sexism and universal suffrage. Hamilton's (1994) indicates how women of color worked to provide education and social services that were denied to their communities.

In the first phase of black Canadian feminist thought, black women understood the importance of racism in their everyday experiences. Dua (1999, p.13) writes that in this historical moment with its own particular modes of domination, scholars did not make a necessary connection between "racism and sexism, either theoretically or in praxis."

Toni Cade's (1970) *The Black Woman: An Anthology* marked the beginning of a black feminist agenda. Many of the issues addressed therein are still explored today. Cade asks, "How relevant are the truths, the experiences, the findings of white women to black women? I don't know that our priorities are the same, that our concerns and methods are the same" (p. 121). She understands that it was important to think about black women's identity and the ways that gender and racial ideologies articulated differences between the experiences of white women and black women. Hence, Cade cautions that without examining the black female experience, there could be no basis for a critical approach to examining black and white women's lives.

During this same period, African American women were clearly articulating their own interests as an oppressed group. One participant at the 1973 National Black Feminist Organization (NBFO) conference stated that "while we share with our men a history of toil and dignity, it is categorically different to be black and male" (Berry, l986, p. 44). The formation of the NBFO signalled the emergence of a black feminist movement among African American women. Other organizations concerned with the specific problems of being black and female included the Black Women Organized for Action, the League of Black Women in Chicago and the National Black Women's Political Leadership Caucus in Detroit. African American women began to analyze the extent to which gender inequality and racial inequality affected their lives. Two works of fiction served to articulate this point: Toni Morrison's (1970) *The Bluest Eye*, Alice Walker's (1976) *Meridian,* Ntozake Shange's (1977) play *For Coloured Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf,, and* Joyce Ladner's (1971) *Tomorrow's Tomorrow* a groundbreaking sociological study of black adolescent girls,

provide excellent summaries of race, class and gender oppression. These writers raised issues specific to African American women and beyond.

In many ways, African American scholars made black feminism visible and black female voices audible. However, there are problems in black feminist texts especially in reference to the claim of an essential black female experience whereby African American scholars are narrowly defining what black voices represented. Since black women's experiences are heterogeneous, black feminist criticism can not afford to reduce the experiences of all black women to a common denominator.

In the 1970s, black Canadian women, as did African American sisters, argued that white feminists continued to perpetuate the same exclusionary and exclusive practices against black Canadian women that were evident in white male scholarship by establishing the experiences of white, middle-class, college-educated women as the norm. Black Canadian women identified race, class and gender as dimensions of social inequality affecting their lives. The main criticism of white feminist scholars' claim of gender as the primary locus of oppression was that it concealed or deleted other structural inequalities resulting from a history marked by colonialism, imperialism and racism.

My analysis of CBWC activities in the 1970s revealed the racism in white women's organizations. In the black Canadian communities, black women's organizing refuted quintessential claims that black women were absent or made invisible by white women's organizations. This study demonstrated the longstanding and articulate voices of black women in assessing the role of mainstream contemporary women organizations in excluding the experiences of black women from white feminist

scholarship.

While black feminist thought enriched our understanding of the multiple oppressions that intersected black women's experiences, one of its larger weaknesses was also its proclivity to monolithic accounts. Through its organizing efforts, the CBWC problematised what it viewed as the oversimplification and obfuscation of issues affecting them in the Canadian context. Black feminists were silent about blackness rooted in Canada *via* the United States, Europe, South America, Africa and the Caribbean. Black Canadian feminist scholars pointed out that the heterogeneous black population in Canada required a more nuanced analysis. Black women started researching and writing about how race, class and gender identities impacted black women's lives in different socio-political contexts in the 1980s. By examining the Canadian context, black Canadian feminist scholars challenged the idea of a universal black woman's experience.

Black Canadian Feminist Thought – 1980s

The 1980's witnessed impressive strides in black feminist scholarship. Black feminist thought continued to provide analytical guidance for black Canadian scholars. In *Ain't I A Woman? Black Women and Feminism* (1981), bell hooks criticized scholarship in which the experience of a group is "studied, interpreted, or written about ... solely by the group with greater power" (p. 63). She argued that mainstream feminism has devoted very little discussion to the impact of racism on black women. Similar arguments in the Canadian context have been made by Makeda Silvera (1989), Dionne Brand (1984) and Agnes Calliste (1989). The latter, however, linked their analyses to the experiences of black women who migrated from the Caribbean. They

admonished that blackness is not just African American and female, it is also Canadian and distinct in terms of other dimensions of social inequality.

Makeda Silvera's (1989) interviews with ten working class Caribbean women about their lives and day-to-day struggles as domestic workers with temporary employment visas marked the beginning of a black Canadian feminist agenda. All of the women had children who were being cared for by their grandmothers or other women in their home countries. Silvera described how none of the women were told about the widespread prejudice they were to experience in Canada nor were they informed about the degree to which racism was embedded in an economic system that encouraged the importation of cheap labour from the Caribbean to support the needs of wealthy and middle class Canadian families. Specifically, Silvera analyzed the intersection of race, class, gender oppression as well as the complicit role of the state in maintaining hierarchical power relations that subjugate black women workers. She concluded that race played a central role in the structure and organization of the Canadian workforce, where black female domestic workers are perceived as cheap, expendable and exploitable.

One of Silvera's most important contributions was her critique of immigration scholarship. She did not view the Canadian state as a benevolent institution engaged in humanitarian endeavours, especially in terms of dealing with displaced persons or efforts to assimilate Caribbean domestics into Canadian society. Instead, she spotlights Canadian immigration policies that restrict the entry of Caribbean women to temporary employment or during times of labour shortages (see also Flynn, 2003). Silvera showed how any discussion of capitalism and patriarchy could not exist independently of other

social relations such as racism.

In "A Working Paper on Black Women in Toronto: Gender, Race and Class," Dionne Brand (1984) used a model that integrated an analysis of racism with a "Marxist focus on class and [a] radical feminist emphasis on sexual hierarchy" (Hamilton, 2004, p. 19). She noted that the relationship between capital and class was important for understanding black women's oppression. For Brand, the radical feminist model did not dispute the exploitative nature of capitalist relations. Similar to Silvera, Brand concluded that location of black women in capitalist relations of production has structured the expendability and exploitation of black women's labour.

While Brand's framework enriched the black Canadian feminists' understanding of the relationship between women's productive and reproductive work, it contained a major weakness regarding socialist feminism which maintains "not withstanding its efforts to incorporate race and class into theory and practice, its analysis of racism and understanding the relationship between racism and classism were left unspecified or were inadequate" (quoted in Flynn, 2003, p. 19-20). Despite Brand's attempts to change, the situation, the concerns of white feminists continued to dominate feminist theories and practices.

Agnes Calliste (1989) has examined the 1956-1966 Second Canadian Domestic Scheme, an immigration policy based on the Canadian government's racist and sexist perceptions of black Caribbean women as promiscuous single parents who were likely to become a public burden. Calliste described the Second Domestic Scheme as an experiment in which black immigrants were acceptable under limited conditions so as to reduce what was perceived as a chronic shortage of domestics. Calliste used race,

class and gender to analyze how the state enacted discriminatory immigration policies and regulations against Caribbean women and shows how the Department of Immigration agreed to the scheme in order to maintain Canada's preferential trade and investment positions in the British Caribbean. Calliste and anti-racist feminists such as Roxanna Ng (1987) demonstrated clearly how state policies were shaped by the demand for cheap labour, thus implicating the crucial role of the state in demarcating the Canadian labour force along lines of race and gender.

While the work of black Canadian feminists has value in terms of incorporating the intersection of race, class and gender, some limitations still need to be addressed. As Flynn (2003) pointed out, these scholars have tended to present the state

> as a single powerful entity that was stuck in time and place and operating without interruptions as it devised policies and regulations to exclude black female migrants. In these analyses, black labour was constituted as a reserve army of labour, who, upon migration, found themselves in the lower echelons of the Canadian economy that some white Canadians abandon (p. 23-24).

While this has often been the case, such an analysis failed to examine how the skills, experiences and education of black Caribbean women might be differentiated in the labour market. In addition, many analyses of Caribbean domestic workers cannot be generalized to the experiences of other Caribbean migrants. Evidently, there were multiple challenges for Caribbean immigrants in Canadian society during this period and the studies cited here represent a very strong first step toward understanding them.

Black Canadian Feminist Thought - 1990s

In the 1990s, the third wave of black feminist writers were concerned with interrogating mainstream feminist theory and praxis for the ways in which it maintained the racial differences between women (Massaquoi & Wane, 2007). The texts establish parameters for theorizing about interconnections between race, class and gender (Dei & Calliste, 2000; Dua & Robertson, 1999). Similar to the situation among African American feminists, the term "antiracist feminist" has been applied to writers who analyse the intersection of multiple oppressions. Expanding challenging insights into the antiracist feminist literature, Dua (1999, p.18) proffers profound insights into the third wave of antiracist feminist writings by exploring three broad parameters of the literature. In the first parameter, scholars analyze the feminist discourse for the ways in which its theories focus on the interests of white women who perpetuate racism. In the second parameter, scholars raise epistemological questions about how to theorize the connection between race and gender. In the third parameter, scholars continue to work in documenting how racial differences among women are maintained.

As part of the first parameter, black Canadian feminist thought has been shaped by tensions within feminist theory. Peggy Bristow and Linda Carty (1994) described these tensions in terms of how academic feminist discourses largely ignored the problems and experiences of black Canadian women and the need to recover their narratives. A specific example was the anthology *We're Rooted Here and They Can't Pull Us Up: Essays in African Canadian Women's History* (1994), in which Peggy Bristow, Dionne Brand, Linda Carty, Afua Cooper, Sylvia Hamilton and Adrienne Shadd addressed the task of recovering the narratives of black women in Ontario and

Nova Scotia. The writers shattered the misconceptions that black people did not play a role in the development of Canada as a nation and that blacks should be viewed simply as recent arrivals. By placing black Canadian women at the centre of their analyses, the authors attacked the enduring national myth that racism does not exist in Canada. Further, they also emphasized the importance of religion in black Canadian communities.

In her paper on the lives of black women in Kent County, Ontario from 1850 to 1865, Peggy Bristow (1994) addressed the racism of legislators in the Canadian Parliament—including Lord Elgin, who feared that the country might be flooded with "blackies who are rushing across the frontier to escape from the bloodhounds that the Fugitive Slaves Bill has let loose on their track." According to Bristow, a public meeting was held in Chatham in 1849 to "prevent the Elgin Association from creating an asylum in Raleigh Township for fugitive slaves" (p. 77). "The opposition failed, but Bristow gave many other examples of racism that burst all hyperbolic niceties about Canadian tolerance" (Clark, 2002, p.317). By analysing black women's lives in the Elgin Settlement, Chatham and Buxton, Bristow shed light on their ideas about religion, education, marriage, family life, domestic labour and agricultural service in order to detail how black women, such as Mary Shadd Cary, participated in organizing communities and publishing newspapers.

According to Himani Bannerji, the feminist movement was based on a commitment to a "racialized nation-state, a commitment that contribute[s] to positioning women differently with the political economy" (quoted in Dua, 1999, p. 16). Hamilton (2004), Agnew (1996), Dua (1999) and Simms (1992) illustrated the ways in

which the attitudes of white middle class women have been central to developing liberal, radical and socialist feminist theory. They noted that the experiences of women of colour with all aspects of gender differ substantially from those of white middle class women. They stated that these differences raise the question of whether in fact a universal experience of gender exists. Reinforcing what black Canadian feminists have been advocating since the nineteenth century, these writers suggested that an inclusive feminist movement required feminists to analyse the multifaceted processes through which racism was perpetuated in Canadian society.

The second parameter of antiracist and black Canadian feminism concerned methodologies for studying race and gender. Writers have generally used one of two strategies. Stasiulis and Creese reason in favour of reformulating the Canadian political economy approach to address the multiple and contradictory intersection of race, class and gender in local and international contexts. Likewise, Bannerji called for a new model for analysing Canadian society. She explained that concepts such as capital, class and imperialism were "considered as totalizing, abstract, master narratives and untenable bases beyond the concreteness of immediate experience" (quoted in Dua, 1999, p. 16).

In *No Burden to Carry*, Dionne Brand (1991) employed oral histories to analyse the experiences of black Canadian and Caribbean women, arguing that in contrast, written histories reflected the ideas of those who occupy a place of privilege and who were not qualified to speak for those who are subordinated. She viewed oral histories as powerful, living testimonies of the ordinary and powerless that more accurately reflected lived experiences. The same women who speak their histories also deal with

an imposed muteness, one that has long silenced black and Caribbean women. For Brand, oral histories do a great deal to make up for the dearth of information and references to black women in other forms of historical resources.

Given the different strategies, antiracist and black Canadian feminists have developed two approaches to studying race and gender. One approach was located in a standpoint epistemology. Bannerji (1995) and Nourbese Philip (1992) emphasized the work of Marxist writers such as Walter Rodney and Franz Fanon. For these writers, the strength of a standpoint methodology was located in the "outsider within" status of black Canadian women. Drawing on Homi Bhabha's concept of a third space these writers have pointed out that women of color occupy a structural position within the Canadian political economy that overlapped the margins of race, gender and class. They argued that by tracing how black Canadian women were positioned, they could "simultaneously trace how race, class and gender have been constituted in Canadian society" (quoted in Dua, 1999, p. 19).

One of the distinct strengths of using a standpoint epistemology was that it allowed for a more complex understanding of the ways in which the discourse of race has shaped the contingent character of colonialism, imperialism and capitalism. Underlying this approach was the premise that racialized regimes of power and knowledge played a significant part in affecting the historical specific context of Canadian colonial and capitalist development - as was the imperative for profits. According to Bannerji (1995), acknowledging these regimes supported an understanding of how "social relations and forms come into being in and through each other, to show how a mode of production was an historically and socially create

formation" (quoted in Dua, 1999, p.19).Nonetheless, a number of writers have pointed out the weaknesses in the standpoint methodology -- the possibility that it might replace gender essentialism with race essentialism. Ahmad (1995) said that the women's experiences with racialization vary according to class location, the different ways different groups have been racialized, sexuality and personal history. Others noted that there was an additional danger in such a methodology because it did not allow for the fluid character of social identities. As Khayatt (quoted in Dua, 1999, p.19) suggested, the formation of one's identity included "my class, my color, my ethnicity, my sexuality and my religion." The antiracist feminists stated that the rigid definitions of race and ethnicity that do not account for fluidity of categories were not useful in that they mask differences of class and location. They fail to reflect individual identities or take into account lived experiences

While acknowledging the shared characteristic of women's experiences, Collins (1990) stressed that such experiences are not uniform, and that the existence of group interests does not mean that all women have the same experiences. Thus, she recommended an appreciation of black Canadian women's experiences as a "heterogeneous commonality embedded in social relations of intersectionality" (p. 24). Collins emphasized that black women constitute a heterogeneous group with experiences generated by differences in age, region, province, sexuality, religion, colour, hair texture, etc.—all of which can be theoretically accommodated within a shared viewpoint.

In the third parameter of this feminist scholarship, writers have continued to document the ways in which Canadian culture and institutions perpetuate racial

inequalities. Nourbese Philip (1992) points out that culture was the primary instrument through which whiteness is asserted. She stated that through the cultural images in stories, narratives and photographs, Canadians were divided into a normalized group and others. Other writers illustrated the ubiquitous nature of racialized images of femininities such as the happy and grateful immigrant female worker, the sexually available First Nation woman, the controlling black mother and the ignorant third world women among others (see Bannerji, 1995; James and Shadd, 1994). Hoodfar noted that "these images lead to psychological and socioeconomic consequences for women of color, who must work harder to establish themselves as thinking, rational, legitimate members of society" (quoted in Dua, 1999, p.22). Bannerji (1995) and Brand (1988) noted the ways in which these images were embedded in imperial regimes of power as the racialization of colonized women legitimated colonial and capitalist domination. The hegemonic role of culture in reproducing racism has led to several struggles over the access that people of color have to cultural institutions and over cultural appropriation struggles over who has the power to define whom, when and how (Henry, 2000; Gabriel and Scott, 1997; Nourbese Philip, 1992). For other writers employment practices specifically reproduced racialized labour markets (Dua, 1999). Quantitative analyses suggested that one's skin color was directly linked to the advantage or discrimination they experience in the labour market. Li (2003) using the 1991 census data, found that the Canadian economy placed a premium on skin color to the extent that "people of color experience an income penalty while white Canadians receive an income premium."

Black Canadian feminist thought emerged due to important antiracist feminist

texts such as Sherene Razack's (1998) *Looking White People in the Eye: Gender, Race and Culture in Courtrooms and Classrooms*. She commented on the difficulty of talking about black women's experiences with racism due to the lack of a homogeneous category of "black woman." Her study played an important role in shaping this dissertation in the ways that challenges assumptions of autonomous individual or collective identities, focusing instead on multiple, fragmented and unstable subjectivities. When referring to a category of women, she argued that it is important to know what that means.

In *Black Like Who? Writing Black-Canada* (1997), Rinaldo Walcott alluded astutely to various forms of black Canadian cultural production to analyze the processes of hybridization, creolization, intermixing, borrowing and reinventing that descendants of Africans have undergone to demonstrate the complexities of a black Canadian identity. In this dissertation I indicated how the formation of black Canadian woman's identities can be explained as a cultural production influenced by socio-political and economic contexts.

Antiracist feminist thought from the 1990's continued to be a strategically important framework for black Canadian women negotiating the political landscape. The black Canadian feminist synthetic and organizational model of movements supports an interrogation of and engagement with multiple theoretical positions—standpoint, Marxist, social movement, oral history, liberal, integrative.

Black Canadian Feminist Thought – 2000 to 2003

From 2000 to 2003, a black Canadian feminist perspective continued to be shaped by multidisciplinary approaches. In her dissertation *Race, Class and Gender: Black Women Nurses in Ontario, 1950-1980*, Karen Flynn (2003) examined the working lives of Canadian- and Caribbean-born black nurses. Drawing from recent scholarship on women and work, antiracist feminism, Canadian immigration history and black diasporas, Flynn analyzed how black nurses are located within the post-World War II health care system. Flynn noted that black nurses' identities, workplace experiences, encounters with racism and efforts to resist discrimination have been shaped by the same racial, class and gender categories that mould their subjective sense of self as professionals, workers, wives, citizens and immigrant women. Flynn's work has great value in terms of not lumping together all migrant workers and showing how analyses of domestic workers cannot be generalized to the experiences of other Caribbean workers. She described the ability of black women to be concerned with single issue - in this case, black nurses - without examining how black Canadian women are concerned with multiple issues.

Prospects for ongoing research are currently being debated. An integrative black Canadian feminist synthetic and organizational model of movements seems to be focussed on developing multilayered, black feminist frameworks concerned with a large number of issues and concepts such as diaspora, black youth/gangs/violence, black francophone women, third-world women, police-black community relations, same-sex benefits, AIDS/HIV, spirituality, reproductive technologies and their impact on women's health, day care and employment. Indeed, it appears certain that an

integrative black Canadian feminist standpoint will constitute a significant force in the coming decades.

In conclusion, the black feminist literature illustrated the importance of discourses of race for understanding how black women are situated within Canadian society. Scholars analyzed the ways in which the notions of insiders and outsiders are crucial for the production of racial differences. They also indicated that these notions have an impact on how an individual was economically and socially located within Canadian society. This study furthered these ideas by examining how black women were both "engaged" in and "distant" from the above reproductions of ideologies, institutions and identities.

The Synthetic Model

Nancy Whittier's (2002) synthetic model facilitates a powerful understanding of the relationship between the CBWC's external context and its internal organizational dynamics. Whittier examines how social, political and cultural meanings, contexts, interaction, identities, institutions, ideologies and organizations are significant in explaining how actors engage a neglected constituency and mobilize people within a social movement community to address a collective problem.

The section is divided into three parts. First, the four focal hypotheses of Whittier's synthetic model are outlined. Second, the connection between the synthetic model and the three concepts of ideologies, identities and institutions, is indispensable to understanding the kinds of activities that the CBWC has initiated and maintained during its thirty-year history. Third, building on the two previous sections the

importance of incorporating a black woman's standpoint (Wane, 2002; Collins, 1990) into Whittier's synthetic model is argued.

Whittier's synthetic approach to social movement communities is based on four hypotheses (Whittier, 2002, p.292-294).[11]

> First, both meanings and structures are important for understanding movements' internal dynamics, their external contexts, and the interaction between the two. Structural elements include the state structures and political opportunities, and social movement organizations and communities. Meanings include the cultural context in which movements operate, that is the dominant culture, discourse, and collective identities that explain and justify existing hierarchies, practices and distinctions among groups. These understanding are embedded in the state, public policy, other institutions, mass media and "common sense."

The synthetic model incorporates structural, political opportunities, institutions and cultural elements as the factors shaping the context of mobilization. It is based on an examination of the interplay between internal organizational dynamics and the external political context. Internal dynamics and the external factors shape movement communities. Internal dynamics include the interpretive processes through which groups construct collective identities and oppositional meanings, organizations and public challenges oriented towards the state. External factors encompass political events, dominant culture, and discourse. In addition, challenges include the various

[11] In Whittier's (2002, p.289) synthetic model, the relationship between social movements and states are located in particular "organizational context and relationships, alliances, chain of command, power struggles, and in legitimizing discourses and collective identities."

types of actions initiated by individuals and groups in their daily lives as part of a struggle to change their society (ibid).

Table 1 Components of Meaning and Structure in the CBWC's Internal and External Contexts

	Structural Elements	Context (Meanings and Understandings)
Internal	CBWC, Chapters SMC Networks	collective identity, individual identity
External	Government, Resources Institutions, POS	oppositional discourse, collective identities social movement communities

Source: Adapted from Whittier, 2002, p.293.

Second, meaning and structure are mutually constituted and cannot be understood separately. [12]

Social movements and the state cannot be extricated from their contexts. For example, both states and movements are configured around ideological, symbolic, power and resource issues. States produce meanings, identities and discourses within a structural context. Organizations are constructed around issues relating to power, state and resources. External structures and dominant discourse are shaped by co constitutive oppositional identities and organizations. Meanings and structures therefore operate on multiple levels of analysis (individual, cultural and structural) that are inseparable.

Third, movement's internal dynamics interact with external contexts. The processes through which organizations, movement communities and their external contexts influence each other are intricate because the influence is bi-directional (ibid). Movement interactions with external contexts are clearly about structure, the control of power and resources, opportunities for movements to gain access or exploit disputes

[12] States can shape movements, and movements can reshape states, politics, institutions and culture in which they operate (Whittier, 2002).

among power holders and the state's ability to compel or co-opt the movement's organization or action.

Paul Gilroy (1993) and Stuart Hall's (1997) recognition of the ways in which identity politics and cultural struggles could be incorporated by the state is particularly salient here. Black political struggles over identity can become institutionalized. This institutionalization can focus on bureaucratic antiracist procedures or promote tokenism and patronage in the political arena. Either way, the end result is the incorporation of conflict and the promotion of individual interests. Wider social inequalities, discrimination and racism associated with the intersection of gender, race and class remains unchallenged. Similarly, black community politics in Canada, like any form of identity politics, could be developed in ways that would lead to further fragmentation. Identity politics, for example, could be developed between black organizations themselves, or between working class, feminist movements leading to competition in a hierarchy of oppression for scarce resources (Meekosha, 1993). The key point here is to point out how important it is for critical strategies to be developed that will circumvent such competition.

Fourth, systemic inequalities of gender, race, class and sexuality shape both movements and the institutions they confront. Social movement scholars can tell us much about how systemic inequalities shape movements and how groups become established in different political arenas. Recent focus on race/gender/class provides insight into the links between movement communities and the societies in which they organize and furnishes a template for rethinking intersections of structure and meaning more broadly (Whittier, 2002). According to Whittier, numerous scholars have started

to explore how social movements are gendered in their organizational structures, recruitment and mobilization processes, emotions, collective identities, frames, and political opportunities (Schmitt and Martin, 1999; Taylor, 1999; Abdulhadi, 1998). Similarly, many scholars have begun to examine how intersections among race/class/gender shape movements (Robnett, 1997; White, 1999; Einwohner. 1999).

Social movements that are grounded in theories of the intersectionality of race/class/gender highlight the links between meaning and structure. They reveal how "systems of inequality are maintained and justified through institutionalized inequalities in power and resources, discourses about the dominant and subordinant groups' nature and worthiness, and symbolic and interpretive processes that enact inequalities in institutional practices and daily life" (Whittier, 2002, p.295) (Meyer, 2002; Collins, 1991).

Succinctly, by describing the interactions between the external context and internal organizational this model provides insight into the dynamic identities, institutions and ideologies of the CBWC. Let us now examine the relationship between the synthetic model and identities, institutions and ideologies.

Organizing, Identities, Institutions and Ideologies

Social movement research has greatly increased our understanding of the conditions under which social movement organizations emerge and develop (Freeman, 1999; Gamson, 1995; McAdam, 1982; Tilly, 1978; McCarthy and Zald, 1977). I argue that an examination of the identities, institutions and ideologies- is required to be important for understanding the getting connected, staying connected and the disconnecting and reconnecting stages of the CBWC. In this study, the CBWC is

defined a formal structure created by black women to advocate for change. The CBWC provides black Canadian women with a vehicle to communicate with one another, to strategize, to mobilize support and to coordinate their activities. For example, the CBWC grew out of pre-existing black organizations and networks of individuals and groups. Friendship networks, relationships in the workplace, communities, and neighbourhoods were the vital connections necessary to build the movement.

Organizing

While the concept of organization is important to this study, I also want to emphasize the term organizing. This reflects a focus on the content and process of activities, in addition to the structural features of organizations. In the case of the CBWC, the participants belong to many different groups and organizations; they are linked to social networks that cut across groups and organizations engaged in the process of creating social change.

Identities

The importance of collective identity for movement participation is well documented (Meyer, 2002; Whittier, 2002;Gamson, 1995; Snow, 2001; Snow and McAdam, 2000; Melucci, 1996; Taylor and Whittier, 1992). Activist identity formation is argued to be central to organizing and dialectically linked to social action. Thus, before individuals can coalesce into a movement, they need to know who they are. Whom do they represent? Collective identity refers to the willingness among participants to think of themselves as belonging to a group with distinctive problems, similar, not identical grievances and interests.

Institutions

The findings indicate that identities and ideologies are shaped by institutions. That is, black Canadian women's consciousness is influenced by the family, community organizations and their own respective women's movement. Essentially, this mix of factors has contributed to the development of an oppositional consciousness. Perhaps the most important lesson that the women's movement can draw from CBWC resistance is the manner in which the CBWC women broadened the women's movement. Moreover, their status and experiences (derived from their social location in Canadian society, as well as their positions as women and mothers) need to be closely examined in the sociology of movements.

Ideologies

Black Canadian feminists in this movement form and inform identities in relation to conflicting social narratives of ideologies supported by institutions. Social movements mediate culture and character by challenging and reworking their respective stories of identity, individually and collectively. What is the social construction of their subjectivities within processes of identity production, discursive displays of experience and social histories of selfhood? This question demonstrates the relationality of a black Canadian feminist movement as a serious substantive and generic site for investigating often overlooked and yet fundamental issues of inequality, for unravelling the connectedness of concepts and applied practices and for questioning dominant modes of discourse.

Within a synthetic model, both external context and internal organizational dynamics shape and are shaped by important features of collective action. Black

Canadian women's experiences of racism, discrimination in employment, and immigration policy, for example, formed part of the socioeconomic and political bases for the getting connected stage of the CBWC. Black Canadian communities provided the pre-existing organizational base or what Aldon Morris (1999, p.517) calls "the proliferation of social networks across localities and across neighbourhoods in cities through which a movement is mobilized and sustained." Black women both reflected and called into question their experiences and struggles in their communities. To further elaborate and understand this process, we must look at standpoint theory as a guide.

Locating Blackness: Towards A Black Canadian Woman's Standpoint

A number of scholars refer to standpoint theories to explain how women's identities or social location provide a particular perspective from which to experience, and subsequently to understand, how power relations structure their daily lives. The term is also used to refer to individual experiences (Collins, 1990) and critical dialogues among those sharing similar experiences (Hartsock, 1998). Post-modern theorists point out the weakness inherent in standpoint models: identities and constructions of community are so dynamic and shifting that any knowledge acquired from these perspectives is too incomplete to be utilized for critical analyses.

One solution to this problem is Dorothy Smith's (1992) work on the everyday world framework. From this perspective, standpoint is a site of inquiry rather than the property of the subject. Smith's approach offers a methodological strategy for understanding the "social relations and organizations pervading her world but invisible to it" (ibid, p.91).

However, rather than view standpoint from one angle, like Nancy Naples (1998) I find all three approaches to standpoint analyses (as located in social identities, as constructed in communities, and as a site of inquiry) central to the investigation of the CBWC's political praxis. Antiracist feminists and black feminist scholars (Robnett, 1997; Wane, 2002; Bristow et al., 1994; Collins, 1991; hooks, 1981; Barnet, 1995) have long recognized the importance of examining how the intersection of race and gender constrains the socioeconomic and political choices of black women. Their status at the low end of the power hierarchy provides a foundation from which to develop a black woman's standpoint to theorize the diverse experiences of black women and their communities. By adopting a black woman's standpoint, this study foregrounds the importance of identities, institutions and ideologies to the analysis of the CBWC.

As Dua (1999) argues, women of color in Canada do not suffer oppression in precisely the same way as white Canadian women. The differences and diversity within the woman's movement raise questions about how the multiple identities, institutions, ideologies and hierarchies of oppression affect black Canadian women. How can they define their identities in complex ways and in multidimensional terms? Standpoint theory recognizes multiple forms of diversity. Accordingly, the black women represented by the CBWC do not represent homogenous, static entities, but rather collectivities with distinct socio-historical origins. Similar experiences, specifically experiences with racism, housing, health, child development, education and pensions, provide the rational for association with one another.

As previously noted, the definition of the term black is also important. It refers to "descendants of Africa during the slave trade, black loyalists, refugees, fugitives, settlers who immigrated during the American Civil War and those who immigrated mostly from the Caribbean and Africa after the Second World War" (Mensah, 2002, p.21). To this definition, I also include those who are Amerindian, Brazilian, African Europeans, African Asians, part of the Maghreb and Islamic Heartlands and Indian Ocean.[13] These descendants are also part of the African diaspora. As such, a black Canadian woman's standpoint explores the interrelationships between different dimensions of women's oppression to illustrate that their experiences are complex, with overlapping as well as conflicting interests, both within and between social movement organizations. It also allows us to make the connection between meaning (identities, ideologies), institutions and structures (organization) in their lives. We begin to observe black women and their organizations both in history and biography that have been invisible or overlooked. This perspective is committed to uncovering what is around us revealing the historically constituted power relations embedded in the institutional structures of society (Dei, 1996; Calliste, 1996).

Standpoint theory can be used to articulate the distinctive position of black women in Canadian society. It allows us to understand how black women's identities, institutions and ideologies contest relations of domination and subordination and how power can mediate and constrain their experiences. It argues those women's experiences, their communities, and their organizations are vital to understanding the importance of a group's history and culture to the processes of social change. A black

[13] These terms are taken from a Memory and Methodology workshop on the African Diaspora that I attended. The Harriet Tubman Resource Center on the African Diaspora, Department of History, York University on July 2-23, 2005 hosted the workshop.

Canadian women's standpoint can be used to demonstrate the ruptures in the dominant discourse (Katzenstein, 1998), identify injustices done to a group (ideology), demand changes in society, address those injustices and see black women and men's shared interests in solving these problems. In other words, Meyer, Whittier and Robnett (2002, p.121) argue that "standpoints, ideologies, institutions and identities are important in helping us to understand how participants in social movement organizations create shared meanings and reach agreements about attainable goals."

Recent social movement research has cast light on black women's standpoints (Robnett, 1997). Like Belinda Robnett, I argue that a black Canadian feminist synthetic and organizational model of movement activities provides a much-needed understanding of black Canadian women's movement organizations and challenges this study to analyze the position of women within the context of blacks in Canada.[14] To this end, this study uses a synthetic model that is informed by black women's standpoints. The model incorporates identities, institutional, ideological, transnational, economic and political considerations. The model is concerned with gender equality and the power structures that subjugate people (ibid). The model provides black women with what Naples (1998, p.342) calls "a position from which to act politically that varies by race, ethnicity, class, sexuality and region, among other dynamics (nation) that must be further contextualized and understood as relational, contested and changing over time." This study is written from the perspective of black women in the

[14] David Meyer (2002, p.57) argues the degree to which political process theories are applicable to the rest of the world is not known. This is an interesting challenge in the Canadian context to explain the CBWC. To this end, my study hopes to encourage the study of diasporic communities in Canada that will inform and broaden synthetic explanations for social protest.

CBWC. It seeks to identify the unequal conditions affecting black women in order to account for their organizational activities in the CBWC (see table 2).

Table 2
Towards A Model of Diasporic Communities

	Structural Elements	Context (Meanings and Understandings)
Internal	CBWC, Chapters SMC Networks Transnational Networks	collective identity, individual identity African Diaspora: Canadian, West Indian (circum Caribbean, Mainlands, and Islands), American, Amerindian, Brazil, Maghreb and Islamic Heartlands, Indian Ocean, African (ethnicities) African-European, African-Asian[15]
External	Governments, resources From other institutions, POS	oppositional discourse, collective Identities social movement communities, diasporic communities

Source: Adapted from Whittier, 2002, p.293.

Social Movement as Movements: Movement as an Analytic Tool

The concept of movement refers to the progression of related experiences and identity changes through which an individual or a group moves. A movement is a socially recognized process involving a relatively orderly "sequence of movements" (Becker, 1963, p.24). This constellation of behaviour and values serves as a framework for interpreting action (Hughes, 1937) and for charting identities (Rock, 1979, p.140). Within the interpretive paradigm, a movement is not only a way of being but also a way of knowing. Movements consist of forms of sociation which impose some intelligibility on the actor's world.

Using the concept of movement, we are able to focus on the processes of, and stages in, choice, development and transformation. We are led to discern major

[15] I presented a paper at the CSAA's annual meeting, hosted by the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, at the University of Western Ontario 2005. At the conference a colleague asked me how my work connects to black Latinas. Black Latinas are part of the African diaspora. Their struggles are part of the social protests of diasporic communities. This model and chapter is my answer to her question.

components and relations; to investigate both formal and informal links between stages; and to specify various contingencies affecting the nature of interactions located in these stages.

Movement stages are characterized by identifiable and organized sets of relations and social meanings. As they emerge from social interactions and as they are subsequently interpreted as meaningful, stages provide actors with a set of perspectives. In other words, actors construct knowledge of their different worlds by assessing situations and assigning meanings to the activity and to others as classificatory schemes. Consequently, staging a movement becomes an ongoing process of self-indication and self-validation. Stages are essentially procedures that individuals use in making sense of their immediate situations. With increased and continued interactions, these movement categories evolve so that stage identifications follow and are considered by others in future encounters. These categorizations establish routine rules for interaction and serve as directives for future involvements.

Rules are not independent of actors but are constructed by actors who define social reality because a belief in the "objective facticity" of various sets of rules. Rules are objectively established through interpretive processes and not by simple reference to a body of culturally given norms. Activities and the movements with which they are associated are often attached to institutions that enjoy powerful codes of conduct, fixed discipline and reward structures. The social organization of a movement consists of various forms that typically plot biographies and relationships. They include different features of (1) the initial "getting connected" or "becoming"; (2) the "staying connected" or "being" ; and, (3) the "disconnecting" or “reconnecting” stage of a

movement pursuit characterized by graduation, expulsion, termination, retirement as well as transformation, conversion or greater induction into another orientation (Visano, 1988).

Actors create stages that in turn are used to justify degrees of involvements. Passing through these stages is not an automatic process. Participation in and commitment to a stage depend upon several specific adjustments. These contingencies appear both as conditions and consequences of interactions. At each stage a number of tightly interwoven contingencies operate and assume different meanings. They do not operate "simultaneously" (Becker, 1963, p.24) but become important to the actor during different stages of his or her commitment to a movement. Instead of leaping from one stage to another (Ericson, 1975, p.84), actors experience "contingencies" (Goffman, 1961, p.135). Three related factors are fundamental in building and maintaining the symbolic worlds of movements: constituting skills of actors, reactions of others and self-identity.

A movement is conditioned by the acquisition of skills, knowledge and resources. Rewards are maximized by the ongoing development and application of knowledge. Aspirants' interest alone is not sufficient to qualify them for mobility. They must learn a stock of beliefs, values and ways of acting that will ensure continued participation. They may be expected to interpret the rewards offered and their chances of realizing them. Rational choice requires information that they would presumably channel within different stages (Becker, Geer, Hughes and Strauss, 1961). This may be influenced by the individual's interpretation of several immediate conditions: abilities or qualifications, specific occupational information, orientation to the specific work life

and social relations. In addition, there are the unexplicated features of settings of interactions that promote and permit the exercise of the actor's capabilities.

A second factor that affects acting units is the action of other acting units (Blumer, 1967). This reference to "previous significant others" (Gerth and Mills, 1953, p.93) aids in securing access to resources. More significantly, associations with similarly circumstanced others serve to "validate" (Lemert, 1972, p.81) and sustain a convenient self concept. By attending to the reactions of others, the actor learns favourable definitions of experience and self that, in turn, guides new strategies of interaction. Actors acquire their roles by interpreting the role of others and by reacting to how they think others conceive normal action in a situation. As Blumer (1979, p.ix) noted, "The acts of others make up the social setting for one's own act, serving to incite, to inhibit, to temper and to guide one's own line of action as one takes note of what others are doing or are likely to do." Actors interpret and define the action of others. They do not simply react to the responses of others. The response of significant others will be framed by the movement that is extrapolated for the self (Rock, 1979, p.137). This frame of reference aids in organizing perceptions and experiences.

The third pivotal condition affecting movement advancement is the acquisition of techniques for constructing appropriate self concepts. Actors establish and situate meaningful identities for themselves and for others at different stages (Goffman, 1961, p.125). The influence of an individual's self concept has received considerable attention in studies of vocational choice. Traditionally, the self concept has been studied in terms of normative theories of congruence (Holland, 1973).

An interpretive framework, however, suggests that participants are actively involved in shaping their identities with others with whom they interact. Self concepts are negotiated, assumed and discarded. The developmental perspective of the knowing self is fundamental to the movement process. It is however mediated by the actor's interpretations of contingencies, such as the actor's own definitions of social reality. Actors define stage expectations in socializing associations. Consequently, their moral characters and their relationships to rules and to others are continually evolving during the course of interaction. Socialization simplifies the learning and maintenance of an appropriate self concept by specifying the necessary world view, skills and knowledge. Interestingly, these products are based upon, but are not coterminous with, the actor's image reflected in interaction with others (Lemert, 1972, p.78).

The logic of this developmental model does not presuppose that once actors have begun to move in the direction of a certain movement, they will inevitably go through the entire range of stages. Rather, the premise of this model suggests that there are a number of situational and subjective contingencies which the actors confront, interpret and select at various stages in the sequence. These contingencies are not objectively given. A movement study, therefore, is not limited strictly to "affinities" which preordain actors nor to "affiliations" which convert them (Matza, 1969, p.119-121). Shifting relations and meanings emerge in order to cope with these affinities and affiliations. An actor may enter at any stage only to move forward, backwards or out of the process completely. At each stage, the actor accomplishes the necessary skills and identities to respond to the various movement challenges, however constructed. The nature of the relationships is significant in affecting the next stage he or she will pursue

in advancing, maintaining or abandoning his or her movement. It is not guaranteed that once all the stages have been experienced that, the actor will have secured a movement.

Stages often involve varying degrees of overlap, negotiations and compromise (Miller and Form, 1951). For Lemert (1972, p.79), an analysis of recurrent or typical contingencies awaiting someone who continues a course of action is a more meaningful inquiry. It becomes necessary to specify the precise mechanisms of learning and patterns of interactions that allow for the development of contingencies integral to one's becoming, being and changing orientation. The "theoretically best choices" and "points of no return" or "turning points" warrant exploration (ibid). An interpretive perspective recognizes that many unrelated encounters occur at different stages of a movement which are neither incremental nor consequential (Rock, 1979, p. 140-1). Likewise, there are "objectified" elements of a movement, of which actors are no longer conscious and which are beyond their control (Ericson, 1975, p.39).

From the social action perspective (Weber, 1946; Blumer, 1967, p.143), movements are viewed as emerging accomplishments of actors in their daily encounters. The process by which meanings are assigned to routine activities with and among fellow participants is the focal point of inquiry. This perspective highlights the need to consider the meanings and negotiations of definitions behind the formation and coordination of movement stages and their attendant contingencies. The common everyday properties of work, interaction and social identity become the subject of sociological examination.

A movement is an enterprise developed and articulated against a backdrop of significant meanings. The social organization of movements- status, roles and stages,

enter action only to the extent that it shapes situations in which people act and it provides symbols that people use in interpreting these situations (Blumer, 1967, p.146). Movement, as a meaningful concept, is ordered reflexively by social actors into a human enterprise. Movement stages, therefore, are presented as the outcomes of the actors' consciously applied skills. Emphasis however, on the coping and problem solving aspects of interaction (Hughes, 1971; Becker, 1963; Matza, 1969; Lemert, 1972).

The concept of movement is valuable precisely because of its "two-sidedness" (Goffman, 1959, p.127-69). On the one hand, this concept is linked to internal matters- the individual, the image of self, felt identity and its shifts. On the other hand, it is related to "social" identities, to the public, the significant society with which the former interacts. A movement study provides an examination of this dialectic in terms of the socialization process through which an individual acquires a set of values, rules and language. In orienting his or her behaviour to that of others, the actor encounters a number of contingencies. The actor often interprets these experiences by attending to the accounts of others. This reference to his or her experience and the experience of others becomes classified according to stages that in turn assume meaningful designations.

Influenced by his associations with Hughes, Becker suggested that within this processual dimension, movements flow out of differential experiences that actors undergo (1963, p.31-34). The experience of social reaction becomes a significant determinant of movement development. Non-institutional movements are subject to the typing and control process of institutions with which actors interact. A movement

develops in order to cope with and "manage" problems of adjustment (Lemert, 1972; Goffman, 1973, p.79).

This interpretive framework downplays the notion of movement as fixed, static and self-maintaining systems constrained by strict rules. Instead, this perspective emphasizes the fluid, loose and continually emerging qualities of movement, the ongoing dynamic reorganizations and changing webs of interaction among its members. Shifting memberships, limited movement involvements, role discrepancies and ambiguities, incomplete rules, conflict and change are just as much part of movements as stability and consensus.

Outline of the Chapters

In chapter one, I analyzed the social movement, feminist, antiracist feminist, black Canadian feminist literature to show that black Canadian women have a long history of organizing in North America. This chapter examines three concepts central to this study: identities, institutions and ideologies.

Chapter Two details the methods and data used in this study: interviews, participant observation and archival materials. The interviews focused on the respondent's participation in the CBWC. I attended and observed both national and local conferences and meetings. The archival research and documents loaned to me by the chapter's members supplied the detailed information regarding the women's activities in the CBWC.

Chapter Three details how events that occurred between 1973 and 1983 significantly affected the lives of black Canadian women and set the "getting connected stage" of the CBWC. To explain the "getting connected" stage with its emphasis on

identities, I examined how black women came together at conferences, from self enlistment to recruitment practices. The conferences served as the mechanism, if not the engine, for mobilizing interests. Therein the activities of knowledge production served to build and maintain communities.

I trace the CBWC's origins from a series of conferences that took place between 1973 and 1983 in order to explore issues related to identities, racism, immigration, education and black youth. Thus, the rise of the CBWC was inextricably linked to black women's opposition to racism, oppression and exploitation in Canadian society. The focus is on six strategically planned conferences that took place between 6 April 1973 and 21 November 1980. I argue that these conferences were the precursors to the development of a formalized organizational structure. This mobilization process is explicated through examining four different phases in the CBWC's development: (i) the founding of the first national Congress of Black Women (CBW) in 1973; (ii) the establishment of an ad hoc committee the National Congress Committee (NCC) in 1974; (iii) the rise of the National Secretariat (NS) in 1977; and, (4) the development of the Congress of Black Women of Canada in 1980. I show how incremental developments within one conference became catalysts for change in other conferences thus building the momentum for the rise of a national organization for social change.

Table 3 Organization/Acronym, Founding Year and Purpose, 1973-1983

Phase	Organization/Acronym	Founding Year and Purpose
1	National Congress of Black Women (NCBW)	1973; founding conference
2	National Congress Committee (NCC)	1974; to establish aims
3	National Secretariat (NS)	1977; to develop a formal organization
4	Congress of Black Women of Canada (CBWC)	1980; to build a network of solidarity for black women

Chapter Four illustrates how the process of staying connected required a more institutionalized identity. How do institutions mediate the impact of ideologies on identity? This chapter argues that by applying a black Canadian feminist synthetic and interpretive organizational model of movements, we become better equipped for understanding the social construction of an institution in the Congress of Black Women of Canada. In this "staying connected" phase the role of institutions in mediating the impact of ideologies on identity is filtered through organizational structures. As the organization became more institutionalized with formal rules, divisions of hierarchy, specialized tasks, the organization was perceived as more embedded.

Once the organization was perceived as more embedded, the CBWC's institutional entrepreneurs are the socially constructed and constructing individuals or collective units that create, change or break down organizational institutions. Organizational institutions are embedded in organizational fields that may constitute battle grounds for participants who are attempting within institutions to draw on contradictions of existing institutions to confront oppressive practices and drawing effectively on movement institutions to challenge the structural domination of the state as they promoted a new definition of black Canadian women and demonstrated a different ideology for mobilization based in oppositional rather than dominant meanings.

In brief, Chapter Four focuses on a period of unprecedented organizational growth and expansion: new local organizations were founded in eight provinces, membership grew, government grants were secured and the National Foundation of the Congress of Black Women of Canada was incorporated as the official fundraising body

of the organization. Conferences continued to provide members with information, skills and services. The CBWC also organized educational forums and discussion groups and lobbied the federal government for funds and policy changes. This was especially significant in the CBWC's history: ideas and grievances articulated by the first decade of activists were translated into formal organizational practices. This chapter demonstrates that the CBWC's successes during this period were possible because of the organizational foundation, the social construction of institutions and social changes brought about by leaders.

Chapter Five undertakes an analysis of the CBWC's disconnecting and reconnecting stage to answer the following question: How is the organization able to sustain itself between 1993 and 2003? This chapter argues that the shared agendas of a range of actors were vital to the CBWC's survival and continuity. While the CBWC's national conferences have played a significant role in keeping it alive, this chapter looks at how the CBWC had built coalitions between black women, black men and antiracist feminists. Drawing on the integrative black Canadian feminist synthetic and interpretive organizational model of movements, this chapter examines whether mobilizing around identity struggles hindered an appreciation of struggles that have broader constituencies (Sudbury, 1998). The chapter identifies factors that have prevented or encouraged the CBWC's effective coalition building. Social movement organizations may fall apart or transform themselves because their resources disappear, internal conflicts or declining membership. Chapter five argues that despite its early promise and considerable success, the CBWC faced a number of formidable challenges. A trouble strategic vision, a national leadership ineffective at coordinating

communication and activity among CBWC structures, restructuring at the local/ grass roots and the absence of organizational funding were largely responsible for its decline in recent years.

Chapter Six pulls together the empirical data and theoretical contributions in terms of a number of applications and implications of this study. In addition to proffering a unique understanding theoretically and empirically to the social history of black women's organizing in Canada, this chapter provides a set of recommendations for the CBWC.

Contributions

Highlighting the significance of identities during the 1973-1983 the getting connected stage of the organization, the salience of institutions during the 1983-1993 staying connected stage; and relevance of ideologies during the 1993-2003 disconnecting and reconnecting stage of the CBWC, this study moves beyond the narrative to explore more fully the relationships among identities, institutions and ideologies. The latter represent the quintessential sociological problematic of conceptually inquiring into the differential impact of ideologies on identity and institutions. More specifically, this study draws upon black feminist theoretical and methodological insights to develop *an integrative black Canadian feminist synthetic and interpretive organizational model of movements* to explain the CBWC. This model captures both practical applications and theoretical implications relevant to a wide audience that goes beyond the academy. Therefore, my study would have a broader accountability and invites the use of a language of inclusion. At the same time, using a black feminist synthetic and interpretive organizational model of movements also

meant that I wrote as a black Canadian woman located within particular temporal and spatial contexts.

Likewise, the analytic dimensions of identities, institutions and ideologies provide the theoretical scaffolding for appreciating the getting connected, staying connected and disconnecting and reconnecting stages of the CBWC. Movement organizations, identities, institutions and ideologies play vital roles in the formation of social movement communities and their subsequent interactions with the state, the dominant culture and in the everyday lives of potential recruits and members. The CBWC mobilizes a neglected constituency by building up solidarity, articulating their identities and engaging in community campaigns. Therefore, an integrative black Canadian feminist synthetic and interpretive organizational model of movements that incorporates black women's perspectives provides a window into the organizational activities of the CBWC and contributions of black Canadian women.

Chapter 2

RESEARCH METHODS:

A BLACK FEMINIST SYNTHETIC AND INTERPRETIVE ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL OF MOVEMENTS AS A COLLECTIVE ACCOMPLISHMENT

Introduction

Concepts such as identities, institutions and ideologies sensitize us to the task of moving to the concrete forms of empirical instances (Blumer, 1969). Theoretically, the interpretive paradigm provides a partial and tentative framework wherein concepts designating principal features of social structure and process in a specific situation are located. Epistemologically, the interpretive approaches directed this research project by providing a general proposal of guiding notions. These guiding notions are pivotal in shaping an otherwise amorphous mass of observations and experiences. Sensitizing concepts serve as a reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances (Blumer, 1970, p.58).

This exercise contributes to the development of abstract categories from an ongoing analysis of data. As Visano (1988) articulates, through interviews and participant observation a researcher becomes acquainted with a peoples' "weltanshaung" or world meanings. Lofland (1971) and Wax (1980), emphasize the mutuality of participant observation and intensive interviewing as the central

techniques of the qualitative researcher. Field work permits the field worker to provide an intimate account of the social processes and personal experiences involved.

In general, qualitative methods resist a rigid inventory of research steps. Rather than an a priori elaboration of rules and procedures, this methodology encourages a flexible accommodation between theory and methods that is consistent with the theoretic demands of a black feminist synthetic and interpretive organizational model of movements and the methodological requirements of qualitative research. This research tradition does not begin with a fixed or rigid design which specifies and operationalizes concepts in advance of fieldwork. By preserving the *verstehen* or *understanding* tradition in sociology the collection and the ongoing analysis of the data demand a commitment to knowledge generated from the experiences with the phenomenon studied. As Rock (1979, p.209) admonishes, coherence emerges as methodological decisions are made and pursued. Theoretical issues and methodological procedures always overlap; the discovery and presentation of findings are always integrally related.

The Critical Tradition

This research is associated with a critical mandate, that is, a style of analysis and discourse embedded within a political purpose. Conventional methodologies generally speak "for" their subjects, usually to an audience of other researchers. Critical interpretive research, by contrast, raises their voice to speak to an audience "with" their research participants as a means of empowering them by giving more authority to their voice. A critical ethnography seeks to modify consciousness or invoke a call to action (O'Reilly-Fleming, 1993). While conventional ethnographers aim to study culture for the purpose of describing it, critical researchers try to change it.

Again, this methodology is highly congruent with the critical interpretive framework detailed in chapter one. The micro-institutional or localized gestures that inscribe and sustain logics in everyday life are linked to ideological productions, the constitution of normative and oppressive cultural expressions (Silvera, 1989). The method of inquiry, according to James (1963b), is liberating as it transcends the given and confronts the phenomenology of rootedness. This research method restores authenticity as the ultimate reality by confronting the contradictions of lived experiences (Trotman, 1993). It is oriented towards the authentic social construction of a different reality that does not silence opposition but rather hears voices which move to social action. This method provides participants with occasions that enable them to be the centre of their experiences, that is, the subjects in their worlds. Within feminist perspectives, critical interpretive methodologies have advanced an unique standpoint, different "distinctive resources" that have been neglected in traditional scholarship. As Dorothy Smith (1987) notes, mainstream methods exclude the voices of women and men of colour, of native peoples and of homosexual women and men.

Maguire (1987) argues for the integration of research, research subjects and direct action. Research becomes a collective enterprise in which its production and use are to be shared with those who are its focus. Researchers also become active in confronting explicit problems that affect the lives of the researched, as defined by them rather than remain passive recipients of "truth" that will be used to formulate policies by and in the interests of those external to the setting.

Central to critical methods is the notion of "triangulation" (Denzin, 1970, p.1995). Triangulation is the application and combination of several research

methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon. The diverse methods and measures which are combined should relate in some specified way to the theoretical constructs under examination. Multiple methods in an investigation are used to overcome the biases of a single method. As a consequence, no single research method will ever capture all of the changing features of the social world under study. Interpretations which are built upon triangulation are certain to be stronger than those which rest on the more circumscribed single method. A triangulated interpretation reflects the phenomenon as a process that is relational and interactive. Methodological triangulation may consist of within-method or between-method strategies (Denzin, 1978, p.304). This study employs a mix of documentary analysis, interviews and participant observation methods to analyze CBWC activities. This case study approach (McAdam, 1999; Buroway, 1998; Lofland, 1996; Morris, 1984; Orum, Feagin and Sjoberg, 1991; Snow and Anderson, 1991) of the CBWC approach incorporates participant observation of the CBWC's meetings, document analysis of records and minutes and semi-structured interviews (Blee and Taylor, 2002) with twenty two respondents will be conducted. This approach has three benefits. First, "it allows for the development of a detailed description of black women's organizational activity. Second, it illustrates the specific patterns of interrelationships between events. Third it preserves the chronology of activity in distinguishing between efforts and results" (Gordon, 2002, p.65). According to Gordon, qualitative analysis:

> is often the best way of chronicling movement community activity while also developing a perspective on how participant themselves perceive their actions. This is due in part to the fact that the nature of political activity

> requires attention to discussions, meetings and activities that may not appear to be politically significant upon initial observation. The case study approach also assists in the development of theory (ibid, p.65).

Within the social movement literature and black feminist research tradition, "personal narratives and interviews represent a significant way in which women are able to express their own understandings of their political environment and their abilities to impact it" (ibid., p.65). I have personal and academic interest in black Canadian women's organizations. I was interested in studying a black Canadian woman's organization and I joined the Scarborough Chapter CBWC in 1991. My first CBWC experience was attending an open house for the Scarborough chapter that I saw advertised in *Share* magazine, a black community newspaper. I was warmly welcomed, and I spent much of my time talking about my graduate studies and research interests, in addition to meeting members who described their reasons for joining, and who invited me to attend chapter meetings. I viewed this initial encounter as an opportunity to share many of my political concerns with chapter members. The latter, consisting of high school teachers and principals, university professors, businesswomen, nurses, politicians, government employees gave me a sense of pride in my heritage and community.[1] This study reflects my personal and academic interests in black Canadian feminism, black Canadian communities, black Canadian women's organizations and the CBWC. My increasing awareness of the political struggles faced by black women increased my desire to gain a better understanding of the CBWC. As a graduate student, I took a course on social movements and I discovered that many of my personal

[1] See Belinda Robnett. 1997. "Introduction" in How Long? How Long? African American Women in the Struggle for Civil |Rights. New York: Oxford University Press.

interests naturally extended to my academic work.[2] I recalled a few discussions where individuals opined at length, and with great certainty, about the futility of trying to research black women's organizations in Canada. I argued that black Canadians have a long history of activism in Canada - there was little anyone could do to deny the existence of the museums, scholarly studies and the long time activists scattered across the country provided ample evidence.

Being a black woman and becoming a Scarborough chapter participant facilitated my access to the organization and my ability to establish the necessary trust for collecting data. Several black Canadian feminist scholars have commented on the benefits of a shared perspective between interviewers and interviewees, emphasizing the manner in which ideological compatibility enhances rapport, empathy, and trust (Calliste, 2000; Flynn, 2003; Robertson, 1999). The main benefit of my insider status was not that it gave me a privileged view, but rather that I gained knowledge of developments that might not appear in written sources. My status as a doctoral candidate was also helpful in that it assured the CBWC leadership and other interviewees that I would be generating an analysis based on a black Canadian feminist synthetic and interpretive model of movements.

Interviews

This research investigated the community activism of black Canadian women in the CBWC. I explored how the CBWC kept alive their repertoires of resistance against racism in Canadian society. I documented the ways in which racism hindered their fight against oppression, both in society at large and in the mainstream institutions from

[2] See David Meyer. 2002. "Opportunities and Identities: Bridge Building in the Study of Social Movements." Social Movements, Identity, Culture and the State. New York: Oxford University Press.

which they have been excluded or in which they have been marginalized. The black Canadian feminist researchers have been concerned with developing methodologies to study race and gender. Carty (1992) and Nourbese Philip (1992) argue for a standpoint epistemology that is located in black women's outsider status. The everyday nature of black women's experience shows that they occupy a structural position within the Canadian political economy that overlaps with the categories of identities, institutions and ideologies. They argue that research from a standpoint epistemology or from the standpoint of black women attempts to trace how the women of color are position in Canadian society and they can simultaneously trace how identities, institutions and ideologies have been constituted in Canadian society. Black Canadian feminist scholars have commented on the importance of self-definition during the research process, and of recognizing the interactive nature of the relationship between the researcher and the interviewees (Calliste & Dei, 2000; Massaquoi & Wane, 2007). Interviews were especially useful for identifying information about the participant's lives that tend to be overlooked in traditional studies (Bristow et al., 1994).

Some Interviewees were encouraged to explain how they viewed their circumstances and to define issues. I was therefore able to use the voices and experiences of CBWC participants. Black Canadian feminist scholars have also asserted that interviews are particularly useful for identifying how participants make sense of and justify their actions (Brand, 1991; Calliste, 1989; Carty, 1991; Flynn, 2003). They provided insights into individual and collective identities, ideologies, institutions, hopes, expectations, critique and projections for future CBWC actions. My interviews also helped me understand a central motivation for many participants: a

desire to be "part of something."

This research gives voice to black women who are politically active in the CBWC. Between 1973 and 2003, the CBWC's activities did not arrive out of the blue, but out of a set of determinate social and historical conditions in which new forms of resistance and political agency was constructed. In this sense, the range of activities brought to bear on black women in the CBWC; and the diversification of blackness was such a theme across the CBWC's history can be described in bell hooks's (1989, p.12) terms as a process of finding a voice:

> as a metaphor for self-transformation, [the idea of finding one's voice] has especially been relevant for groups of women who have previously never had a public voice, women who are speaking and writing for the first time, include many women of color.

The mantra of "finding" a voice may sound cliché at times. However, for women within oppressed groups coming to voice is an act of resistance. Speaking becomes both a way to engage in the active self-transformation and a rite of passage where one moves from being an object to being a subject - only as subjects we speak.

This research on the CBWC began in the winter of 2003.[3] Phase one and phase two of my research involved examining both primary and secondary sources. In this study there was considerable overlapping in both phases and these categories were not regarded as mutually exclusive. Rather, the two phases assisted in structuring my analysis and in developing the descriptions of activities and themes to augment the

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[3] See Black Political Organizations in the Post Civil Rights Era. 2002. Edited by Ollie Johnson III and Karen L. Standford. Erika Gordon's article was used to help structure this section. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press. See Erika L. Gordon's article "A Layin On of Hands: Black Women's Community Work, p.54-79.

emerging interpretations of the CBWC. The interview questionnaire was pretested with the Scarborough Chapter of the CBWC. The interviews were analyzed using content analysis identifying repeated themes, concepts and perspectives. Careful attention was paid to potential distinctions in perspective among the interviewees.

During the initial phase, efforts were focussed on the generation of a sample. Ultimately, data were elicited from a snowball sample of twenty-two semi-structured interviews conducted mainly in 2003-2004. To select participants, the listing of the CBWC chapters was obtained through telephone calls, Internet searches and the CBWC's membership lists. "A snowball sample was generated from two starting points of contact" (Gordon, 2002, ibid., p.66) In the first, telephone calls and a letter was sent via-email to the CBWC's co-chairs. I asked the co-chairs for the CBWC's membership list. Based on the list, I phoned individuals to set up an interview. The second starting point was through the monthly chapter meetings or CBWC activities. Interested respondents were solicited and they were asked to provide contact information (e.g., address, telephone number and email address) - along with the time of day most convenient for an interview. The sample selection process consisted of getting the names of prominent leaders from conference reports and other CBWC documents and then asking those individuals for the names of organizational supporters who might be willing to be interviewed. The final sample consisted of both leaders and rank-and-file members identified through this process. These reputational samples were generated on the basis of the referrals of informants on the basis of their respective reputations which in turn incorporates a snow ball sample.

Of the twenty-two women interviewed two women were born in Africa, fifteen

women were born in the West Indies, and five women were born in Canada. Eight women had undergraduate degrees, nine were university graduates, one woman had a M. Ed, one woman had a LL.M, two women had a Ph.D. and one woman had graduated from high school. Most of the women indicated that their mother tongue was English, while one interviewee indicated that she spoke French. The occupations included one government employee, two administrators, one social worker, two university professors, two financial consultants, one secretary, one principal, one nurse, one lawyer and one daycare provider - some of the women were married while others were single.

All of the interviews were open-ended, semi-structured and lasted between thirty minutes and two hours. The interview questions addressed the history of the CBWC and the women's participation in the organization. The interviewees were promised confidentiality. To protect their identity, some information has been changed and those quoted have been assigned pseudonyms. The interview protocol conforms to the ethical code of York University. My consent form and sample letter to the co-presidents of the CBWC are based on guidelines provided by the Sociology Department and Faculty of Graduate Studies, York University, Human Participants Research Procedures.

All telephone interviews were transcribed and coded. Unless otherwise indicated, all direct quotations come from the transcribed tape-recorded interviews. The telephone interviews were important to this study because they allowed me to interview the participants in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. I interviewed three women in person.

I did not wish to impose a research agenda on my subjects that would ask them

to fit their experiences into my categories. According to Joyce Ladner (quoted in Agnew, 1996, p.137):

> Research question that discard Eurocentric conceptual categories and are derived from the experience of the subject can provide us with new and different ways of seeing the oppressed. Such questions can take us past looking at the problem that are often attributed to the oppressed and direct our attention instead to the racism that structures their experiences.

I developed the interview protocol in the course of my reviewing the CBWC's documents in 2005. I added new questions, which emerged, from my analysis of the documents. I often tested the ideas suggested by the previous interviewees against the documents about the CBWC's getting connected, staying connected and disconnecting and reconnecting stages.

I recorded information from the interviews by using a coding sheet with ten categories: (1) self, (2) time, (3) level of analysis, (4) organization, (5) location of events, (6) chapter members, (7) issues at stake, (8) networks/related social movements, (9) Congress Documents and (10) interviews (see appendix E for the coding scheme).

The (1) self code referred to myself as the interviewer.

The (2) time code indicated the socio-political context: 1973-1983, 1983-1993, and 1993-2003.

The (3) level of analysis code referred to the local, provincial, national and transnational levels of organizing in the CBWC.

The (4) organization code referred to the CBWC's internal organizational dynamics such as the organization's structure, chapters and resources such as

fundraising or government programs.

The (5) location of events code referred to where activities took place such as at the members homes, no specific location or other.

The (6) outside speakers code referred to individuals, groups, government official who spoke at CBWC activities and were part of their network.

The (7) issues at stake code referred to activities related to education, youth, single female, immigrant female, racism, sexism, sexuality, education, family, policing, health, employment, social justice, free trade, apartheid, employment equity and the healthcare system.

The (8) networks/related social movements code referred to working in coalition with black, women or other groups.

The (9) Congress documents code referred to the CBWC's organizational documents.

The (10) interview's code referred to the date of the interview and the person interviewed - these categories referred to the primary codes that I used to pick out the information important to this study.

I used this coding scheme to content code my interviews. Using a black Canadian feminist synthetic and interpretive organizational model of movements, I was interested in examining the core themes in the CBWC. The interviews allowed me to uncover the CBWC's activities during its thirty-year period and to cross-reference the information collected from the participants with the socio-political context. More importantly, the interviews provided a historical record of the issues important to black women and events important to this research.

The first theme concentrated on the importance of identities to the black women's organizing in the CBWC between 1973 and 2003. I used this theme to analyze how the CBWC's members reflected on their experiences with systemic inequalities to develop their own self-defined voice concerning those experiences and to challenge their invisibility and the silencing of their voices in Canadian society. Thus, I traced the CBWC's getting connected stage to the national conferences to argue that the organization formed to address the discrimination that black women and their families were experiencing in Canadian society.

The second interrelated theme concerned the concept of institutions within the context of the CBWC's staying connected stage between 1983 and 1993. I argued that by collaborating within a black Canadian feminist community, the CBWC was able to speak out against social injustice and racism and achieve political goals far beyond the scope of its individual size and structure. To this end, I use this theme to examine issues concerning homophobia, recruitment, ethnicity and the CBWC member's organizing at the local and national level to challenge the presumption that racialized identities provide the primary marker of identification and solidarity for the CBWC.

The third theme focused on the impact of ideologies in the disconnecting and reconnecting stage in the CBWC's activities. The CBWC disconnecting and reconnecting stage was influenced general ideological struggles around issues of multicultural policy, the charter of rights and freedoms, racism, immigration, education and employment. The CBWC was located in these ideological contexts to reveal the historical context of their activities that were traced back to black political struggles in

Canada. Thus, the external environment informed the CBWC's activities and the struggles that have sustained Canada's black population and their white counterparts.

In conclusion, *a black feminist, synthetic and interpretive organizational model of movements* was particularly useful for understanding how participants make sense of and justify their actions (Agnew, 1996; Calliste, 1996). These interviews allowed me to gain insight into the participant's experiences. Through the interviews with these women, I was able to understand their motivation, in their words, "to come to voice and be part of something."

Participant Observation

The second phase of my study was based on seven months of participant observation, from August 2003 to February 2004, of the CBWC's organizational activities. Participant observation offers a window to the lived experiences of individuals (Lichterman, 2002). In this research, to understand the everyday organizing activities of the participants I attended four events: a regional meeting and the Kay Livingstone Awards Luncheon both hosted by the Ontario region; the Durham Region's Open House; and the Brampton Chapter's scholarship Awards Ceremony. By observing, and to some extent participating in the CBWC's activities, I was able to gain insight into the organization's activities. I took field notes to capture the activities, participants and the issues that were being mobilized around.

As a fieldworker, I was aware of the perils of being a participant and an observer. This research implied that to enhance reliability a degree of neutrality position was essential while validity requires being a participant. Feminist scholars have critiqued the objectivism and neutrality of this methodology to show what Agnew

Table 4
CBWC Participants Interviewed

No. of Persons	Province	Pseudonyms	CBWC Position	Interview Date	Education/ Occupation
2	British Columbia	Atwel	leader	Sept. 14/03	B.A/Government Employee
		Anietheen	leader	Oct. 8/03	B.A/ Administrator
5	Alberta	Asevt	leader	Sept. 28/03	*
		Atwen	leader	Oct. 14/03	B.A./ Administrator
		Aonet	leader	Oct. 14/03	*
		A.T	leader	Oct. 14/03	B.S.W./Social Worker
		Aos[4]	leader	Nov. 11/03	Ed.D/Professor
2	Saskatchewan	Aothre	leader	July 23/03	B.A./Financial consultant
		B.T	rank-and-file	July 24/03	*
1	Manitoba	A.S.	leader	Aug. 12/03	Ed.D/Professor
8	Ontario	Afoute	leader	Sept. 24/03	High school/ secretary
		Aone	leader	July 23/03	Ed.M/ Principal
		Aet	leader	Aug. 13/03	B.A./Financial Consultant
		Aft	leader	Sept. 24/03	B.Sc/Nurse
		A.J.	rank-and-file	Nov. 14/03	B.A. Daycare Provider
		Beth	rank-and-file	Sept. 9/03	*
		Bon	rank-and-file	July 23/03	*
		Bev	rank and file	Oct. 6/03	*
1	Quebec	Atwensi	leader	Nov. 10/03	LL.M/Lawyer
2	Nova Scotia	Aetn	leader	Oct. 7/03	*
		Asti	leader	Sept. 26/03	*
1	New Brunswick	Afiev	leader	July 29/03	*

* Information unavailable

[4] I conducted a telephone interview with a former Alberta member who currently resides in Jamaica.

(1996, p. 139) calls the "unacknowledged biases and androcentric knowledge." Lorraine Code writes (quoted in Agnew, 1999, p.139):

> Theories and research methodologies in the social sciences objectify the human subjects they study. Experiments are designed to predict human behaviour and to analyze it quantitatively, for only behaviour amenable to statistical analysis is judged worthy of scientific study. The methodologies produce explanations of personality and of social structures that take into account neither the consciousness of the subject's studies nor the meanings and interpretations of their experiences for these subjects.

The theoretical framework and methodology of this study (see Figure 1) is critical of the value systems that underlie positivisitic research methods and have argued for methodologies to do research "with" the subject (Agnew, 1999). This approach maintains that researchers are not impartial but have feelings and values that form a necessary part of the research project. The location, the historical context, and the goals shape and guide their research. Code (1991, p.27-56) states that the "research that acknowledges these principles have the potential of researcher and subjects." Black feminists contend that in the mainstream social science methodology the researcher exercises control and ownership. The research belongs to the researcher who appropriates the experiences of his/her subjects to prove his/her theory and exploit the subjects for personal goals. This research reduces the subject to an object and makes the researcher the expert. The methods used in this study do not objectify the research subjects but gives them the role of active participants in the inquiry. This approach

stands in contrast to the mainstream social science methodology by engaging the subjects in the research project, acknowledging the expertise of the subject and by providing a space where their voices can be heard (hooks, 1989). The subjects participate with the researcher in determining the questions that guide the study. Questions arise from the grassroots level and develop through the interaction with the subject. The research serves the needs, goals and objectives of the subject as well as those of the researcher. That is, "Equal power relations transform the relations between the subject and the researcher and makes the research non-exploitative" (Agnew, 1996, p.141).

In this study, the interviewees were engaged in all aspects of the research. For example, when I took notes or conducted an interview, I gave the subjects an opportunity to read the transcript of their interview, modify it, delete or add to any of their statements. Black feminists use these rules to eliminate any misrepresentations and inaccuracies and allow the subjects to exercise control and authority (Agnew, 1996). In addition, I employed these rules to empower the interviewees.

Indeed, my research on the CBWC confirmed the suspicions held by many of the interviewees regarding the mainstream social science methodology. Many individuals believed that their voices have not been heard and that their experiences rarely reflected in mainstream sociological feminist writings. The women of the CBWC, the subjects of this research, are not interested in doing research with me as the feminist theoreticians might expect. Rather, they wish to engage in activities that they perceive as contributing more directly to reducing the racism in Canadians society. As Agnew (1996) states, "one cannot assume that because the research is participatory and non-

exploitative that the subjects will share the same views of the efficacy of transforming the relations of domination in Canadian society."

My research on women in the CBWC forms part of the social justice work in which community organizations engage. Given the praxis of this research and the commitment of the CBWC as a vehicle for representing black women, our interests were extremely compatible. I not only felt welcomed but was invited by several chapters to attend the Kay Livingstone Awards Luncheon, Ontario Region's Meeting, Brampton Chapter's Scholarship Awards Ceremony and North York Chapter's meetings.

The Kay Livingstone Award's Luncheon

Sybil Garrick established the Kay Livingstone Award in 1987 to acknowledge the contributions of black women to Canadian society. Ettie Rutherford and Fay Cole, recipients of the 2003 award, were recognized for their interest in education, participation in community organizations, social justice advocacy, and in particular, for promoting the interests and activities of black peoples of the diaspora. The philosophy underpinning the award was that the solutions to the problems experienced by black women in Canada required leadership at the local and national levels. I attended the luncheon on Sunday October 19, 2003 at the Century Gardens Recreation Centre. There were approximately five hundred participants, representing eight chapters in Ontario: York Region, Brampton, North York, Waterloo, Mississauga and Area, Ajax-Pickering, Scarborough and London Region. At the luncheon, I was shown considerable respect; CBWC members and their families did not raise any objections to my presence. In fact,

the president of the Ontario region treated me the same as the other individuals in attendance.

The Ontario Region's Meeting

The Ontario region's meeting took place before the Durham chapter's open house on Saturday September 13, 2003 - approximately twenty members attended from Brampton, Scarborough, North York, Ajax-Pickering, Durham, Hamilton, London and Kitchen-Waterloo. The agenda included chapter reports, and updates from the CBWC's co-chair on the National's activities which included a meeting with Jackie Klaxton, Director of the Women's Program Status of Women, National Congress of Black Women Foundation; and the Kay Livingstone Awards Luncheon. The main objective of the meeting was to reinforce the communication between the chapters and to provide an overview of the organization's activities at the local, provincial and national levels. As I observed these meetings, I was aware that being a black Canadian woman played into the dynamics of my relationship to the informants - it was apparent that they felt that they could speak frankly with me. One chapter member, for example, was enthusiastic when I told her I was interested in black women's organizations in Canada and she drew me aside to talk about her participation in the CBWC.

The Brampton Chapter's Scholarship Awards Ceremony

The Brampton chapter's Scholarship Awards Ceremony was on Saturday August 9, 2003 at the LaSala Banquet Hall. Fifty people attended and six scholarships were awarded to high school students: Daniela Goode, Elizabeth Yeboah, Peta-Gaye Johnson, Andrew Vaz, Renesha Graham, Iyana Gardner and Candace Stewart. My attendance at the event gave me a better sense of the benefits to be gained from the

CBWC's activities. To some extent, the success of the CBWC's projects can be measured by the participant's experiences in its activities. For example, the scholarship recipients were attending university in September 2004. The purpose of the scholarship was to financially assist students with their post-secondary education. Their educational pursuits represented a range of interests from medicine, education, information technology, business to psychology.

Complementing their achievements, the CBWC encouraged the development of social links with the members in the black Canadian communities. Their emphasis on community participation was predicated on the understanding that the black Canadian communities have suffered as a consequence of racism in Canadian society and that the solutions to our problems can only be built on a foundation of mutual support. The recipients acknowledged that support from the CBWC was one factor that was likely to facilitate their progress and their efforts to make a difference in Canadian society. In this case, the making a difference was recognized as a solution to counter the problems affecting them in Canadian society.

When I spoke to the scholarship recipients, they were not reluctant to talk. They talked about how proud they were to receive an award from the CBWC. My identity as a black Canadian woman and the academic nature of my research were never obstacles towards gaining the trust and cooperation of members. They were familiar with my research and fully supported my project.

The North York Chapter's Meetings

Six months of participant observation with the North York chapter also provided data for this study. The meetings took place once or twice a month at the

Edithvale Community Centre. I also attended the chapter's programmed activities: mix and mingle, membership drive, scholarship program, Christmas party, leadership seminar and black history month celebrations -attending the meetings allowed me to understand the CBWC's structure in the context of its activities. From the beginning, I was candid with the chapter about my interest in black Canadian women's community organizations and about my experiences with them as material for this study. Their jokes about my copious note taking, "You should take the minutes for the meetings" made it apparent that my observation was in no way covert. Although I usually refrained from fully participating in the activities, I introduced myself and provided background information about my work history and research project each time the group did the rounds. When asked, I gave my honest opinion about the issues that arose during the meetings. I also engaged in many one-on-one discussions with individual group members about the issues relevant to their participation. I made it known to the group that I was happy to discuss my research with them at any time and welcomed their input. I believed that maintaining a sense of openness with the chapter's members enhanced our rapport and increased my access to their insights. At the events, I was able to meet some of the women that I interviewed by telephone. They were always supportive and they enjoyed helping a woman from their own ethnic group.

In conclusion, my attendance at the CBWC's events provided the opportunity for an understanding of Canadian society from the standpoints of black women. Women in the CBWC were engaged in black feminist work, in providing scholarships, building chapters and initiating programs for black women. Many of the black women were committed to mediating conflicts within their communities - all accepted the

concept of empowerment as important to black Canadian communities.

Documentary Analysis

The second phase of this study examined the internal operations of the organization itself and consisted of the collection and analysis of written materials. The analysis of the CBWC's official documents, which were archived by the provincial representative, was the third source of data. I collected some documents before I commenced the interviews and collected the rest of the documents after the interviews. I contextualized the interviews with the following data: unpublished materials annual reports, pamphlets, minutes - from the CBWC produced between 1973 and 2003 and the CBWC's newsletters including the National Secretariat, Congress News, Update and NewsFlash.

Since I did not have the opportunity to interview all of the founding members, the literature produced by the CBWC and its various chapters assisted me in piecing together a rich narrative concerning identities, institutions and ideologies. Why did black Canadian women form the CBWC? What did black Canadian women discuss at the national conferences? How did the CBWC develop? In brief, official documents of the organization generated considerable themes which were pursued in the analysis.

The CBWC's archival collection in Ontario contains information on the national, regional and local chapters. Within this collection there are newsletters, newspaper articles, photographs, provincial reports, conferences reports and booklets, videos, cassette tapes, personal correspondence, minutes of meetings, chapter's bylaws, constitutional information, inter-chapter memos, the CBWC's seal and publications from feminists and visible minority organizations. I used these documents as the

primary source of data. They were analyzed by using a coding sheet with ten categories: (1) self, (2) time, (3) level of analysis, (4) organization, (5) location of events, (6) chapter members, (7) issues at stake, (8) networks/related social movements, (9) Congress documents and (10) interviews. I paid particular attention to the ideological changes that occurred in the 1980s and 1990s. Over the course of my research I also noted some gaps in this collection, mostly copies of chapter and member documents that were not deposited in the archives.

Again, the purpose of content coding of the data was to further saturate information obtained in order to discern emerging themes. I used the documents to analyze the CBWC's identities, institutions, ideologies and the national conferences, funding, coalition formation, activities and events as they related to the integrative black Canadian feminist synthetic interpretive model of movements. I used the codes to structuring and focus the analysis of a plethora of topics and activities.

This research was able to identify gaps in the collection of archival material. Some documents produced by the CBWC were not deposited in the organization's archives and many of the documents were still in the possession of individual chapters and members. Similarly, although the organization's documents were a rich source of data for my research, some documents omitted crucial information vital to the organization concerning the outcome of their activities. The conference proceedings often printed only resolutions that were adopted. The information of the 1974 conference about topics covered in the health and welfare workshop was incredibly scant. Likewise, there were shortcomings in the documents were in the youth workshop and the education workshop. When they were made available, I used the documents

loaned to me from the CBWC's members to supplement the existing materials that I had.

In conclusion, the documentary evidence was one source of information about the CBWC. The documents provide an opportunity to understand the world from the standpoint of black women because their voices that have been suppressed in the feminist writings can be heard in their organization's documents. The black Canadian feminist methodology speaks to the experiences of black women and their families.

To repeat, three data sources were used to investigate the organization's identities, institutions and ideologies: participant observation of organizational events; interviews with leaders and members and analysis of movement documents from August 2003 to February 2003 (these movement documents were analyzed and included the conference reports, constitutional materials, organizational newsletters, correspondence, and minutes). Second, I conducted interviews with movement activists. Interviewees were conducted with both leaders (n=17) and members (n=5) participants. Participants were guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity.

Methodological Issues/ Problems

I encountered two problems during my study: equipment failure and participant refusal. Despite the purchase of new equipment (microphone, tape-recorder, tapes), I encountered logistical difficulties in recording two of the interviews. Illustrative of this was with an interviewee who resides in Jamaica. The tape recorder failed to record her interview. As soon as I discovered this problem, I wrote down everything that I could remember in my notes. Next, I called the interviewee and informed her of the technical problems that I had experienced recording the interview by phone. She offered to send

me her answers by email. However, I never received the email. Similarly, in another instance, the last three questions of a tape-recorded interview were erased by mistake. I called the interviewee to inform her of what had happened. While she was very sympathetic and agreed to answer the three questions again, she did not. Despite repeated attempts on my part to contact her by phone, the interview was never completed.

Second, one person would only consent to an interview if I surrendered the intellectual ownership of this dissertation research. When asked her why she required ownership of my intellectual property she declined to elaborate. Consequently, I decided not to interview her.

Roles and Rules

Qualitative methodologies make effective use of the relationships that researchers establish with their "subjects" in the field. The rapport and subsequent information collected are conditioned by the roles researchers adopt. For Becker (1970), roles affect research findings. To ensure a naturalistic description, a role is required that is comfortable enough for respondents to accept and comfortable enough for the researcher to assume (Visano, 1990). Researchers must respond to the observed by "creating and maintaining a series of viable roles and identities". These roles move beyond achieving acceptance by subjects, towards facilitating greater access to intimate accounts of their lives. A role is required that permits the researcher to observe while being able to record, compare and analyze data. This role includes movements back and forth, between the world of one's hosts and one's own sociological discipline. Roles range from complete participation to complete observation. But, there are dangers

inherent in both extremes. With complete participation, there is usually an over-identification and a whole-hearted acceptance of the participants' perspectives. Contacts are often too close and do not allow certain issues to be explored without offending the relationship. By complete participation investigators entirely enter the world of their subjects and also become subjects.

Full participation is undesirable in many research endeavours. One participates as fully as one could limit only to a sense of professional and personal propriety. Nonetheless, researchers are required to share as much as possible in the lives and activities of subjects in order to avoid the charge of ethnocentrism. It is incumbent upon them to learn the language and habits of these actors. To avoid the bias of complete participation, records are kept of any shifts in perspectives and reminders of the research objectives in daily diaries.

Alternatively, complete observation often invites the dangers concomitant with ethnocentrism. For instance, when sociological definitions are imposed prior to data collection, uncongenial perspectives or foreign values exist that are likely to force responses or even trivialize the phenomenon under investigation. This dilemma of selecting both participation and observation is resolved, according to Rock (1979, p.212), by shifting between these two roles, exploiting each and by withdrawing and returning periodically to the margins. Comparisons of field notes and ongoing discussions with key informants help to maintain the necessary sociological sensibilities.

A Question of Ethics: Trust and Truth

All social scientific research must resolve fundamental issues concerning ethics.

The ethics of scientific inquiry demands uncompromising honesty. Equally, it is unethical, for example, for supervisors to encumber future researchers by making it impossible for others to conduct similar inquiries. There is also the often ignored ethics to society - the demand to ameliorate social conditions (Plummer, 1983). Equally significant, researchers must act responsibly toward their subjects by avoiding injury to the reputations of the studied actors caused by divulging confidential information. Likewise, entrance, presence and departure are unethical if they disrupt the long-term functioning of the social group, especially if findings are used for immoral ends, for ignoring black Canadian research and for silencing the voices of the studied group. To safeguard ethics research participants should be encouraged to read the manuscript individually or collectively. Just as social scientists have a duty to contribute to knowledge, they must also learn to protect participants from the harmful consequences of the research enterprise.

Confidentiality is the most familiar ethical question facing social scientists. The promise of confidentiality remains an inducement to subjects for their cooperation and, therefore, ethically binds the researcher to honour that commitment. This obligation to protect the identity of subjects becomes heightened especially with research subjects who are disadvantaged in the larger society. The sociological practice of altering names and using pseudonyms to protect the identity of all actors is a necessity. Any detailed descriptions would, not surprisingly, violate promises of anonymity guaranteed to all subjects involved. Facts and information regarding specific identifiable locations warrant protection. Pseudonyms or fictional names, rather than the less personal case or file numbers, are encouraging.

Consistent with this promise of confidentiality is the equally important issue of trust. To ensure trust researchers ought not to detach themselves from the consequences of their work. Admittedly, the study of significant problems requires sensitivity to the way findings can be subsequently used. Participants should be informed that the details observed could be widely read or published. Some would "test" these assurances directly by asking what other actors had said and done. An extraordinary burden is ultimately placed on these trusting relationships especially in situations where the actor compels the researcher to divulge information about other participants. Regardless of the requests made, pledges of anonymity and confidentiality should never be negotiable commodities to be traded. In establishing trust, one avoids stirring up painful or sensitive personal issues. Instead, the researcher must be prepared to follow up on meanings presented while offering considerable support and resources.

Validity and Reliability

The above discussion concerning naturalism and the role of the investigator challenges natural science or positivistic orientations. The methodological issues raised by ethnographic accounts present real dilemmas to the investigators who operate within a natural science model. In general, validity refers to the accuracy of data, that is, the accuracy of the picture one reports about the empirical world. Validity in qualitative research, as Wiseman (1979, p.280) suggests, is concerned with whether social actors build concepts and constructs of their daily social reality out of the same experiences which the researcher has observed and gathered. Likewise, Phillipson (1972, p.151) notes that validity is established by developing methods which demonstrate that sociological reconstructions and explanations are congruent with the meanings that

subjects construct in their everyday realities. Clearly, validity rests on how well the sociologist understands the actors' subjective categories for ordering their experiences. The subjective interpretations of actors, especially the "central meaning patterns" (Archard, 1979, p.210), need to be tested. Validity is achieved by active contact with the life of the observed. Actual involvement and direct communication yield data of maximum validity. The extent to which an observer gains access to actual situations and still retains a degree of non-involvement enhances validity. But, validity is problematic whenever a priori assumptions are imposed upon data.

As the problem of validity is lessened, the concern for reliability of the data is increased (Visano, 1990).The problems of validity and reliability can be addressed in a variety of ways. To determine whether the data collected represent what they purport to represent, "multiple convergent measures" (Weppner, 1977, p.190-1) are used. Gathering materials from a variety of sources enhances accuracy, conclusiveness and internal validity of evidence. A close rapport with the actors' actual statements increased the validity of the data. Without identifying specific sources of information, subjects can be given an opportunity to read and comment on information gathered from informants, subjects and the general "grapevine". In fact, some participants agreed to review the findings once all the data were collected.

Analysis

Interview data were analysed in three steps, as described by Loftland (1996) and Stake (1995). First, content was organized around the key themes of identities, institutions and ideologies. Second, data were divided according to a grid system of primary and secondary codes. Third, each interview was treated as a case for

comparison with other interviews in terms of specific themes. I then performed my analyses according to the core concepts. Following the technique recommended by Rosenbaum (1981, p.47), data were analyzed concurrent with data collection. This technique promoted the development of new insights to be explored during the current and future interviews. Following the transcription of taped interviews, further analyses of interviews and field notes were undertaken as suggested by Spradley (1979). Coding of the data was an important part of analysis. Coding represented the process by which data were broken down, conceptualized and re-assembled (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

The recording of field notes performed the important tasks of data collection and data analysis. When writing up detailed field reports, recorded phrases go a long way towards jogging one's memory in recollecting events, impressions and quotations. During observations, condensed notes are taken as unobtrusively as possible. Note-taking in the natural setting is avoided if it detracted attention away from the subjects to the notes. During the interviews, participants often expected or encouraged note-taking in their presence. In general, they felt that any failure to report implies a lack of interest in what they are saying. Nevertheless, a strategy was adopted which minimized intrusions by keeping notes abbreviated and yet sufficiently accurate. Whenever possible, direct quotations were recorded in order to preserve as much of the original wording and flavour.

Immediately after leaving the interview or observation situations, I constructed a running log of mental notes and jottings. This diary of field experiences documented descriptions of behaviour observed, conversations as well as meanings, expectations and explanations reported by participants. The data from observations and interviews

yielded considerable information on activities, relationships, meanings and settings. In addition, profile sheets with biographical information and case histories supplemented the above personal accounts.

Faced with such a quantity of rich and varied data, it was necessary to engage in an ongoing review and classification of information. After sifting through the material, data were grouped under general headings and supporting subheadings. The emerging interpretations are incorporated into themes which are, in turn, checked against and modified by subsequent data. This constant indexing constituted a preliminary analysis of data. A cross-indexing of categories was further conducted of observations and interpretations. Data were inspected according to the frequency with which beliefs were articulated, activities observed and topics raised. Lastly, issues discovered in a study were compared with those raised in the literature.

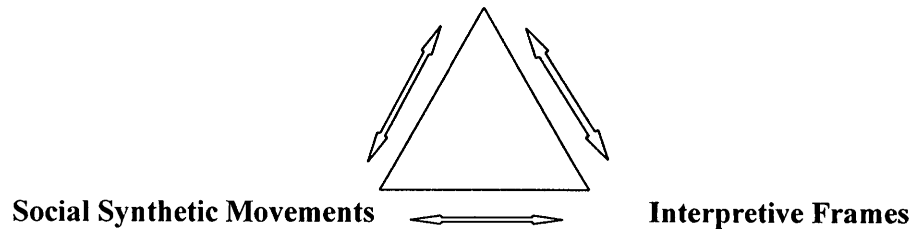
This qualitative method commenced with only a few general concepts or "hunches" regarding the nature of black feminist movements/ organizations. Under the general guidance of orienting concepts data were collected on how actors organize their worlds. Gradually, I made theoretical sense of the data by sorting out similar and different contents into tentative formulations of categories. A number of constructs emerged as a result of these theoretical interpretations of empirical incidents. Primary analysis was organized around the core properties that seem especially relevant to the substantive area under study. Actors, activities and settings were then classified in terms of typifications they build and use in interpreting their participation. It became clear after a short period in the field that participants distinguish events (conferences and relationships) other according to a number of attributes. Frequently cited

characteristics are interpreted and presented as types which serve to indicate to themselves and to others where they are located in the context of the activity. These internally identified types which classify actors were often constructed according to the following criteria: self-concept, perceptions of others, participation, relationships and setting.

In conclusion, this chapter is concerned with the relevance of a black Canadian feminist methodology to this study. I discussed the process by which the research problem was formulated and access to the Congress of Black Women of Canada's documents was obtained. I argued that the black Canadian feminist synthetic and interpretive organizational model of movements was important to the study of the CBWC because it provided a critical analysis of the conditions that have shaped the organization. The three methods contributed to my research by allowing me to check my data. I was able to cross reference information provided to me by the interviewees with the documents and my attendance at CBWC events. By using this methodology I was able to provide an account of the CBWC's history.

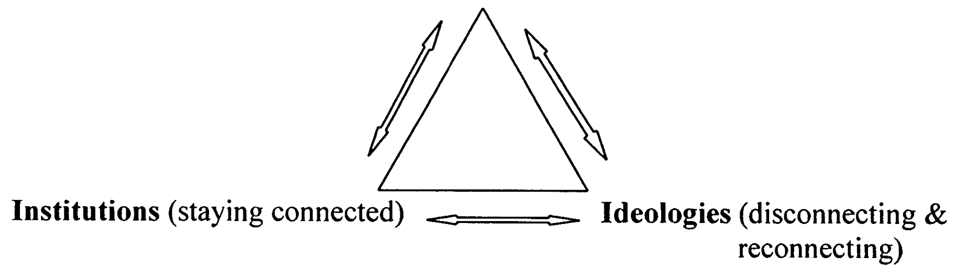
Figure 1

THEORETICAL DESIGN



EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

(Internal and External Contingencies)



Chapter 3

GETTING CONNECTED: *IDENTITY*

Introduction

A careful analysis of the findings clearly demonstrates the importance of three sensitizing concepts: identities, institutions and ideologies. Not only are these three fundamental concepts evident in all three stages of the organization but each concept characterizes a different stage in the organization. To illustrate, in the initial getting connected stage *identities* are salient as are *institutions* for the staying connected stage and *ideologies* for the disconnecting and reconnecting stage respectively. Interestingly, the data indicated that identities, institutions and ideologies are not only present in *all* three stages but they are mutually constituted, correlational and mediate relationships among themselves. Stages and contingencies, the foci of these empirical chapters, are influenced by both precipitating and predisposing factors, push and pull factors, internal and external forces, by immediate means and immediate goals as well as ultimate means and ultimate goals.

The getting connected stage of the Congress of Black Women of Canada (CBWC) are traced to six national conferences that occurred between April 1973 and November 1983.The data presented in this chapter indicate that these early conferences served a number of functions. Conferences provided an opportunity for black women to meet, to learn about organizations in other parts of the country and to plan simultaneous collective action in different cities. These fora enabled them to

come together to organize themselves around workshops in order to deal with their respective local concerns as well as more generic of racism, sexism, education, youth, immigration policy, employment, human rights, health and to secure social justice for their members. Prior to this, a number of small groups of black women were meeting throughout the country.

This chapter argues that in this "getting connected" phase, conference activities stimulated thoughts about many issues affecting black Canadian women and represented a form of claims making based on the mobilization of their resources. More importantly, the 1973, 1974, 1976, 1977, 1980 and 1982 initial stage of coming together at conferences was shaped by contingencies of identity.

Identities in turn are shaped by self concept, skills and reactions of others. This chapter details the salience of identities in the initial getting connected stage. Skills and reactions of others are respectively characteristic of the staying connected and disconnecting and reconnecting stages. The nature of identities shape and are shaped by the quality of the conferences. This chapter features how black women used the conferences to solidify identities, specifically those experiential factors that shaped their self concept and motivated them to organize the conferences. The discussions and recommendations of these earlier conferences identified the differential impact of exclusionary practices of the dominant culture.

To trace the organization's getting connected stage, this study uses excerpts from interviews; six national conferences, CBWC conference reports, brochures, two black women's newsletters the National Secretariat and Congress News and meeting minutes; and texts from the Canadian Negro Women's Association (CANEWA)

newsletter. To locate the CBWC's origins, this chapter analyzes its historical trajectory from the founding conference, National Congress Committee, National Secretariat, to its establishment as a national organization. The chapter begins by examining the external context to the organization that explain its emergence and then shifts the focus to internal organizational dynamics.

In the next section, I consider the socio-political context of the emergence of the CBWC. I then review and analyze each of the CBWC's national conferences. Finally, I conclude by reviewing the impact of the organization on black women's activism during the 1973-1983 decade.

External Environment: the Socio-Political Context and the Emergence of CBWC, 1973-1983

According to the black feminist synthetic and interpretive model of movements that informs this study, it is necessary to inquire into how the interactions between external factors (changes in the social and political landscape, funding and the economy) and internal dynamics (ideology, leadership, organizational structure and goals) shaped the development of the CBWC.

Sidney Tarrow (1998, p.85) defines political opportunities as "dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure." The *social* context consists of the structural and spatial organization of the population the movement seeks to affect or what John McCarthy, Doug McAdam, and Mayer Zald (1996) call mobilizing structures. The *economic* context refers to how "national actors may comply with the external demands that alter domestic policies and institutions and affect, in some cases, the basic institutions of the state" (Glenn, 2005, p.117). In this

case, the external context incorporates the socio-political and economic opportunities that suggest to black Canadian women that their chances for achieving a national organization are enhanced. These opportunities encompass a range of external conditions including the existence of elites that are sympathetic to the demands of the organizational actors and intra-government conflicts that made the state willing to support movement organization goals. Such opportunities are argued to have influenced the emergence of social movements (Robnett, 1997; Costain, 1992) and how they developed over time (McAdam, 1996; 1982).

Before proceeding, a caveat is in order. The data available are insufficient as a result of numerous gaps in the census data.[1] Singh Bolaria and Li (1988) and Mensah (2002) noted this problematic in their respective studies as well. According to Mensah (2002, p.21), "until the 1996 census Canadians were not officially disaggregated into races. Consequently it was difficult to procure empirical data on black Canadians from the censuses. As such, we must note that from the outset the pre1996 data on Blacks are problematic." Consequently, this study draws on published data from multiple sources, principally Statistics Canada, Joseph Mensah (2002), Peter S. Li (2003), Leah Vosko (2002), Janine Brodie (1994), Christina Gabriel (1999), Isabel Bakker (1994), and B. Singh Bolaria and Peter S. Li (2003) to scope the external contexts of the first ten year period of the CBWC, 1973-1983.

The CBWC emerged within an external context characterized by the following six features: a restructured Canadian economy, immigration, discrimination,

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[1] The data I am referring to draws on published data from multiple sources, but principally Statistics Canada, Canadian Census, Immigration Statistics compiled by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Report of the Special Committee on Visible Minorities (1984) and the Report of the Royal Commission on Equality in Employment (1984).

multiculturalism, status of women (National Action Committee on the Status of Women - NAC), and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. How then did these factors affect black women and shape the context for the emergence of the CBWC.

Canadian Economy

The rise of the CBWC occurred in a transitional period resulting in the restructuring of the Canadian economy from a broadly Keynesian model to neo-liberalism. The post-war system of welfare provisions, macroeconomics, stabilization policies and increased trade with the United States was radically altered (Brodie, 1997). Canada beset by financial crises and a recession began to cut back its support for social welfare programs and consequently state involvement in the economy was not only unnecessary but under neoliberalism the Canadian state's role was diminished. The focus was a rigorous fiscal discipline, which in turn implied paying off debts, austerity programs such as eliminating state subsidies to food, transportation, energy and utilities and selling state enterprises to private investors. Beset by a recession, Canada began to cut back its support for social welfare programs and overall state participation in the economy.

Black women's economic difficulties during the 1970s were linked to the restructuring of the Canadian economy from a Keynesian to neo-liberal model, thus radically altering the post-war system of welfare provision, macroeconomics, stabilization and expanding trade with the United States (ibid).These economic policies had a negative impact on black women in Canada. High labour force participation, low wages, unemployment, combined with poverty had a dramatic impact on their well being impact because once hired black women experienced

significant income disadvantages appearing at the low end of the wage scale without regard to skill level. Canada's labour force grew from 8.8 million people in 1971 to 12 million people in 1981 (Li, 2003, p. 34). Nearly 62% of black women worked in the labour force in 1971. Yet Census data indicated that they had "higher participation rates and unemployment levels than all Canadians" (Richmond, 1976, p.78). The significance of this was that blacks continued to face barriers in employment and promotions. Data compiled from the 1981 Census shows 86, 000 blacks (including African, Caribbean, Haitian and other Blacks) in the labour force: 83% of black males and 54% of black females (Gabriel, 1999; Bakker, 1994; Brodie, 1996). Black women's wages continued to be considerably lower than those other Canadians in similar jobs even when education was taken into account. For example, 29.4% of black women graduated from university, about 85% earned less than $16, 000; of these half earned less than $8, 000, although a very small percentage of them were in the upper income categories (Mensah, 2002; Bolaria and Li, 1988). While economic expansion and increased demand for women's labour generally characterized this period, economic restructuring had a differential effect for black women.

As the women's movement focused on barriers to equal opportunities in employment, black women focused on systemic barriers, the ways that the labour market was gendered and racialized and the issues of low wages and poverty (Brand, 1984; Calliste, 1989; Silvera, 1989). It was these lived experiences of discrimination, sexism and exploitation that shaped the efforts of black women to organize groups such as the CBWC. The comments of Aft, a nurse and CBWC member epitomized the crisis, "Black women had issues and problems that were due to the structure of this society.

For instance, job promotions and the subtle way that people were refused opportunities or jobs even though they were qualified" (Mills interview, tape recording, September 24, 2003, A015, 02, 2A). This statement illustrates the roles played by the economy and racism in unemployment. This dire situation would serve to bring black women together. Those who organized groups such as the CBWC wanted to find solutions to employment problems and it was within this climate that black women mobilized communities to lobby the government on issues of importance to them.

Immigration

Historically, aside from the First Nations, Canada is a country of immigrants (Li, 2003; Mensah, 2002). During this decade, however, Canada reformulated its immigration policies (Mensah, 2002; Stafford, 1992; Taylor, 1991) to attract immigrants with professional expertise, technical skills and substantial financial capital and investment to immigrate.[2] Many immigrants were mainly concentrated in urban centers such as Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal, while others moved into various provinces and territories of Canada. An examination of the 1971 and 1981 Census revealed that the black population increased from 0.29 percent to 0.59 percent of the total Canadian population. Black immigration to Canada accounted 28.6% of Canada's population. Twenty- five percent of the black population were Canadian born. Black women accounted for 54.4% and black men 45.6% of the black population (Torczyner, 1997, p.58). The general picture was that the black population was composed of Canadian born blacks and immigrants coming from the Caribbean, the United States,

[2] The 1976 Immigration Act emphasized family reunification and the settlement of refugees. By 1978 immigration amendments revised the 1976 point system by focusing on occupational skills and entrepreneurial endeavours.

the United Kingdom and Africa. Atwensi (Mills interview, tape recording, October 14, 2003, A020) spoke positively about the organization's need to appeal to a diverse constituency:

> There was a need for women of African origin to see themselves reflected in so many different walks of life. I believe that the Congress was a rallying point and we were able to reach out and recruit women from different sectors. We were doing a lot of activities around immigration policies. We were active with South African women. We were able to form broad-based coalitions of Quebec women's groups working bilingually. We had activities around Haitian workers.

Atwel (Mills interview, tape recording, September 14, 2003, A012) made a similar point when asked her about recruiting conference participants.

> Black women in Canada were coming from different parts of the world. We were being lumped into this one system, without looking at our histories and to tell the historical view of slaves coming from Africa and the United States and the Caribbean.

These women were part of heterogeneous black Canadian communities and transnational networks, that is, a diasporic community. But, what were in dispute *were the assumptions of common experiences and common interests.* Gilroy (1993) and Hall (1997) have also criticized essentialist notions of blackness that do not take into consideration how black experiences were shaped by these diasporic influences.[3] A major focus of black women, therefore, was the goal of creating an organization that was committed to a *broader set* of issues concerning diasporic communities.

[3] Bannerji (1996) has pointed out that Canada is a nation that constructs race in static and finite terms.

The case of the black population in Canada was also instructive when compared to the ethnic origin population of Canada. During this decade, black immigration did not change Canada's ethnic composition as people of European descent accounted for 96 percent of the 21.5 million people in Canada in 1971, and 75.8 percent of the 24 million people in Canada 1981 (Li, 2003, p.126-127). This meant that black Canadians constituted a minority and the challenges they faced included the need to appeal to a diverse constituency while working with limited resources.[4] How did the CBWC compensate for the fact that it is numerically small compared to their usual opponents?[5] What kinds of alliances must they make with other groups? Briefly, the CBWC tried to develop a strategy to appeal to a diverse constituency and to seek organizations that might link them to new resources and support. The later sections will demonstrate that through their efforts at expansion, black women activists mobilized resources that were previously unavailable.

While the women's movement maintained that Canadian immigration policies represented a mix of pragmatic labour needs and explicit racist policies (Hamilton, 2004), black *women focused on the specific experiences of Canadian immigrants in the 1970s and 1980s* (Brand, 1984; Calliste, 1989; Silvera, 1989). Most black newcomers during this period arrived from Jamaica, Haiti, Barbados, the United Kingdom, Africa and the United States (Mensah, 2002). New immigrant communities required access to one another, to other people with similar grievances, to cultural support systems and to organizations through which communication and mobilization could occur. The CBWC responded to calls from its own membership and black immigrants to address

[4] These two factors were significant to the CBWC's founding because they were an acknowledgment of their exclusion from the national culture, polity and history.
[5] The opponents I am referring to include other groups trying to affect society in general.

grievances that were framed in the contexts of diversity, social experiences and cultural identities. In a letter to *Contrast* magazine, one of the founders of CANEWA, Aileen Williams (1972), wrote that the initial CBWC conferences "embraced the active participation of Canadian, Caribbean, African and American black women residing in Canada, and it dealt with several concerns that were vital to our communities." In a July 17, 1972 letter to the Canadian Secretary of State, CANEWA spoke positively about the organization's need to appeal to a diverse black population:

> In recent years, the black population has accelerated; indeed many cities and towns have substantial numbers of black citizens. These numbers have brought with them their own experiences, their own problems and their own particular input into the Canadian way of life ... We recognize the vitally important role that has fallen to black women. We recognize the importance of solving our own problems.

Again, the women, she mentions in her letters, were members of heterogeneous black Canadian communities and transnational networks. They were disputing assumptions that all black women shared common experiences, and showing out how such essentialist notions of blackness failed to consider diasporic influences, global issues (e.g., apartheid, human rights), exchanges of strategic and technical information across borders (e.g., administrative agencies or offices aimed at public education) and transnational linkages among activists, organizations and movements that provided continuity of action (Gilroy, 1993; Hall, 1997). CBWC organizers acknowledged that the failure to deal with differences—especially political and cultural differences—would eventually result in conflicts among black Canadian, Caribbean and African

women. They therefore purposefully appealed to diverse groups and reached out to organizations that might provide access to new resources and support. This finding is quite significant since it indicates an effort to mobilize resources that were previously unavailable. The CBWC organizers perceived themselves as providing a space in which black women from all backgrounds could share their experiences. As a result, CBWC members felt free to discuss problems based on politics and culture as well as on family and community relationships.

Systemic Discrimination

A third external factor that contributed to the rise of the CBWC was the systemic discrimination that black women and their families experienced in Canada. They found themselves the targets of discrimination aimed at limiting employment, job promotions, housing, education and public services. Walker (1985, p.20) argues that the systemic inequality blacks experienced during this period was reinforced by a "discriminatory pattern of physical violence, assaults, harassment, inflammatory slogans and vandalism" that existed in many parts of Canada (Contrast Magazine April 4, 1975- April 21, 1977; Henry, 2000; Bolaria and Li, 1988; Walker, 1980; Head, 1975). Empirical studies (Ramcharan, 1982; Krauter and Davis, 1978; Winks, 1977; Clairmont and Magill, 1974; Henry, 1973; Fredere, 1973; 1976) and reports filed between 1975 and 1983 by human rights commissions (Ontario, British Columbia, Nova Scotia), Canadian Civil Liberties Association (Contrast Magazine Jan 13,1977) school boards, universities (Institute for Behavioural Research at York University), and municipal, provincial and federal governments documented the racist

context experienced by “visible minorities” and the widespread structural discrimination to which they were subjected.

In keeping with their roles as mothers and community activists, in the 1970s and 1980s CBWC members organized to resist the systemic discrimination that black people experienced throughout Canada. Black women and their families were discriminated against in terms of employment, promotions, housing, education and public services. Issues tied to discrimination in employment, housing, education and public services played a role in bringing black women together to organize municipal, provincial and national campaigns aimed at change. According to Aone, Professor of Education and past CBWC president,

> Many people thought that racism was not a problem. They believed that racism was an example of intolerance; they do not like people because they do not know them. What people failed to realize was that there was still that undertone. They cannot come out and say that I do not like you, but what they could do was prevent you from moving up that corporate ladder (Mills interview, tape recording, July 23, 2003, A01, 02, 2A).

Within this sense of need, black women began to organize groups such as the CBWC to address discrimination in Canadian society, in large part by providing an organizational base for hundreds of black women across Canada to participate in community politics—a simple act of empowerment.

Multiculturalism

A fourth external factor that contributed to a rise of the CBWC was the set of government policies aimed at bolstering and encouraging cultural relations. A case in

point is Canada's multicultural policy. The policy was introduced as a response to the unintended consequences of the establishment of the Bilingual and Bicultural (Bi & Bi) Commission. The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (also known as the Bi and Bi Commission and the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission) established on the 19th of July 1963 was to

> inquire into and report upon the existing state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada and to recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races, taking into account the contribution made by the other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada and the measures that should be taken to safeguard that contribution.

In response to the policy, various ethnic groups argued that people of British and French origins were not in danger of being excluded from efforts to entrench a bilingual and bicultural model of Canada. In 1971, Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau and his liberal government responded with a federal policy that confirmed the bilingual status of Canada, but within a multicultural rather than bicultural framework. A Multiculturalism Directorate was established in 1972 by the Department of the Secretary of State to implement this policy and related programs. The Multiculturalism Directorate established a Race Relations Unit (1981) and announced a major funding commitment to combat racism. By 1983, Multicultural Minister James Fleming (May 26 1983, Globe and Mail) told reporters that "the federal government is calling for a special parliamentary inquiry into what it describes as the pervasive problem of racism."

A policy of multiculturalism recognized the ethnic and racial diversity of the Canadian population and served as a "guideline for the government's policy at both the federal and the provincial level, by providing a framework for national discourse on the reconstruction of Canadian society" (Agnew, 1996, p. 144).

Multicultural policy represented the government's intervention into the reconstruction of a symbolic order and redistribution of social status among ethnic groups. Canada's multiculturalism policies were called into question as black women and other groups opted for redefining notions of nation to address issues of racism and discrimination.[6]

The federal government's multicultural policy to address issues of racism and culture raised a series of questions for black women. They argued that the federal government's efforts were directed towards creating an ideal and inclusive society that recognized and promoted "polyethnicity" (Kymlcyka, 1995). The demands of black women and their communities for recognition of their right to maintain cultural distinctiveness coincided with changing political strategies and ideologies among federal and provincial governments that helped shape public policy. For black women, one weakness of the policy was its limited effectiveness in changing Canadian institutions, whose practices reflected systemic and institutional racism. For example, immigrants and their children have historically been incorporated into a national identity whose symbolic character is fundamentally British, but separately regarded as Canadian (Hamilton, 1994; Brand, 1994; Bristow, 1994; Carty, 1994; Dei and Calliste, 2000; Cooper, 2002; Li, 2003). The new multicultural policy represented an attempt to

[6] Drawing on the work of Bannerji (1996), my point is simply that discourses of nation and culture provide a foundation for the perpetuation of structural inequalities based on race, gender and class.

reconstruct the symbolic order and to redistribute social status among ethnic groups. This policy was challenged by black women and other groups interested in redefining notions of nation to address issues of racism and discrimination. They did not believe that the policy, as enacted by federal government, was capable of accommodating the symbolic aspirations of black Canadians.

Status of Women

By 1971, Canada had a minister Responsible for the Status of Women, who acted as an advisor and advocate within Cabinet to ensure that women's concerns were an integral part of the discussion and decision-making. The Office of Equal Opportunity for Women was responsible for policies related to women's equality, including those of Justice and Welfare, Employment and Immigration and the Secretary of State.

The United Nation's International women's year meeting occurred in 1975 in Mexico City and the Office of the Status of Women was created in 1976 to monitor and coordinate the implementation of the directives. This included a separate federal department, a national advisory council on women, women's directorates and advisory councils in most provinces and territories, human rights commissions and thousands of women's organizations across the country. By the early 1980s, Canada had strengthened its national machinery for the advancement of women. This included Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women at the federal, provincial and territorial levels and organizations within the bureaucracies of government to provide expertise, strategic policy funding and program advice on issues affecting women. Women's groups and other organizations such as the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status

of Women (CACSW) were also key partners in the advance of women's equality in Canada.

In the process of organizing, black women discovered that issues concerning racial discrimination took a backseat to gender in the women's movement in Canada. In the Royal Commission on the Status of Women report, while the section on poverty focused on Indian, Metis and Eskimo women, immigrant women and women of colour, these groups were notably absent from the rest of the report (Agnew, 1996). Black Canadian women's experiences and the variations within these experiences, vary significantly according to their ethnicity, language, class, sexual orientation and age. Black women were actively organizing to respond to their respective communities needs and to overcome complex forms of racism and discrimination. When asked about the political challenges facing black women at that time, Atwel (Mills interview, tape recording, September 14, 2003, A012) explained that "we were being left behind in terms of our views and action had to be taken". She further believed that it would be beneficial and necessary for black Canadian women to work together in order to organize and advance their respective interests.

Specifically, the establishment of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW) in 1970 by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau at the behest of Laura Sabia (president of the Canadian Federation of University Women) and Secretary of State Judy LaMarsh (Hamilton, 2004) contributed to the formation of the Congress of Black Women of Canada. Operating according to a broad mandate, the RCSW (1970) documented "local units of the women's movement in 16 cities from Vancouver to Halifax. These units were made up of increasingly diversified groups of women that

tried to improve their collective lot as well as to combat discrimination" (ibid, 2). The Committee eventually pressured the Canadian government to enact laws based on RCSW recommendations. The NAC (which served as an umbrella organization for women's groups across the country) and the federal government helped set the stage for the emergence of the CBWC. These external forces were responsible for bringing together many knowledgeable and politically active black women who wanted to work on matters of direct concern to black women and their families on a national level. Note, for instance, the comments of one of my interviews[7] , Afoute, a high school secretary and CBWC founding member, who recalls that "Black women received very little attention in the NAC press" (Mills interview, tape recording, September 24, 2003, A014, 02, 2A).

A core group of black Canadian women started to organize conferences and held meetings to discuss the issues of greatest importance to them. Similar activities and organized protests in the name of social justice took place well before the 1970s, but the first signs of a national black women's organization were not visible until 1973, following the formation of the NAC. Efforts in this regard suggested a willingness to challenge the exclusion of black women from equal participation in the woman's movement. In other words, the idea that the NAC represented the concerns of white, middle class Canadian women was a critical factor in the development of the CBWC. For black women, the NAC's focus on gender oppression as the basis for universal solidarity was exclusionary and alienating, especially since it regarded male supremacy as the most basic form of domination and interpreted all other forms of exploitation—racism, capitalism and imperialism, among others—as extensions of male supremacy

[7] All of the interviewees were mentioned by one name.

(Agnew, 1996). In its early stages, the CBWC found it difficult to fit within the NAC mandate precisely because the CBWC challenged the story of the "universal woman." Black women refuted this notion by emphasizing the diversity of power relations shaping their lives.

Charter of Rights

In 1982 the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* was enshrined in Canada's constitution. It stipulated the constitutional rules to which all government action must conform with respect to anti-discrimination. Section 27 of the Charter stated that "this charter [was] interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians." This interpretative clause did not distinguish nor clarify communities to be included therein. Likewise, there was no mechanism by which inclusionary practices were to be operationalized, running the risk therefore, of leaving space for practices that were inherently racist. Many individuals cited section 15(1) of the Charter which guaranteed equality before and under the law and equal protection and benefit of the law, noting that individuals cannot be discriminated against on the basis of "race, national or ethnic origin, color or religion" among other factors. Subsection (1) of section 15, according to Agnew (1996) states that The Charter does not preclude any law, program or activity that has as its objects the amelioration of condition of disadvantaged individuals; or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability. Agnew (ibid, p.145) writes that the Charter provides for a balance between the "rights of the individual and those of groups. Multiculturalism has been described as reaffirming two fundamental human rights in

Canadian society- the right to be different (preserving culture) and the right to maintain the same (receiving equal treatment)."

Black women criticized the legislation for its inability to protect the rights of black people and other racialized groups. Frances Henry (2000) argued that as an instrument for addressing discrimination, the charter was ineffective. She argued that while the Charter outlawed discrimination on the basis of race, it defined neither discrimination nor race. In other words, the fruitful efforts to ameliorate racial discrimination were completely absent from the Charter.

In brief, the above six factors contributed to the contentious issues facing black women. The ten year period, between 1973 and 1983, marked a decade of struggle between black women and the federal government to recognize, define and develop policies to address issues concerning health, education, housing, employment, racism and immigration policy. These struggles provided a rallying point for them to take advantage of their extensive social networks to represent the issues concerning black women. Within this context, activists came to understand structural inequalities as a pervasive problem with important implications for their equality. Most importantly, they held meetings in their cities to discuss the government's commitment to racialized minorities, women and the poor as well as the need for black women to organize and act collectively.

Just as many of the black Canadian feminists in the universities were influenced by the local struggles around issues of race and gender inequality, so too were the origins of the CBWC were shaped by prevailing national debates on the black feminist's experiences with racism and sexism. As we will discuss, for example, the

themes of the CBWC's national conferences, *the Black Woman Today, the Black Woman and Her Family, Impetus the Black Woman, Concerns for the Eighties* reflected the interests of black women in the black feminist movement. The themes were consistent with and derivative of the national climate of concern regarding issues of race, class and gender discrimination of the 1970s and 1980s. Conferences of the 1970's reflect a tacit acknowledgement of black women's initiative to take a more critical and personal look at the power relations in Canadian society. These conferences served to scrutinize blatant forms of oppression and probe the systemic biases, stereotypes, discrimination, sexism and racism in social institutions. The CBWC's interests were shaped by the national climate which was heightened by the political activity of the antiracist feminists who began to form autonomous organizations. According to Vijay Agnew's (1996, p.144) astute analysis:

> the protests by women from Asia, Africa and the Caribbean against race, class and gender discrimination and their demands to have equal access to social services for women from their ethnic and racial groups are premised on three inter-linked rights: first, the right to maintain their cultural distinctiveness; second, the right to equal treatment under the law; and third, the right to special programs designed to eliminate and compensate for the historical disadvantages resulting from race, class and gender oppression.

It is within this context that the CBWC have used the principles of multiculturalism to gain support for themselves with state agencies and to provide services to women. They have protested against policies that do not recognize their own cultural distinctiveness.

For others, the CBWC has scrutinized education as an institution that legitimizes some kinds of practices and ways of thinking about schooling, while at the same time making others illegitimate. The education system reflects the relations of power, that is, the ways in which more powerful people achieve their particular ends, while the options preferred by the less powerful people are rarely successful.

The CBWC has criticized the ways in which the state has contributed to the production and reproduction of the subordination of black workers through its racialized, gendered and class-biased immigration policy. Before 1967, immigration was a strategic mechanism to control black people as evident in the explicitly racist and restrictive provisions of the Immigration Act. Immigration policies were shaped by a dialectic of economic, political and ideological relations: the demand of employers for cheap labour and the state's desire to exclude blacks (Calliste, 1996). Immigration officers and their agents abroad perceived black people as inferior and undesirable, contributing to permanent economic, social and race relations problems. Consequently, officials restricted the entry of those for whom services were in demand and only when sources of white labour were unavailable (Li, 2003; Dua, 1999; Mensah, 2002; Walker, 1985). With specific reference to black women, the process of racialization and the ideologies of racism and sexism played a key role in the state's decision to admit a small number of Haitian workers and subsequently amended its immigration policy to deport them.

Haitian social workers (like other professional and skilled black workers) were expected to contribute to the social, economic and cultural life of Canada. This class-bias in the immigration policy was designed to serve the needs of the economy. Canada

economized on the reproduction of high-cost labour, since it was easier and quicker to import foreign-trained professional and skilled labour. Haitian social workers were admitted under a differential immigration policy, which once amended stated that they could no longer use their tourist visa to apply for a resident's visa or landed immigrant status. This differential immigration policy produced and reproduced the subordination of black Haitian worker within a gendered and racially segmented labour force. Clearly, Haitian workers have suffered a complex history in which racist, classist and sexist immigration policies.

The CBWC was drawn to the case of Haitian immigrants. CBWC noted that the presence of federal and provincial legislative initiatives to address the discrimination that black women face in their everyday lives may ensure that procedural laws apply equally to everyone, but had little to do with the actual racism these black women faced on a day-to-day basis. For example, the CBWC advocated on behalf of Haitian immigrants to challenge the immigration legislation. The CBWC argued that the Haitian immigrants were detained. Haitians alleged that the amendments to the Immigration Act did not provide fair treatment at the hands of immigration officials. Such a challenge required a long struggle. The CBWC attended the trials of Haitian immigrants, affording them the right to legal representation.

The 1973-1983 decade lent legitimacy to the concerns of the CBWC members who experienced discrimination due to the race and gender biases of Canadian society. Black women during this decade were organizing the CBWC's National Conferences. The National Conferences opened the space for black women from the communities all over Canada to meet. They came from different ethnic groups, countries, cultures, and

occupational backgrounds to meet on a regular basis - these meetings enabled black women to gain new knowledge and to learn from each other's experiences. They facilitated the planning of collaborative projects within the black Canadian communities. These women formed chapters and established social networks at the local and national levels which, in turn, provided resources that would empower the women's advocacy.

Funding

Fundraising is important to social movement organizations. The CBWC was no exception. The importance of revenues to sustain organizational activity was widely acknowledged in the social movement literature (Oslander, 1995). This section examines how the CBWC financed its conferences in 1973, 1974 and 1977. The information indicated that most of the funding for the conferences came from government grants[8] and internal fundraising activities. In April 1973, 40% of revenues came from a federal grant of $5, 700.00.[9] In that year, 23% of the organization's money came from patrons, donations, registration fees and sponsors: patrons gave $373.00, donors gave $945.00, registration fees totalled $1,860.00 and sponsors gave $1,730.00. These figures indicate that these sources constituted the main source of revenue to fund the conferences. Money was vital in meeting the maintenance needs of the conferences (meals and accommodations, delegate travel expenses, gifts for speakers, administrative costs, printing programs) as well as to pay for sustaining organizing costs (mailings, postage, stationery, printing and administration).

[8] The Federal Women's Program, Secretary of State's Office, established in 1973 became a source of core funding for women's organizations.
[9] CANEWA Letter, dated 17 July 1972, from Secretary of State Women's Programs.

Conference organizers found funding opportunities from corporations such as Xerox of Canada, Limited, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Eaton's of Canada Limited and the Toronto Star Limited. Donations were also secured from community organization such as the National Black Coalition of Canada and the Canadian Negro Women's Association. The conference organizers believed in the importance of fund raising from community organizations given their respective access to and familiarity with the experiences of black women. The CBWC committee also relied heavily on the social skills of its prominent and well connected members such as Kay Livingstone who launched a number of fundraisers designed to attract affluent supporters at fashionable places such the Westin Harbour Castle Hotel. The 1973 Conference report documents the participation of affluent political supporters at the inaugural conference. Conference organizers directed their attention to mobilizing resources that would help to build the organization that would in turn lobby for government funds. The Honourable Ross Macdonald, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, Mr. Leonard Braithwaite, M.P.P Member of the Ontario Legislature for Etobicoke, Mrs. Rosemary Brown, M.P.P, member of the British Columbia Legislature for Vancouver-Burrand attended the fundraiser. The Honourable John Yaremko, Q.C., Solicitor General of Ontario was a guest speaker. Mr. Lincoln Alexander, M.P, Member of Parliament for Hamilton-West and Mr. Dan Hill, Director of the Human Rights Commission, Joseph Gray, Minister of State for Multiculturalism, M.P. Marc Lalonde, Minister of Health and Welfare, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, M.P. John Roberts, Student Community Services, M.P. Office of the Secretary of State, Gil Scott Multiculturalism Office, Carol Aziz Citizenship Branch, Louise Holmes Status of

Women, and Enid Page Citizenship Branch, Herb Gray M.P., Bernard Newman M.P.P., Gene Whelan M.P., and Ted Bounsall M.P.P. were also in attendance. This list indicates a clear interest in establishing connections with the "establishment" of civil, human and women's rights organizations. The women of the CBWC used their skills to access the established institutional channels for obtaining resources located within extant government programmes.

In 1974 the second conference was being planned and conference organizers looked for more ways to involve community groups and students. They lobbied the federal government to increase their funds from the previous year. The 1974 Financial Report of the Congress of Black Women (CBWC) described the grants obtained and information about the student group that was to receive funding. The report indicated that NCC received a student grant for $2, 400.00, a federal grant for $5, 000.00, a cultural grant for $2,300.00 and an administrative grant for French/English translation for $700.00. Most of the money continued to come from government grants and a small amount from donations that totalled $2,302.00. Registration and project costs totalled $5,543.84 (see table 5).

In 1977 the National Secretariat was established and this was not a period of accelerated financial growth. Most of the money continued to come from federal grants. One grant was for $4, 200.00 from the Secretary of State. During this period, regional representatives and committees were in place and financial growth was neither as rapid nor as forthcoming as it had been from 1972-1974.

One of the salient concerns of social movement funding, as identified by scholars and activists relates to the power of the government to co-opt movement activity

(Oslander, 1995; McAdam, 1982). Concern about this problem leads, some scholars to conclude that social movement groups should avoid external funding. Individuals who take this position see reliance on internal funding, coming from a group's own membership, as the optimal way to avoid the potentially moderating or compromising influences of social movement funders. Although the conference organizers depended on the federal government for funds, this study will show that they were not co-opted. The ideas of the activists were not adopted nor co-opted by mainstream organizations (Staggenborg, 1999, p.144). Black women were less able than others to rely on their constituency for resources and more likely to rely on government agencies or corporations for part of their organizational survival. Despite these constraints, activists accepted government funds. While looking for alternate sources of funding, these women often used these funds to critique government policies.

Financial Statements/Revenues/Reports of the National Congress of Black Women 1973, 1974, 1977

Table 5, April 1973

No.	**Revenues**		**Expenditures**	
1	Grants	$5,700.00	Meals and Accommodations	$7,246.00
2	Patrons	$373.00	Delegates Travel Expenses	$1,061.00
3	Donation	$945.00	Gifts for Speakers	$34.90
4	Registrations	$1,869.00	Postage, Stationery	$405.24
5	Sponsors	$1,730.00	Printing	$1,899.25
6	Dinner and Dance	$1,249.00	Administration	$478.08
7	Accommodations	$1,228.00		
Total		$13,094.00		$11,539.13
Balance	$1,554.41			

Table 6, March 1974

No.	**Revenue**		**Disbursements**	
1	Student Grant	$2,400.00	Salaries	$2,626.38
2	Federal grant	$5,000.00	Hotel Rooms and Meals	$6,242.51
3	Cultural Grant	$2,300.00	Office Supplies and Stamps	$875.70
4	Grant RE: Simultaneous Translation	$700.00	Telephone	$101.07
5	Donations	$2,302.00	Transportation	$1,267.91
6	Registrations & Projects	$5,543.84	Cultural Projects	$3,412.20
7			Guest Speaker	$484.00
8			Rentals	$1,000.00
9			Printing	$365.79
10			Refunds	$75.80
11			Miscellaneous	$186.70
Total	$18, 245.94			$16,638.06
Balance	$1,607.88			

Table 7, April 11, 1977

Income	Secretary of State Grant received February 1/77	$4,200.00
Expenditures	Secretary's Pay	$654.94
	Receiver General	$9.20
	Masonic Temple	$100.00
	Ringrose Press-Letterhead	$21.57
	Planning Meeting	$89.93
	Office Supplies	$49.22
	Telephone	$44.63
	Postage	$15.00
	Travel-Planning Meeting	$1,808.60
Total		$2, 793.09
Balance		$1,406.91

Internal Factors:

Organizational Structure, Objectives, Frames and Leadership

Table 3
Organization/Acronym, Founding Year and Purpose

Phase	Organization/Acronym	Founding Year and Purpose
1	National Congress of Black Women (CBWC)	1973; founding conference
2	National Congress Committee (NCC)	1974; to establish aims
3	National Secretariat (NS)	1977; to develop a formal organization
4	Congress of Black Women of Canada (CBWC)	1980; to build a network of solidarity for black women

The First CBWC Conference, 1973

Interestingly, Lawrence Hill (1996) provides a brief discussion of the founding of the first CBWC conference. In 1973, Kay Livingstone was interested in women's issues, racial issues and raising her family (ibid, p.21). She was active in the woman's movement at the local, national and transnational level. Barbara Catto, YWCA member, writes that "Livingstone was a forceful advocate of black women's rights, a founding member of the Canadian Negro Women's Association (CANEWA), a member of the

United Nations women's section and represented black women at the International Women's Year Conference in Mexico" (26 September 1975).

All of the interviewees knew that it was these personal experiences that promoted the desire by Livingstone to organize a national conference. Catto writes: "Kay travelled from the Yukon to Newfoundland on an assignment from the Privy Council informing Women's minority groups of their rights and how to obtain them" (ibid.). All interviewees state that at the cross country meetings, Livingstone was not only the only black woman present but she alone confronted issues of race and gender that were being ignored. She decided to ask the Canadian Negro Women's Association (CANEWA) to organize a conference for black women to talk about their experiences and to put forward an agenda for them.

The Canadian Negro Women's Association (CANEWA) was crucial in bringing together the four key activists who founded the First National Congress of Black Women (CBWC)[10]: Kay Livingstone, Aileen Williams, Eugenie Allen and Verda Cook. Livingstone, a CANEWA founder and first president (1951-1953) served as president of the women's section United Nations Association of Canada. Aileen Williams, another CANEWA founder, was a key fundraiser and activist. Eugenie Allen served as CANEWA's president from 1971-1973. Verda Cooke, had previously worked in the Eureka Friendly Club, was a CANEWA member (since 1957) and president (1975-1976).[11] On May 13, 1972 they met at Cooke's apartment to discuss how to best implement Article Three of the CANEWA (1962) constitution: "To undertake and

[10] CANEWA was a local organization consisting of forty active members. It focused on issues pertaining to education, racism, health and welfare, social environment, job opportunities, security for the elderly and provided scholarships and bursaries for black Canadian students.
[11] The Eureka Friendly Club was founded in 1910. It depended on the voluntary cooperation of its members who were responsible for implementing programmes to assist poor black Canadians.

finance a community, national or international project each year."

Allen recalled that they contacted the "CANEWA membership about convening a Congress of Canadian Black Women in mid-November 1972 [and wanted their] views as to the feasibility of this project." The membership accepted the offer to host the conference (Hill, 1996, p.62). Livingstone's dream was realized in 1973. At this initial juncture, their concerns shifted from constitutional issues to the founding of a national organization. This shift was significant because they believed that very few organizations were examining the status of black Canadian women at the time of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, especially in terms of their economic and racial difficulties. To do so was appropriate given that CANEWA was strategizing to address these problems. Livingstone suggested convening a conference in November of 1972 that would be open to all black women (Cooke, 1972; CANEWA Newsletter, Wednesday May 3, 1972).They wrote and sent telegrams and letters to newspapers, community organizations and the Office of the Ontario Premier. As Verda Cooke recalls, "It was exciting to plan the conference ... We wanted to involve people, and there were several problems that we wanted to deal with. We thought that by organizing we would be able to deal with those problems (Mills interview, tape recording, Toronto, September 24, 2003, A014, 04, 4b).

Atwen (Mills interview, tape recording, Toronto, October 14, 2003, A020) concurs:

> When the group started I thought we were really going to capture the hearts of all the black women in the cities. The purpose was always to provide a network of solidarity of black women, to be a united voice in

> defending human rights and any other issues that a person might have. I remember people saying that it was a safe place to examine the relevant issues to your family. Even to discuss issues that were relevant to them in Canada and develop solutions. Coming from other countries you didn't have the awareness and the know how, but if we got together and talked about issues, if you didn't understand the issues somebody in that group will help you understand or find someone to deal into the issues and give you a better view of what is going on.

From the beginning, the conference offered the participants an opportunity to address a range of subjects related to discrimination, health care, human rights, immigration, housing, employment, raising families and education. Asevt, Atwel and A.S. spoke about the purpose of the conference. Asevt (Mills interview, tape recording, Toronto, September 28, 2003, A017) explained it was "to provide a network of solidarity for black women in Canada and to be a united voice in the defence and extension of human rights and liberties for black women in Canada." Atewl (Mills interview, tape recording, Toronto, September 14, 2003, A012) elaborated:

> Because there was a matriarchal system within the black community, we had to take the lead in raising families, some black men were not there. So black women needed support. The CBWC was a support system to help black women to focus on raising families, lobbying for health care, black women's rights, housing and immigration. I saw the CBWC as the voice within the Canadian system for all of those things. ... For me, the CBWC was the anchor to help black women to rise above discrimination

> and make sure there is a safe place for kids, lobby for their husbands, domestic workers, and immigrant women.

When inquired about her participation in the conference, A.S. (Mills interview, tape recording, Toronto, August 12, 2003, A007) added:

> The purpose of the CBWC was to investigate the lives and activities that impact on black women's lives first of all and their families. The Congress was an organization that set out to improve the educational, employment situations, to speak as a voice for black women across the country in terms of seeking equity among black women and their families, being apart of the broader agenda of women's activities. Therefore we did not work solely among ourselves. We are part of all of the women equality seeking situations across the country.

When asked about the first conference, Aetn (Mills interview, tape recording, Toronto, October 07, 2003, A018) further explained:

> The Congress was dedicated to improving the welfare of black women and their families in their local communities and nationally to clarify and bring due recognition to the roles of black women in Canadian society. The Congress thought that by doing that they were seeking programs through education and services to motivate black women to participate in the life of their communities in which they lived. The Congress was tired of the rejection and traditional ways of exploitation and oppression in which black women were always excluded from the mainstream society.

Indeed, the activities of the founding members laid the groundwork for the future organization in several ways. Livingstone, Cook, Williams and Allen brought together organizations and groups who worked together around issues of direct concern to black women. For example, the CBWC steering committee mobilized a diverse group of movement organizations from across Canada including: the Coloured Women's Club Incorporated (Montreal), Black Community Development Project (Montreal), Community Club of North Buxton, Black Action Movement (Winnipeg), Negro Women's Professional Club, (Halifax), Black Professional Women's Group (Dartmouth Nova Scotia), Jamaican Canadian Association (Toronto) and the Toronto Negro Color Guard Ladies Auxiliary. Recruiting these organizations was significant because it helped establish a broad-based constituency. These findings are consistent with other case studies that show mobilizing structures or a pre-existing and broad socioeconomic base of support for the movement (Robnett, 1997; Morris, 1984; McAdam, 1982).

These founding members also used their connections to recruit many knowledgeable and politically active individuals who could lend prestige and influence to the event. They included Zanana Akande (activist), Rosemary Brown (M.P.), Juanita Westmoreland- Traoré (lawyer), Reverend Addie Aylestock (first black woman ordained in Canada) and Gwen Johnson (Third World Bookstore owner). Prior to the 1973 CBWC conference, many of these women were leaders in their local communities. Because of their high status at the local level, provincial and national level, several of them women acted as community bridge leaders (Robnett, 1997)

whose primary task was to act as a link between local communities and the conference organizers.

On April 6, 1973, Livingstone, under the aegis of CANEWA, the community organizations, groups and a broad range of activists were woven together to form the first conference of the National Congress of Black Women (CBWC) held at the Westbury Hotel in Toronto, Ontario. The objectives of the conference were to provide a diverse group of black women with the opportunity to meet each other and discuss issues of common concern with their counterparts from across the country. The "Black Woman Today" was established as the theme of the inaugural conference.

At the conference workshops, black women discussed how to target the government about their issues and the discrimination they experienced in Canadian society. In discussing workshop topics, Asevt (Mills interview, tape recording, Toronto, September 28, 2003, A017) noted: In 1973, there were a lot of problems around employment, immigration, housing and access to services, and the general exclusion of black women.

In another example of the importance of the workshops to develop strategies among black women, Aone (Mills interview, tape recording, Toronto, July 23, 2003, A01) described the conference as follows:

> They felt there was a need for black women to have a forum through which they could not only express their needs, but also develop strategies and programs to assist black women and their families.

Small groups attended workshops on topics such as the immigrant female, education, concerns of single women and youth programs. Participants passed 37

recommendations in support of the Congress and its mandates. Attendees returned to their communities with renewed vigour to examine and address problems according to the 37 resolutions, which served as the basis for a sustaining commitment, as well as motivation for organizing a second conference the following year.

Instead of relying solely on those political opportunities for sustained mobilization, black women found local, provincial and national avenues for continuing their protest against the underlying discriminatory practices affecting immigration policy, youth, education and the single female. In other words, the strength of the conference participants involved attempts to influence state policy and decision making at the level of local, provincial and national institutions. They were more likely to lobby the government for changes in policy by utilizing their networks. These efforts were aimed at addressing multiple issues related especially to the issues that have consequences particularly for the identity, consciousness and empowerment of black women.

Workshops

The Immigrant Female

Linking black experiences with the African diaspora was the prevailing theme during the 1973 immigrant workshop. Many problems faced by black female immigrants were linked to past racism in the form of slavery, immigration policy and domestic limitations. The delegates, in the immigrant female workshop were active participants in the discussion on black immigration to Canada. While many of the participants manifested a keen interest in discussing Canada's immigration policy as it related to racial and sexual discrimination.

The workshop on the Immigrant Female focused on Canada's Immigration policy. Juanita Westmoreland-Traoré (Quebec), Eugenie Allen (Toronto Ontario), Shirley Williams-Fowler (Winnipeg, Manitoba), Sylvia Wedderburn (Halifax, Nova Scotia) and Emily Moore (New York) were the committee members. The workshop participants discussed how historically Canada's immigration policy was racist towards immigrants from the Caribbean and Africa and that the current legislation perpetuated gender discrimination.[12]

These activists were aware of issues resembling patterns we see in other transnational networks. This heightened awareness allowed them to build a broad campaign to attract allies and bridge cultural differences among black women. For example, the immigration committee and CBWC participants stated that "black people in Canada have a common African origin and heritage and common problems that stem directly from their racial origins" (ibid, p.4). The CBWC was giving due recognition to the impact of the trans-Atlantic slave trade on the past and present lives of Africans and African descendants throughout the world. They were giving serious consideration to

[12] The conference participants were referring to the explicitly racist and restrictive immigration policies prevailing from the 1860s until 1960s signalling the intentions of colonial authorities to develop Canada as a "white settler colony" (Li, 2003; Dua ,1999; Mensah, 2002; Walker, 1985). Setting the precedent for this exclusion was the 1867 British North America Act which specified that matters related to naturalization and aliens were the exclusive authority of the Parliament of Canada and gave the parliament of Canada the right to pass immigration laws. In 1869, Canada passed it first legislation on immigration, by which immigration agents were established in Canada, Britain, and elsewhere. However, during this period of open door immigration policy, severe restrictions were placed upon non-white immigration from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.

From 1869 to 1907, Canada received 1.5 million immigrants and less than 1, 000 were black (Li, 2003). Between 1906 and 1960, the black population in Canada remained fairly low as the government passed a series of restrictive immigration policies that limited black immigration to Canada including the West Indian Domestic Scheme (WDS). The WDS allowed black women into Canada if they would work as household servants for at least one year, resulted in only a few hundred black immigrants each year between 1955 and 1960. In 1976, the federal government faced with public opposition to the rising number of immigrants (in addition to unemployment and economic recession), attempted to restrict the free flow of immigrants to Canada by introducing the Immigration Act (1976). The 1976 Act was a quota system that limited on a yearly basis the number of immigrants. The CBWC's position was therefore a reaction to the history of racist immigration issues and problems in Canada during this decade.

the global power and wealth imbalances affecting Africans and African descendants created by over 500 years of colonialism and the creation and maintenance of neocolonial policies and practices. By paying specific attention to the fact that African descendants have historically experienced a multiplicity of oppressions, activists were calling attention to the intersecting forms of discrimination and systemic exclusions which still today impede profoundly on their full access to education, housing, employment and educational services. At the end of the workshop, the delegate's resolutions included the following (1973 Report, p.1-5):

> 1. Be it resolved that the women's organizations foresee (a) the necessity of baby-sitting and (b) child-care center facilities during all meetings. That these facilities be organized, whenever possible, on a cooperative basis. That they provide an occasion for communicating our cultural traditions and values to our children.
> 2. Be it resolved that the documentary films from the Embassies be shown in schools outlining the cultural, historic, economic, educational heritage and political development of Black countries in Africa and the West Indies; and that a delegation be present to answer questions that might be asked by parents teachers, or children.
> 3. Be it resolved that the General Assembly of the First National Black Women's Congress nominate a special committee to present, as soon as possible, a brief and oral presentations to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration on the effects of the present changes in Third World countries, with a recommendation for their immediate suspension and eventual repeal.
> 4. Be it resolved that the pressure be brought to bear on the Canadian policy makers, both by West Indian and African Governments and Canadian black organizations to effect a reformation of these immigration policies.
> 5. Be it resolved that an observer committee be established to implement the following aims: (a) to observe Parliamentary proceedings and debates on immigration policies and all related matters; (b) to report on such findings and observations to the Canadian Negro Women's Association; and (c) that such information be disseminated to other interested bodies and organizations, participating and non participating.
> 6. Be it resolved that the General Assembly of the First National Black Women's Congress promote the principle of equal opportunity and accessibility to all applicants; and that selection be based on the date of applications, personal recommendations, and establishing a more

representative ethno racial mosaic in Canadian society.
7. Be it resolved that black liaison officers be appointed to regional Canadian immigration offices to welcome new immigrants to Canada and to distribute information on the various channels of communication available within the black community.
8. Be it resolved that the General Assembly of the first National Congress of Black Women set up a Watchdog Committee on the Canadian Media to: (1) scrutinize the portrayal of black people in the mass media; (2) increase their use of minority groups in advertising; (3) exploit available media sources and facilities; (4) encourage the production and publication of articles that will counter the unflattering portrayal of black people in the media today.
9. Be it further resolved that a group be set up to sensitize Third World embassies to: (1) to the role they can play in Canada in promoting awareness of the cultural and social happenings in their countries; (2) to encourage these embassies to assist on the accuracy of information being disseminated in their home countries with regards to immigration to Canada; (3) to remind these embassies of the possible misuse in the Canadian media of information obtained from their countries.

Education

Catherine Searles, Chair of the Education and Youth workshop, recalled that in 1973, "Education was a major concern for black women and their children" (1973 Report, p.1). Searles noted that "eighty delegates attended the morning session and about sixty delegates attended the afternoon session" (ibid., p.1) They talked about early childhood education and a parent's responsibility in preparing his or her child for public school and high school, teacher training and the importance of parental support at the schools. Searles said that the delegates were to "tackle the problems in education which confront black children in Canada and to produce meaningful recommendations to alleviate and eliminate some of those problems" (ibid, p.3). Workshop attendees shared a belief that primary and secondary schools silenced black Canadian students by ignoring their histories and by refusing to provide information considered relevant to their lives. Delegates supported the goal of helping black children "develop a good self-

image, a historical awareness that was essential to the development of their identity and recognition of their contributions past and present in the schools" (ibid, p.2). Gaps in school-based knowledge production were attributed to several causes. Sharleen Massiah, Education and Youth Committee Chair, noted for instance, the following: textbooks and works of literature selected for study were geared toward white middle class families; there were many other examples of discrimination in teaching materials; and, that black students increasingly resented the fact that the contributions of blacks to Canadian society were excluded from curriculum (ibid., p. 1).

Education delegates contributed the following quote to the 1973 Report: "Teacher's colleges must recognize the existence of racism in our society and in a teacher's approach" (ibid, p.2). This and similar attitudes reflect concerns that the educational problems of black Canadian children were due to overall discrimination in Canadian society. Workshop participants formed "a national education committee ... to call for changes to the Catholic, Protestant and Private Boards of Education" (ibid, p.3).

In this workshop, the participants talked about their own personal experiences with the educational system. Many of the panellists were highly involved in the education system as teachers. Catherine Searles, Zanana Akande, Marjorie Liverpool, Carmen MacDonald, Virgina Adamson and Hyacinth Tackdoor pursued a broad agenda that focused on the concerns of black women and their children in primary and secondary institutions. The goal was to address racism in the curriculum and the streaming of black children into vocational programs.

Four resolutions came out of this workshop. First, an acknowledgement of the need for problem solving in education for all and black children in particular; and a

recommendation for the creation of community planned daycare and nursery centers that were professionally staffed by people experienced with living in the black community and including parent-child care training programs. Second, the activists believed that black history ought to be included in school curriculum. Third, the CBWC participants suggested utilizing the Board of Education placement tests and reception centers to assist immigrant children. A Provincial Education Committee was established to facilitate the implementation of these recommendations in British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritimes. A list of CBWC concerns was sent to the Board of Education in Ontario after the 1973 conference.

It was impossible to ignore the kinds of claims that were being made in the CBWC's reports about what was wrong with the educational system and how to make it right. The committee believed that "the principals and teachers should be screened concerning hang-ups and should be placed in areas best suited to their outlook, ethnically speaking. In the event of obvious discrimination, prejudice or bigotry, teachers should be dismissed, in the interest of the community" (1973 Report, p.2).

In these debates about racism in the curriculum the commitment to alternative ideologies was clear. Essentially the CBWC was in search of:

> an action-oriented strategy for institutional and systemic change that [would] address racism and other interlocking systems of social oppression. It is a critical discourse of race and racism in society that challenges the continuance of racializing social groups for differential and unequal treatment. Antiracism explicitly names the issues of race

and social difference as issues of power and equity rather than as matters of cultural and ethnic variety (Dei, 1996, p.246).

Table 8
National Education Committee

Committee Member(s)	Province
Marjorie Chapman	Vancouver, British Columbia
Patricia Clements	Winnipeg, Manitoba
Zanana Akande, Catherine Searles, Pat Cureton	Ontario
Marion de Jean, Joan Lawrence, Marjorie Griffiths, Gwen Lord	Quebec
To be appointed	Maritimes

Black Youth and Education

The third workshop created by the CBWC committee focused on Black Youth. The youth committee comprised of Sharleen Massiah, Clem Massiah, Sandra Smith, Valerie Braithwaite, Dianne Braithwaite, Kathy Livingstone, Rene Livingstone, Janice Waithe and Carole Campbell, all high school students and members of the youth committee, discussed how black youth understood their black Canadian identity and how to reaffirm their sense of self esteem in Canadian society by challenging the white norms and Eurocentrism in the curriculum. Massiah, Livingstone, Braithwaite and Campbell felt that they had been bombarded with inaccurate representations of black Canadians that erased their history, contributions and current achievements.

The youth workshop was a good example that pointed to the challenge of educational inclusivity within the context of diversity and difference (Dei, 1999). As with the other parts of Canada, the racialized contexts of schooling called for measures to address the question of the exclusion and the marginalization of black Canadian students. The members of the youth committee expressed their profound dissatisfaction

with the communicative and pedagogic practices that failed to adequately explore the complexities of their experiences that have shaped and continued to influence them. At the workshop's end, the black youth committee's resolutions to fight racism in the educational system included (1973 Report, p.2):

> 1. Black history should be included in the curriculum at all levels in the schools.
> 2. Texts related to black students should be introduced into the curriculum.
> 3. Audio visual materials should be screened and updated by a committee including blacks
> 4. Black youth should be trained in television and film techniques
> 5. Black parents and members of the black community should form community groups to work through the school system to educate teachers, black parents and students, on how to make the school system more effective for the community.
> 6. The black community should hold meetings with both parents and children to openly discuss teenage sexuality and family problems.
> 7. A committee should be formed to evaluate black films and inform the black community of their findings.
> 8. Black men should be invited to future congresses.
> 9. More time allotted for the workshops
> 10. Delegates should be kept up-to-date regarding the progress of the committees formed at the first National Congress of Black Women.

The morning and afternoon sessions centered on child-parent interactions and black girls' self-image as portrayed by various media (television, films and magazines).

By creating an issue network in the schools, black youth attempted to use their collective identities to draw on widely and deeply help beliefs to increase participation on these issues, and therefore increase the levels of resources and organizational capacities at its disposal to change policy (Snow and Bedford, 1992).These workshops identified the mounting evidence on how the educational institutions ignored the history, contributions and achievements of black Canadians.

Table 9
Black Youth Committee

Committee Members	Province
Betty Riley	Montreal, Quebec
Beverly Macdonald	Montreal, Quebec
Lorrain Walton	Montreal, Quebec
Tess Archibald	Montreal, Quebec
Adona Shaw	Toronto, Ontario
Debra Jaimeson	Toronto, Ontario
Jackie Lewsie	Toronto, Ontario
Valerie Braithwaite	Toronto, Ontario
Wendy Mecury	Toronto, Ontario
Bonita Grant	Toronto, Ontario

Concerns of the Single Female

Finally, the Concerns of the Single Female workshop centered on issues of mental health, adoption and foster homes.[13] Single parent families, illegitimate children, unwed mothers, contraception and encouraging black families to become adoptive or foster children were addressed. The discussion was informed by the concerns of the Children's Aid Society which was having difficulty placing black children in either foster or adoptive homes. To address this situation, the CBWC participants recommended that the following be addressed: the stigma of illegitimacy, encouraging black health care professionals to work or act as consultants in predominantly black areas and making the (black) Canadian community aware of existing problems. They wanted to pressure the Catholic and Protestant Care Agencies to provide information, assistance and cultural knowledge to white adopting parents of black children.

[13] The chairperson was Aileen Williams and the resource persons/ discussion leaders included Phyllis Brooks, Lilli Johnson, Monica Marsh, Florence Stewart, Sybil Washington and Connie Whittaker.

Health and Welfare

At the 1973 Health and Welfare workshop, participants discussed such topics as preventive medicine, the effects of the welfare system on black women and the foster care of black children. Two resolutions were proposed: first, on establishing a central index of black professionals, and second on sickle cell disease. One goal in the second area was increasing awareness of sickle cell screening facilities at the Montreal Children's hospital and encouraging its use. Participants were encouraged to talk about their health needs and experiences. Mutual support and validation were also stressed in terms of personal power and responsibility. Practices were suggested for helping black women value themselves, recognize ways that adversity had made them stronger and become active agents of social change in their lives. Participants established the goals of addressing women's health needs by understanding the social and economic structures of class, race and gender oppression that put them at-risk of a broad range of health problems.

In conclusion, the initial focus of the CBWC was on the impact of being a single women, immigration, education and youth programmes on the role of black women in their communities. The objective was to bring together a diverse group of black Canadian women to discuss how to influence programs, policies and legislation to address their needs. To address their concerns, the CBWC established steering committees to make major decisions, lists of supporters, voluntary members and loose ties to community groups. They also established a series of resolutions and committees to implement these proposals. While the education workshop's resolutions were acted upon, the resolutions from the youth, immigration and concerns of the single female

were yet to be implemented. The Conference ended with an evaluation of the group's recommendations for the next year's conference including the announcement that the Colour Women's Club (CWC) of Montreal was the host Association to convene the second CBWC in 1974.

The Second CBWC Conference, 1974

The second national conference convened at the Mount Royal Sheraton Hotel in Montreal on November 8, 1974 was hosted by the Coloured Women's Club, a social club established in 1902. The links established through the Coloured Women's Club helped the CBWC expand its support base and establish itself as a national group. According to Atwensi (Mills interview, tape recording, October 14, 2003, A020), one of the participants, "the initial host organization were members of the Coloured Women's Club (CWC). Approximately 500 women from across Canada met for three days under the theme, "The Black Woman and Her Family" (1974 Report, p.2). One-year later, Gwen McKenzie wrote, in the Report of the Second National CBWC conference, that "due to the overwhelming response to [the 1973 conference] the Coloured Women's Club Incorporated (CWC) offered to host the Second National Congress" (ibid., p.2).

The CWC worked closely with the Union United Church to provide bursaries for black Canadian students and was an active participant in the Montreal Council of Women, the National Black Coalition of Canada, the Negro Community Center and the YWCA. As Atwensi (Mills interview, tape recording, October 14, 2003, A020) reported to this researcher "the Congress was a rallying point and because of the

Congress we were able to reach out, recruit and mobilize women from many different sectors."

Similar to the 1973 conference, a Montreal steering committee and a Congress Committee was formed. At the request of conference participants, the women continued to discuss the developments in Canadian society relevant to black women. However, issues addressed by black women covered a *much wider range of topics* than the ones at the 1973 conference. Issues such as the triple oppression of black women were tackled for the first time, however. In addition, workshops continued to focus on immigration, economics and the black family, health and welfare, youth and education.

The conference concluded with resolutions leading to the formation of the *National Congress Committee (NCC)*, which initially consisted of members of the Toronto and Montreal steering committees and a handful of other interested persons (1974 Report, p.2). The goal of the NCC was to develop an organizational base for implementing many of the resolutions.

According to McKenzie, the Conference was "open to students, individuals, delegates, representatives of organizations and all interested black women. All workshops and plenaries were equipped with simultaneous translation for the benefit of anglophone and francophone participants" (ibid. p.2). Resolutions from the plenary session and workshops of the 1973 conference were included in the report. The guest speaker was Dr. Juanita Chambers, acting chairperson of the Department of Educational Psychology, University of Alberta.

Triple Repression

The Triple Repression of Black Women was the first workshop at the 1974 conference. Panelists included Iris McCracken (moderator), Anne Cools, Marie Jean Francois, Khadejha McCall and Brenda Paris. According to the 1974 Report, the "Royal Commission on the Status of Women seemed to us deficient in the many areas of particular concern, interest and relevance to black women; and there was little inquiry conducted on the status of black women in the country"(p.7) The participants argued that the intersection of race, class and gender put inordinate stress on women that was not being addressed in the research.

Workshop participants acknowledged the role that patriarchy and paternalism played in decision-making areas and bodies. In this sense, the participants linked demands for policy changes to a broader set of issues concerning gender issues. For example, a resolution was passed demanding that "Congress acknowledged solidarity with the Indian Women's Movement and communicated with the Quebec Native Women's Council to explore the ways and means of collaboration in the struggle for justice" (1974 Report, p.13). The skills of the activists were well suited to the external context of the 1973-1983 period and were able to frame their demands in a calculated manner to win support from women, racialized groups and black Canadians. That is to say, that the CBWC's strength came through working with other women's movements and racialized groups to increase their political participation in the public sphere.

Another objective of the workshop was to establish community networks that would facilitate political participation and build leadership skills. To this end, the participants passed a resolution to develop resources that would help black

organizations and social groups incorporate black women at all leadership, executive and decision-making levels. Black community centers, for example, were urged to include black women into their structures and to implement programmes directed at developing their organizational skills.

Iris McCracken, workshop moderator, noted that the term triple repression "referred to the repression by class, sex and race that resulted in the inordinate burdens and pressure on black women" (1974 Report, p.8). The purpose of the workshop was to enable black women to participate in the discussions concerning the racist, classist and sexist attitudes toward them in community organizations. McCracken was commenting on the ways in which being black and female combined to affect black women's lives and how they are perceived in black Canadian community organizations. "The Triple Repression of Black Women," referred to "repression by class, sex and race that resulted in the inordinate burdens and pressure on black women" (1974 Report, p.6). The intersection of race, class and gender was to become a recurrent theme in the CBWC literature.

Instead of arguing that racism exerts a more powerful influence than sexism on the lives of black women, McCracken described racism and sexism as interlocking. In McCracken's words, the CBWC "requested that all existing black organizations and community and social groups take immediate steps toward the complete integration of women at the leadership, executive and decision making levels" (ibid, p. 6). Another important recommendation was enacting a national inquiry into the status of black women, to be undertaken by black women in positions of accountability in their communities. Black Canadian community organizations eventually provided the

necessary support and direction for a diverse range of activities among their members, including leadership development and the collective articulation of group interests. These actions were vital steps in changing government policy and making others aware of racism.

Most existing community centres and other organizations tend to view women essentially as housewives, housewares or persons of inconsequential abilities. In some black community centers, women have not held leadership positions. According to McCracken, some black men acted in accordance with this pattern and this contributed to black women's subordination and perpetuated a pattern of male domination in community organizations.

The delegates challenged sexism in community organization by establishing community networks that would facilitate their political participation and build their leadership skills. To this end, the delegates passed a resolution to develop resources that would help black organizations and community groups to train women as leaders. Black Canadian community centers were encouraged to include women in their structures and to implement programs directed at developing their leadership skills. Within community organizations, a primary resource for organizing is leadership. Black Canadian community organizations filled a large part of this void by providing the support and direction for the diverse activities of women. They furnished the outlets to develop and train female leaders. The community organizations were an arena where group interests could be articulated and defended collectively. The delegate's resolutions focused on the following issues (1974 Report, p. 6-9.):

1. Be it resolved that all black community organizations, centers, and institutions involved in black life propose immediately and implement facilities and plans for the express purpose of consciousness raising in groups among black women in Canada. Such consciousness raising to begin immediately, and to involve all black women at all levels.
2. Be it resolved that all existing black community centers and other organizations begin immediately to plan for women and incorporate new and progressive ideas that are sufficiently broad to enable today's black women to participate fully at all levels; and that all directors of all Black community centers and other organizations plan and implement programs which are directed at the enlightenment and development of black women in areas other than those traditionally followed.
3. Be it resolved that the Federal Government conducts an inquiry into the status of black women, and that this inquiry be undertaken by suitably qualified, responsible females of the black race and, that these persons be sensitive and accountable to the black community.
4. Be it resolved that the discipline of medicine, including clinical research and practitioner levels, seriously begin to implement investigations and treatment in the areas if hypertension and other aspects of emotional stress in black women.
5. Be it resolved that research undertaken with a view to compiling an extensive and comprehensive bibliography of books and articles, historical, sociological and other studies, literature and other writings on the black woman and that such bibliographies be made accessible to all institutions, groups, libraries, school boards, organizations, churches.
6. Be it resolved that black women be encouraged to undertake the task of writing articles, books and essays on black women in Canada and that financial support be sought to enable such projects to be undertaken.
7. Be it noted that we object strenuously to the Air Jamaica commercial, which says in part. We make you feel good all over, and Be it noted that we object strenuously to the insinuating and derogatory use of black women by the media.
We resolve that the Second Congress of Black women send a letter of protest to Air Jamaica Limited, with a copy to Air Canada, expressing our displeasure to the aforementioned phrase in their advertisement and demand its instant withdrawal from all its advertisements and to refrain from any similar reference.
8. Be it resolved that all existing institutions be sensitized to the unique needs of black women and the effects that such lack of sensitivity have on the psyche of black women.

Women's Movement: An Issue of Identity

At the 1974 conference, black women were willing to challenge racism in women's organization. The failure of the Canadian women's movement to tackle the

issue of racism was another important 1974 conference theme. According to Iris McCracken,

> The Royal Commission on the Status of Women seemed deficient in many areas of particular concern, interest and relevance to black women; and there was little inquiry into the status of black women in the country ... the government saw the NAC as a body that spoke for all women. I do not think that they were speaking for black women or looking at our issues. (1974 Report, p. 7)

From the perspective of black women, the NAC made very little effort to systematically analyze the nature of the oppression that shaped their particular needs. Instead, as McCracken notes, "It was based on and fundamentally reflected the experiences of white, middle-class women" (ibid., p. 7). She argued that the NAC did not reflect black women's histories or experiences with racism and that for most black women there was little or no potential for achieving formal leadership positions within the NAC. Instead, black women tended to hold positions of power based on their community work; the CBWC reflected this understanding of their identities as activists. The conference workshops supported their efforts to identify racism in the Canadian women's movement and to express black women's interests in addressing these problems. In response to the question concerning how the CBWC was affected by formation of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), Atwel (Mills interview, tape recording, September 14, 2003, A012) recalled that" NAC did good work; but our views were not included." NAC was created to pressure the government to bring laws into conformity with the royal commissions recommendations (Hamilton, 2004). Atwel

(Mills interview, tape recording, September 14, 2003, A012) indicated that "the government saw NAC as a body that spoke for all women. I do not think that they were speaking for black women or looking at our issues." For most black women, NAC made very little effort to systematically interrogate the issues and questions about the nature of the oppression that shaped their lives. They criticized NAC for reproducing a structure of domination embedded in Canada's social relations, institutions and practices. NAC was based on and fundamentally reflected the experiences of white, middle-class, university-educated, largely urban population of northern European women.

The CBWC reflected this particular understanding of black women's identity as activists. The conference allowed them to identify racism in the women's movement and see black women's interests in solving these problems.

Immigration

The second workshop was on immigration, economics and the black family. Panelists included Gloria Hall, Muriel McIntyre, Mireille Anglade, Eugenie Ames, Rosemary Eustache and Juanita Westmoreland-Traoré. This workshop drew on the skills of professional librarians, office workers, professors, grassroots activists and a lawyer. The purpose herein was to i) discuss the economic conditions of black families in Canada, ii) immigration laws and regulations that determined the conditions of entry into Canada, iii) the working conditions once admitted to Canada; and iv) access to social benefits. The participants agreed that Canadian immigration policy needed to be amended and accordingly agreed to send telegrams to the Prime Minister and Minister of Immigration. From the start, there was a decision to use

conventional channels to influence the decision making process by lobbying legislators. What enabled these actors to adopt institutional means of influence and how successful were they in using tactics of political insiders?

Participants of the Immigration Workshop supported the ideas that prevailing racism and sexism in Canada's immigration policies in 1974 could be traced back to the period of slavery. Workshop moderator Juanita Westmoreland-Traoré commented on "parallels in another centuries-old struggle for economic goals among black Canadians" (ibid, 10). She writes:

> History has demonstrated that economic institutions have largely affected, if not determined, the structure of the black family. During slavery, the black family was virtually negated. During the settler period, in the different regions of Canada, black families suffered the effects of overt and covert racism (ibid, p.10).

She led a discussion concerning the state's role in maintaining racist economic institutions that affected black families, and observed how economic institutions had historically affected, if not determined, the structure of the black family. She noted that during slavery, black families were virtually negated and that during the settler period, black families in different regions of Canada suffered the effects of overt and covert racism. Traoré's insights are representative of the views of the majority of CBWC delegates who agreed that a series of systematic discriminatory practices had historically been maintained by state-controlled economic institutions. Following abolition, former slaves, black Loyalists, black refugees, Maroons and free blacks were forced to live in exclusively black settlements, either as landless members of

white Loyalist communities, or on farms that were too remote or small to achieve economic prosperity (Mensah, 2002; Walker, 1985). Large numbers of black Canadians became tenant farmers, working for white Loyalists under sharecropping agreements that created a system of indentured servitude that was similar to slavery. Black families were thus forced into lives of poverty.

Like its 1973 predecessor, 1974 Immigration Workshop asserted that racism and sexism in immigration policy was more properly defined as a system of power relations that rationalize and normalize differential treatment at the institutional level. Institutionalized racism in Canada resides in the historical and contemporary treatment of those now identified as black Canadian. They also argued that the black population of Canada is part of the African diaspora that was initiated by the European slave trade and has continued in the form of immigrants and refugees from many African countries and the Caribbean who have been entering Canada ever since.

The organizational structure of the CBWC in 1974 did not to have easy access to authorities through conventional channels. While the CBWC participants had bridge leaders, they lacked the formal organizational structures that would facilitate access in the early years. This structure was quite decentralized. It lacked a national leader and there was no way for individuals to control the tactics of local activists. Although the first conference provided some resources for national efforts throughout Canada, but by 1974, the CBWC was still a small group and was limited in its ability to coordinate on a national level.

The CBWC was able to compensate for these organizational deficits by drawing on skills of individuals who donated their time. As noted earlier (1974 Report,

p.11), telegrams were sent from the CBWC to the "Minister of Manpower and Immigration and to the Prime Minister and Mrs. Trudeau. The Minister of Immigration for Quebec, Mr. Bienvenus was urged to suspend deportation orders issued or pending against Haitians in Quebec and to grant them political refugee status in Canada." The United Nations and the Haitian government received telegrams urging them to free all political prisoners and deportees from Canada immediately. It was proposed that the "Congress speak to the Canadian authorities to encourage them to grant support for Haitian refugees as was given to Asians from Uganda, Chinese people, Hungarians and Cypriots" (1974 Report, p.12).

Nonetheless, the CBWC also engaged in institutional tactics. Leaders knew how to lobby their legislators and many rank-and-file members belonged to voluntary associations that lobbied for support. For example, as noted earlier, activists opposed the Canadian government's policy of arbitrarily searching, detaining and arresting Haitian people in Canada. In the 1974 Report, Traoré wrote, that "the CBWC were drawn to the case of Francesca Dufresne and Rose Pradieu, two Haitian women, who were charged and were brought to trial on December 6, 1974 in Montreal." The two sisters were social workers at the Haitian Christian Community Center and were charged with aiding an illegal immigrant to remain in Canada. "Francesca and Rose interviewed a client and in the course of their duties as social workers at the center they informed him of his right to legal counsel concerning immigration law. For this action, they faced possible fine(s), imprisonment, and eventually deportation to Haiti" (1974 Report). Traoré wrote that some of the "delegates attended the trail of Francesca Dufresne and Rose Pradieu on December 6, 1974."

In addition, it was proposed that the CBWC meet with Prime Minister Trudeau and his wife, provincial authorities, opposition parties, La Ligue des Femmes de Quebec, Le Ligue Des Droits se L'Homme, media and the provincial Minister of Immigration for Quebec, Jean Bienvenue especially since Quebec has a special interest in French speaking immigrants. The above resolutions of the Immigration workshop were adopted and unanimously supported by the Plenary Session of the second CBWC.[14] The telegrams were sent December 1974 (1974 Report, p.11). More importantly, these efforts were significant because it showed the power of the CBWC's attempt to influence government policy and decision making with institutions. These efforts were aimed at addressing multiple issues relating to the daily needs and survival that have consequences for black women.

At the end of the immigration, economics and black family workshop, the delegates passed the following resolutions (1974 Report, p.11-12):

> 1. Be it resolved that telegrams be sent from the Black Women's Congress to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration, Prime Minister and Mrs. Trudeau and the Minister of Immigration, Quebec, Mr. Bienvenue, beseeching them to suspend the deportation orders issued or pending against Haitians in Quebec and grant them political refugee status in Canada.
> 2. Be it resolved that a telegram be sent to the Government of Haiti beseeching them to free all political prisoners and deportees from Canada immediately.
> 3. Be it resolved that the Congress state clearly to the Canadian authorities its opposition to any form of regulations which would institutionalized the classification of transient workers in Canada and further, that it express its concern over promoting a better ratio of men and women in the black community; and its opposition to all forms of sexual discrimination in the present immigration regulations.
> 4. Be it resolved that the Congress undertake exchanges between English speaking and
> French speaking members of the black community.
> 5. Be it resolved that the Congress make representation to the Provincial

[14] I did not have access to information concerning effectiveness of these tactics.

authorities, emphasizing the need for adequate enforcement machinery, personnel concerning Human Rights Legislation in Quebec, the ineffective anti-discrimination legislation, the ineffectual wording of the equal pay article (No. 43) which would still leave discretionary powers to the employers.
6. Be it resolved that the Congress express it solidarity with the Indian Women's movement and communicate with the Quebec Native Women's Council to explore ways and means of collaboration in the struggle for justice.

Health and Welfare of Black Women

The third workshop focused on the health and welfare of black women. The panellists included Dr. V. Millington (Staff physician St. Mary's hospital), Dr. Ben Thompson (surgeon in Chief St. Mary's Hospital), Kathleen Daly (registered nurse), Rae Rambally (social worker, Children's service center), Madeleine Synott (social workers, Catholic Families and Children's Services), Dorothy MacIntyre (foster mother, welfare recipient), Dr. Yolande Bary (gynaecologist) and Margot Blackman (registered nurse, Vanier College). The moderator, Rosalyn Bramble was the Chief social worker at the Montreal General hospital.

The purpose of the workshop was to educate black women about the health and welfare issues that affected. Topics included: preventive medicine, the effects of the welfare system on black women, and foster family care of black children. In addition, the importance of encouraging public welfare agencies, social agencies and immigration department to educate their personnel about the needs of their black clientele was discussed.

Echoing the sentiments of the 1973 conference, the 1974 conference followed up on the following resolutions: the establishment of a central index of black professionals in the community for public distribution that would encourage all black

families to have annual medical checkups; publication of information on sickle cell disease in black communities and in health and welfare organizations that deals with black children and adults. Like its predecessor, this conference highlighted the importance of making the Montreal community aware of the facilities for sickle cell screening at the Montreal Children's hospital and encouraging them to use it was also stressed. The workshop was built on a model of health care that put women and their needs at the centre. Black women were encouraged to share their lives and experiences, to name their own health needs and to find appropriate care encouraged through groups. Mutual support and validation were stressed. The group's developing analysis recognized social inequality, oppression, personal power and responsibility. As determinants of health care, practices were designed to help black women value themselves, to recognize the ways that adversity had built them up as well as worn them down, and to become active agents in their own lives and social change. The goal was for black women to tackle women's health needs, including the social and economic structures of class as well as race and gender oppression that put their health at risk.

Youth

The Youth workshop was chaired by Adrienne Simmons, consisted of Carolyn Braithwaite, Cherly Challenger, Sandra Wills, Natalie Colins, Carrie Samuels, Myra Clayton, Debbie Dejean (adult moderator/advisor); and resource persons Maureen Holgate and Dorothy Wills. The Black Television Workshop videotaped a large part of the proceedings. Workshop resolutions included the following: first, the CBWC was encouraged to work with the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal and the

Montreal Catholic School Commission to implement Black History courses as credit courses. Second, the CBWC was to persuade parents to collaborate in the decision-making process in an effort to facilitate better communication between themselves and their children. Third, the CBWC was to organize a national black youth section; and the Coloured Women's Club was to incorporate theYouth section as a permanent feature of their organization. Finally, the youth argued that it was vital that the CBWC establish aims and objectives of a *National Black Youth* Congress (NBYC).[15]

The objective of the NBYC was to promote better understanding between black youth across Canada; exchange programs, visits; and develop a national approach to teach Black Studies in Canadian schools. The NBYC would facilitate the exchange of relevant information; provide an open forum for the discussion of the problems of black youth and foster greater political awareness about the problems of black people globally. Melva Stewart proposed that the CBWC foster a cultural exchange with Africa and inquire into the possibility of organizing a charter flight to Africa for black youth. The goal was to obtain funding for the proposed NBYC that will foster an exchange between French and English speaking youth.

Education

The focus in the Education Workshop was on the black family in the educational process. This workshop touched on issues from an emotional, psychological and sociological view of the pressures acting on black Canadian students as they realized their educational goals. Participants freely expressed feelings about the influence of family attitudes in their career decisions. Participants were recruited from the first CBWC (Toronto steering committee) hosting organization

[15] By youth, I am referring to the young black women on the panel and who attended the workshop.

(Montreal Regional committee CBWC). Invitations were sent to students, individuals, delegates, representatives of organizations (Black United Front) and all interested black women. According to the 1974 Report, "the youth met prior to the start of the conference and organized themselves into a youth section" (p.17). Panelists included Ivy Jennings (guidance counsellor LaSalle High School Quebec), Yvonne Greer (community worker), Adeline Chancy (High school teacher, Ecole Polyvalente de Mortagne, Bouchervills), Clarance Bayne (Economics professor of Business Statistics), Gwen Lord (vice-principal Northmount High school), Althea Pierre (student, Lasalle High) and Joy Johnson (research biologist).

The participants reaffirmed support for the previous year's resolutions emphasizing the development of black preschool programs. New resolutions included: to call for black professionals to lecture in the schools and to act as role models for black Canadian youth; and the development of a black parent's union to provide a supportive structure for students. Parents were informed of the curriculum and this union appointed provincial representatives to contact authorities to deal with educational issues concerning black Canadian youth. Specifically in Montreal; the person appointed would contact the black community Central Administration- since this organization consisted of relevant educational black institutions within the black community in Montreal.

The participants suggested the formation of a permanent committee to implement the resolutions and a recommendation that black French and English speaking students participate in the NBYC. It was recommended that the resolutions be carried out at the national level and that regional representatives be appointed to

facilitate this. A regional committee, chaired by Sylvia Cheltenham, was established to begin implementing the resolutions. A project undertaken by this committee was a Rap on the Triple Oppression held at North Mount High school in April, May and June 1975.

Interestingly, the themes of all the workshops manifested an incremental concretization of issues that conditioned the identity of Black women. In addition to coming together to forge a consciousness about issues which hitherto ignored by the dominant white culture, the conference forged an agenda of action. For instance, Frances Mills proposed that the Black United Front (BUF) organize the third CBWC in Halifax. The *National Congress Committee* (NCC) was then formed of the members of the Toronto and Montreal Steering Committee and any person who submitted their names. The objectives of the NCC was to implement Congress resolutions; communicate with other organizations; and foster the formation of a regional committee of the NCC; elaborate proposed aims and objectives of the National Congress. In addition to raising funds for the Congress; the NCC was responsible for organizing the third CBWC in collaboration with the Black United front in Halifax Nova Scotia.

In conclusion, through this conference the CBWC was able to expand its agenda and address issues related to racism, sexism and classism in Canadian society. Agendas were set, fundraising drives were initiated, awareness of black women's issues was increased and black constituencies were enlisted to help assess local needs and priorities. Agreements about obtainable goals of the CBWC were made and the NCC (National Congress Committee) was established to prepare for the third

conference. The strategy behind the formation of the NCC was to create a committee to implement Congress resolutions, and develop regional committees; while the conferences provided the workshops, debates, and discussion about matters of particular relevance to local and national social movement communities in Canada.

The goal of the CBWC was to gain community support for their activities. Ann Packwood, conference chairperson, wrote "the black women in Montreal adopted a resolution presented by the CBWC that endorsed their efforts to communicate with other organizations and foster the formation of regional committees of the NCC" (1974 Report, p. 24) Sylvia Cheltenham confirmed in the 1974 Report that "a regional committee chaired has been established and has begun the implementation of the Resolutions adopted by the Congress" (p.24).

In 1974, the MRC was aware that a number of black teachers were working in the public schools with high black student populations. They were upset by the high failure rate among black students in Quebec's public schools. What was clear to the black community was that institutional racism continued to create barriers to their academic success. In November 1975, the MRC met to discuss forming a national committee to deal with black women's experiences with racism in Canadian society. The committee would promote the equal opportunity for black women in all phases of their lives, and develop other relations with other national, international organizations and women's groups. At the same time, the black women adopted a CBWC resolution to prepare for the third CBWC national conference. One year later, the women started planning for the conference.

The Third CBWC Conference 1976[16]

The third CBWC conference was held on 21-23 May 1976 at the Halifax Sheraton Hotel. It represented the NCC's efforts to initiate a national organization. As in previous conferences, a community organization - the *Black United Front* (BUF) - agreed to act as the host organization. Founded in 1968, the objectives of BUF were to provide a forum to represent the social, political, economic and cultural concerns of Black Nova Scotians. BUF wanted to develop black leadership and community organizing skills to address grievances related to education, employment, human rights, discrimination and find solutions to their problems.

This national conference was a modest assembly of fifty persons. Edith Cromwell assumed a leadership position given that she was elected chairperson of the conference. On this occasion, Maxine Brooks (1976, p.1) recalled that "copies of the resolutions passed at the second conference were distributed for reference and to discuss of their implementation." Cromwell asked the "delegates from each region to meet and pick their representatives and an alternate" (ibid., p.2.) Each group selected three representatives to make up a national body that would set up a regional group in their area. At the end of the meeting, the delegates had formed four regional bodies in Ontario, Quebec, the Atlantic region and the Pacific region who were responsible for drafting a constitution, goals and bylaws.

At the end of the conference, Mrs. Patricia McCurdy noted in the *Hour-a-Day Study Club's* (HDSC) minutes (26 October 1976) that "she was approached and asked if she would find an organization that was willing to sponsor the Fourth CBWC conference to be held sometime in the fall of 1977." McCurdy contacted the HDSC and

[16]A national conference was not organized in 1975.

presented the idea to them (Cromwell, 1976). The HDSC accepted the offer to host the conference and between 1976 and 1977, the women were busy organizing it. Thus, the NCC gained new access to a national grassroots constituency of individuals committed to collaboration.

Similar to the first two conferences, the purpose of this conference was to organize black women on a regional basis and to establish links among like-minded organizations. The 1976 Report was not available but organizational documents indicated that initiating a national organization was proving to be a challenging task. Black Canadian women were calling for a national body with representatives from each region to be selected before the conference adjourned. They sought to establish a formal body that would implement and oversee resolutions from the 1973 Toronto conference and the 1974 Montreal conference. Since not all individuals were present to form a national body, NCC participants argued that it was premature to elect representatives. According to the 1976 Report, the consensus was to proceed with an election because they had "to start from somewhere"(p.1-2). Edith Cromwell (chairperson) and Maxine Brooks (recording secretary) then asked each region to meet to elect two representatives.and an alternate.

When the women met in their regional groups the problem of regional representation was raised again. Each group, however, selected three national representatives who were responsible for setting up regional groups and for sitting on the national body. The purpose of the national organization was to the draft the Congress' constitution, goals and by-laws.

In conclusion, the Halifax conference marked the continuation of the mobilization process. Black women from across the country were elected to represent their regions. The CBWC participants wanted to organize an *ad hoc* committee to study the implications and possibilities of a national organization with regional representatives. The need for a national organization was significant because the CBWC participants realized that a formal structure was important for black women's socio-political and economic issues. By the end of the conference, there were three regional bodies in place that were responsible for drafting a constitutions, with goals and by-laws. As a result, the CBWC participants began to develop more formalized organizational structures that were important in maintaining the organization after 1976 and in making black women's activities like established social movement communities. The next section described the NCC's activities in the following year 1977.

The Fourth CBWC Conference, 1977

The theme for the fourth national conference, held in Windsor, Ontario on August 19-21, 1977, was "Impetus, the Black Woman." According to its objectives, the conference was designed to discuss the status of black women, increase awareness of educational barriers facing black children and to formulate a strategy for establishing and maintaining a communication network among black women. The 219 participants from Canada, the United States and Bermuda heard papers and discussed early childhood education and youth, immigration and human rights, consciousness raising, and multiculturalism. The news of the 1977 conference made headlines in the pages of the mainstream press. On August 19, 1977, "about two hundred and fifty black women

from all over Canada met at the Holiday Inn in Windsor, Ontario to form a national body which would represent the interests of and provide further communication between all black women in Canada," reported Jane Gadd of the Toronto Star. The conference was hosted by the Hour-A-Day Study Club (HDSC) which was founded in 1934. The HDSC's Congress steering committee consisted of Louise Kelly, Patricia McCurdy, Andrea Moore, Cleata Morris, Lillian Palmer, Hilda Watkins and Jacqueline Wayner. Cleata Morris, Hour-A-Day Study Club (HDSC) president, told Gadd the purpose of the conference was twofold. "First, it was to provide a forum for Canadian Black Women so that their particular concerns may be heard not only in the black community but also in the community at large. Second, it was to establish a national executive body to implement the resolutions of the Congress" (ibid).

After the workshops, the General Assembly met to create a *National Secretariat (NS)* whose main task would be to implement resolutions passed by the full organization. The General Assembly agreed that the NS should "act as a catalyst in facilitating those activities in the regions which will bring to fruition the policies and resolutions of the National Congress" (1977 Report, p. 48). Other objectives of the NS included the creation of new communication channels. By developing activist networks, the NS built the scaffolding upon which inter-organizational cooperation would occur regarding issues such as limited career opportunities, education, employment inequalities and issues tied to family life.

Although the 1977 Report was not available, pamphlets indicated that there were four educational workshops: consciousness-raising-the multicultural black, black woman-employment, emigration, human rights, the workshop on economics, on

youth-community action and woman to woman interaction and finally, education-adult training, early childhood, counselling.

Cynthia Taylor's (1977, p.12) paper on "Early Childhood Education" encouraged "black women to use preschool to instil a critical black awareness in their children" so that they can help them to counter the negative social constructions of blackness in Canadian society. Taylor says that blacks have developed a social network of interpersonal relationships with a black perspective, a preservation of self-esteem and a group identity - priority is given to making the family system of blacks increasing relevant to the world. Taylor argues that through the efforts of the black family, a racial socialization and a black identity could assist black Canadian children to negotiate the challenges of a racist society. She further states "that parents who promote the attitudes, meanings, techniques and strategies in the lives of black children develop resilient children" (ibid., p.12) In other words, the parents equip their children with the messages and skills encompassing early childhood development and a critical racial awareness to help them traverse the terrain of a hostile and discriminatory environment. As children transitioned to larger groups, schools and society as a whole, Taylor noted that they would eventually be challenged by questions such as "How [are] black Canadians perceived in this society? ... [and] How [does] this society perceive black women?" (ibid., p.12) .

In her paper, Taylor placed considerable emphasis on race in the child's preschool years. In attempting to empower black children to deal with a racist society, Taylor draws on other racial identifications. While she stressed a strong racial awareness as important to a child's socialization and early childhood education, she did

not only emphasize racial awareness. She was aware that black children have to fight against other forms of oppression including sexism.

In "Language as Social Control and Cultural Conflict", Cora Palmer wrote about the plight of black children who are caught in a school system that uses language differences as a mechanism of social control. Cora Palmer (1977) wrote about the plight of black children in school systems that use language differences as a social control mechanism. According to Palmer:

> Teachers base their expectations of scholastic success on the student's language behaviour. One study of student placement and teacher's reactions to speech reported that eight days after kindergarten started, the teacher divided the class into three streams according to her expectations of the student's future performance in class. The teacher made this division, in part, on the basis of the student's ease of interaction with the three groups who remained locked in those divisions until the second grade. (p. 16)

For Palmer, public schools contributed to the marginalization of students by placing them in the lowest academic tracks, with black children the most likely candidates to experience difficulties due to perceived language shortcomings and the most likely to be socially segregated. According to Palmer, to "claim that black children's native language is deficient, degenerate and incapable of supporting abstraction [is] just as damaging to their self-esteem as it [is] to claim that they [are] inferior because of their race" (ibid, 16). Noting that schools represent social experiences that tend to unify cultural attitudes and practices, she observed that black children are frequently

alienated from the experience and that teacher-centered division of students into various tracks reproduce practices that exclude many black students. One result is that black students become marginalized through a process of "imposed illiteracy" or the continuation of cultural practices rooted in dominant education ideologies.

Interestingly, A.T. (Mills interview, tape recording, September 14, 2003, A010) expresses the same concern:

> I had twin girls that I enrolled in kindergarten. [The first week of school], the teacher called me because she could not understand what they were saying. She said that they needed testing or that my girls should go into special classes. I said, classes for what? - They were only four and a half years old. When I spoke to my colleagues, they said to tell the teacher to wait six months and if the problem persisted to consider my options. If you place them in a class, they will be ridiculed for being in a class for lower education; or the girls will be teased before they were tested. Sometimes it was a discrimination [issue] or because the teacher never had black kids in her class.

Through her discussion of the experiences of her children in kindergarten, A.T. provides valuable insight into her experiences with a school system that alienated her children. At the same time, A.T.'s depiction of her daughter's identity construction process is problematic. The subordination of black students into a particular category of social experience does not mean that they form a homogenous unitary group. Differences in ethnicity, geographical origin, language usage, formal education and gender have provided social boundaries to set both the possibilities and limits of each

student's experience with public school. However, A.T. expresses the need to fight for rights of her twins to receive an adequate academic education and to see their culture reflected in the curriculum. In an educational system in which black Canadian children are disproportionately excluded, A.T's task of ensuring that her children receive an adequate education becomes a profoundly black feminist act.

Consciousness Raising: Whither Identity?

During the 1977 workshops, the CBWC held several consciousness-raising discussion groups in which black women shared their feelings about personal issues and identified their problems as collective and systemic. In her short paper on "Consciousness Raising and the Multicultural Black Woman," Agnes Calliste (1977) shared her insights on the meaning of "liberation":

> What does liberation entail? First, it means that we must be active. By activism, I mean that we have to strive to go beyond current theories, to ask new questions and above all, to formulate and implement plans of action. There is a great need for cohesiveness and unity. We cannot allow national and regional chauvinism to divide us. For despite the differences in our cultural backgrounds, we have one thing in common—the double jeopardy of being black and female. (p. 29)

Calliste's project of creating and maintaining an inclusive notion of race and gender as the basis for common struggle against racism is highly fraught because it suppresses differences among women. She states that there is a great need for cohesiveness and unity that reinforces a limited notion of black women's identity. While there is a need for black women to share a sense of pride towards black women in the Congress, and

support the assumption that all black women needed to become politically conscious, black women are not a homogenous group. Yet Calliste's argument that racial and gender ideologies provide the primary marker of identification and solidarity for black women at all times and in all locations overlooks other makers that are important. Thus, her emphasis on black women's commonalties does not allow for a more open and plural notion of black women's identity.

Calliste's comments reflected the increasing tendency among black Canadian women to express themselves collectively and to willingly participate in networking, communication and debate. Her call for unity and cohesion among black women in different parts of the country supported attempts to establish links that would eventually exert considerable impacts on the meaning of the CBWC. Accordingly, power relations that animated personal life would no longer be accepted as private and beyond the purview of open discussion—an idea that informed the CBWC's work in every area of black women's lives.

The workshops at this conference were remarkable in three ways. First, the CBWC's agenda continued to be largely set by black women who were rendering visible their struggles within schools, community organizations, health care and other systems; the agenda also highlighted connections between African diasporas and racism. Second, black women's experiences with oppression provided workshop participants with the necessary language for conceptualizing and asserting social justice for black women and their families. And, third, the CBWC workshops challenged the notion that gender is the only aspect of black women's oppression and exploitation.

National Secretariat

Following the conclusion of the workshops, the General Assembly met in the Campaign Room to discuss establishing a National Secretariat (NS) as the national executive body responsible for implementing the resolutions of the CBWC. The co-chairpersons were Iris McCracken and Fleurette Osborne and the panellists included Joan Brown, Joyce Burpee, Pat McCurdy, Gwen MacKenzie, September Williams and the resource person was Sylvia Hamilton. At the end of the conference, Morris reported that there were one hundred and eighteen black women, member groups and community organizations with paid membership fees that were represented by one executive structure - the National Secretariat (NS). The objectives of the NS (1977, n.p.) were to:

> -- Act as a catalyst in facilitating those activities in the regions which will bring to fruition the policies and resolutions of the National Congress.
> -- Coordinate those activities relevant to the policies and resolutions between individuals, groups, and regions as required; and act on matters of national concern to all women.
> -- Communicate with the general membership through newsletters or other means regarding issues of national concern and about action taken or contemplated. They shall further keep the affiliates informed of the activities undertaken by individuals, groups, or region relative to the interests of black women.
> -- Act as a clearing-house for information and resources and maintain an up-to-date mailing list of membership affiliates and other individuals, groups, and institution as required.
> -- Act as an advisory body to the sponsors of the National Congress to ensure that the activities of such Congresses fall within the aims and purposes of this body.
> -- To investigate (a) national treasury, part of which may be invested to provide a firm financial foundation, and (b), funds may be solicited from individuals, groups, and foundations for special projects and programs, and activities.

The NS consisted of two regional representatives who were selected from the Atlantic provinces, Quebec, Ontario, the Prairies and the Pacific province. A regional caucus held at the 1977 Conference nominated them.[17] Two persons from each region, the new Officers of the Secretariat, were recommended to the NS for ratification at the Plenary Session. The caucuses consisted of all women registered at the conference from their particular region. The Officers included two coordinators, one treasurer, and one secretary. These persons were elected from the body of the regional representatives. The terms of office for representatives of the National Secretariat were limited to two consecutive terms of office. Subsequently, the caucus replaced one of the two regional representatives on the Secretariat at the following CBWC. Simply stated, the NS formed as a formal network with members, operational rules, regular meetings and a division of labour. The NS connected individuals both within communities (locally based as in a city) and across communities (provincial and national). The NS fundraised, organized campaigns and formal ways for seeking change (see Table 14).[18]

The goal of the NS was to generate additional channels of communication for black women. By developing social networks that connected activists, the NS was important in creating the necessary foundations for interorganizational cooperation. The objectives of the NS were also to provide a space for discussion, foster communication among black youth. It sought to identify the educational barriers for black women which limited opportunities for career growth; provide action to assist in

[17] The provincial representatives were given the mandate of constructing a constitution, establish objectives, aims and purposes, establishing a network of communication, recruiting members and reporting back to the next CBWC for approval.

[18] The NS used institutional means to seek change. By institutional means I am referring to government channels.

the elimination of unequal opportunities in economic, education, business for black women nationally and internationally; and finally to utilize provincial and national resources to aid black women in their pursuit of business careers, education and improved family life goals. The NS was responsible for gathering information and resources useful to black women and for formulating the issues concerning black rights both inside and outside Canada. Morris (1977) recalled that "one of the objectives of the NS was to formulate the procedures for action to assist in the elimination of unequal opportunities in economic, education, and business for black women within and outside Canada." Morris wrote in the 1977 Report that "the NS would produce a "national newsletter to keep black women all across Canada in contact with one another."

National Secretariat's Meetings

At the first NS meeting, (17 September 1977, Toronto), representatives from across the country were selected. The focus was on the NS's relevance to women's issues. The participants stated the need to formulate procedures for action to assist in the elimination of unequal opportunities in economic, education and business for black women within and outside Canada. It was also important to put into action a method for black Canadian women to achieve these goals in the areas of education, health and welfare, youth, immigration and the black family.

The second meeting of the National Secretariat took place at Toronto's Chelsea Inn, October 13-14, 1978. During this two-day meeting, the NS discussed organizational issues and amendments to the minutes. The representatives agreed to expand the NS to a maximum of fifteen members to ensure broader representation and

to recruit consultants with expertise. The NS acknowledged Ms. Burpee and Ms. Ames as the consultants to the NS in Ontario and they were invited to all meetings as full participants.

At this October 1978 NS meeting, Eugenie Ames, Aileen Williams, Fleurette Osborne, Nancy Warner, and Esmeralda Thornhill, national secretariat members, suggested publishing a brochure entitled the *CBWC*. The women adopted the resolution presented by the N.S. that endorsed the "efforts to communicate with the membership through other means" (ibid).

The Minutes of the Second Meeting of the National Secretariat reported that "the brochure was ready to go to press in 1979 and one thousand copies were printed in both English and French" (p.2). Complete copies exist and the section on the CBWC's issues and concerns revealed the women had a confident way of asserting their views. Their goal was to arouse the reader with a direct analysis of the social and political conditions of black Canadians. They claimed the authority to speak out on the subject as women who had experienced these conditions. They denounced racism and the tradition of "oppression and exploitation, which excludes black women from mainstream society" (CBWC Brochure) and they believed contributed to black women's oppression. They proclaimed to provide "a network of solidarity for black women in Canada and to be a united voice in the defence and extension of human rights and liberties for black women in Canada" (ibid). They were adamant that black women should "pursue their adult education and receive training and information about alternate careers" (ibid). The decision to publish a brochure was significant because black women saw support for the CBWC as the best way to accomplish their larger

goals. Through the brochure, the CBWC tried to recruit black women to join a chapter and to participate in a discussion about the important issues that affected their lives. All of the interviewees stated that the brochure summarized the CBWC's history, objectives, organizational structure, membership, issues concerning human rights, housing, health, child development, education, pensions and racism.

The NS was, in this brochure, crafting black Canadian feminist perspectives that were deeply rooted in their gender, racial identities and experiences. Education, human rights, youth, pensions, health, housing, child development and racism were, in their view, inextricably connected to the fight against oppression. Black women could not hope to address the racism and sexism that they experienced until they could address those structures that reinforced a pattern of oppression. In criticizing racism and sexism, they were denouncing all of the institutions in Canadian society that they associated as perpetuating a system of discrimination. Their position, which can be associated with their experiences in Canada, is an act of resistance.

The brochure received recognition from the members. The 1978 Minutes of the Second Meeting of the National Secretariat noted that when the brochure was printed, "it was distributed to the delegates who gave copies to their members." While the document was being circulated in Canada, the local women were taking note of it and attending the meetings of the chapters in their cities. All of the interviewees referred to this NS's brochure. Aft (Mills interview, tape recording, September 24, 2003, A015) praised "their work as an excellent introduction to the organization." The NS was becoming an increasingly influential body in the lives of black women and their

families and in August 1979, the NS carved out a path that would direct their activities concerning racism in policing.

The National Secretariat soon organized around the alleged reports of police brutality in the metropolitan areas throughout Canada. A major part of the NS's organizing was directed towards implementing the resolution that endorsed the efforts to communicate with the general membership through newsletters regarding actions taken. "They shall further keep the affiliates informed of the activities undertaken by individuals, groups or regions relative to the interests of black women." One of the NS's most well known cases concerned Albert Johnson, a Jamaican Canadian resident who was shot in his Toronto residence by the police in August 1979. The National Secretariat sent a letter to Roy McMurtry, the Attorney General of Ontario, requesting an investigation into his killing. "[They wanted] charges to be filed against the police officers in question; and the formation of a Citizens Review Committee to look into the complaints against the police; rather than have the police themselves conduct the inquiry" (National Secretariat CBWC 1980, n.p). They sent copies of the letter to Mr. Johnson's family, the National Black Coalition of Canada and the Editor of Contrast Magazine, a black community newspaper.

One of the NS's initiatives was to raise awareness about the discrimination in policing and the criminal justice system. The ongoing conflict between the police and the black Canadian community was a reality in 1979 and the NS raised the concern that black people were not treated fairly. The NS was a vehicle to express the concerns about the discrimination against black Canadians throughout Ontario's criminal justice system. Black Canadians made some complaints about the bail and sentencing

decisions and about the conduct of trials and other hearings. As these stories circulated in the black Canadian communities, some connections were made with the shootings. Patricia J. Williams (1991) writes that a system that appeared not to care about black victims of police shootings would not ensure the fair treatment of black persons accused or convicted of a criminal offence. Thus, for the NS, the perceived failure to adequately address the concerns raised by the Albert Johnson shooting came to be seen as part of a pattern of indifference toward and unequal treatment of black people in the criminal justice process.

Representatives of the various regions reported on their activities over the past year. Regional activities focused on media exposure (Festival of Light and Learning event-feminist conference (1978), and sending telegrams. For example, the Saskatchewan NS sent a telegram to the Minister of Immigration and Manpower, Bud Cullen and the Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau protesting the deportation of seven Jamaican women and demanding that the decision be reversed. A telegram was sent to support the Saskatchewan Association of Human Rights (SAHR), and the Third World Ethno-Cultural Committee (TWECC) at the request of Fleurette Osborne. Other activities focused on press releases (Saskatchewan (1977) Winnipeg, Ontario, Quebec), coverage in daily newspapers (Quebec) radio interviews (Saskatoon, Regina and Moose Jaw 1977), conferences (Quebec NS participated attended the International Congress of the UNIA in commemoration of its founder, Marcus Garvey). Briefs were used by the Quebec NS. For example, the Quebec NS made a presentation to the Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism,

Table 10
National Secretariat

Name	Position	Province
Fleurette Osborne	Coordinator	Saskatchewan
Nancy Warner	Coordinator	Quebec
Esmeralda Thornhill	Secretary	Quebec
Eugenie Allen	Member	Ontario
Aileen Williams	Member	Ontario
Joyce Burpee	Member	Ontario
Jean Clayton	Member	Maritimes
Helen Dorrington-Price	Member	Maritimes
Tylira Hamilton	Member	Maritimes
Beryle Jones	Member	Prairies
Shyrlee Williams	Member	Manitoba

to the Quebec Ministry of Education, Council task force on Education Quebec NS and with the Quebec Alliance on black organizations on language legislation. In addition Fleurette Osborne and E. Ames were appointed to the subcommittee to prepare a rough outline of the constitution.[19]

In April 1980, Esmeralda Thornhill published the National Secretariat Newsletter and endorsed the NS's resolution to "communicate with the general membership through newsletters regarding issues of national concern." She reported that the NS was involved in organizing black women and they succeeded in forming "six provincial structures in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia - where black women were concentrated. In Halifax, Thornhill reported that "black women were holding their meetings and planning some fundraising projects" (ibid).

The formation of the NS across Canada meant that while the members were organizing the conferences and distributing the brochures and the newsletters, black

[19] The CBWC documents that I had access to do not indicate the outcome or impact of these efforts.

women elsewhere were taking notice and agreeing with much of what the delegates were talking about at their meetings. For black women in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia, they used the NS to talk about their experiences with racism. Black women in the national secretariats could support friends, family and acquaintances and encourage them to attend the conferences and direct them to the chapters and the National Secretariats that were located in their communities. Black women made contacts in the various cities and provinces during this period that helped them in addressing the discrimination that they experienced. The chapters, national secretariats and personal contacts formed an elaborate system of communication and provided black women with a measure of security in areas where black Canadian women were a small group.

In conclusion, the NS attempted to organize black women at the municipal, provincial and federal levels. Formal meetings were organized by the NS committees at the local and provincial levels to provide space for black women to connect with each other, share experiences and build solidarity. At the same time, the NS recognized the need for a national organization that would join with other groups to address issues affecting black women and lobby for policy changes. Analyses of NS organizational dynamics also contributed to understanding activism locally and across provincial borders. It attempted to capture organizational concerns spearheaded by black women, many of whom were educated, had few financial resources and had skills and experience within organizations. This description of the NS demonstrates that the organization (NS) and networks (local chapters) were emerging across local

cities and provinces borders. More importantly, the NS realized that it had the power to seek change especially around the issues affecting black women and their families.

In brief, the 1977 conference was another example of how black women took steps to make the CBWC more responsive to their concerns. Under the National Secretariat of the CBWC, meetings continued to be held in cities across Canada. They sent telegrams to the Prime Minister; they established contact with black women and tried to discover issues of importance to them. The NS continued to organize black women at the local and national levels to provide a space for black women to share their experiences and build solidarity. Thus, the CBWC captured the organizational concerns spearheaded by black women who had skills and experience within organizations and encouraged them to establish beyond a doubt that they were addressing the issues affecting black women and their families.

Symbol - Cactus

In June 1980, the Congress of Black Women chose the cactus as a symbol to show the strengths and resiliency of black women. In her keynote Address, Facing Reality: Black Women in the Eighties, Esmeraldo Thornhill (1984, p.17), wrote that the cactus was:

> a family of plants that thrives under adverse conditions. No matter how arid the soil, no matter that no care and attention is given, the cactus survives, multiplies flowers and bears fruit-a fitting symbol. With or without assistance the black woman manages to educate herself, rears and educates her children, tends to her sick and aged; labours both inside and outside her home. She survives and the race survives.

From National Secretariat to Congress of Black Women of Canada (CBWC): Fifth National Conference, 1980

By the time the Fifth National Conference of the CBWC was convened in Winnipeg, Manitoba on November 21st 1980, approximately fifty black women from across Canada came together under the theme "Concerns for the 80's", Esmeralda Thornhill, agent de formation, Service de l'education, wrote in the National Secretariat. Our data indicate as reported by A.S. Professor of Education and past CBWC president, that the meeting location was selected to help support a new local chapter (Mills interview, tape recording, August 12, 2003, A22, 05, 4b). The constitution that was adopted during this meeting confirmed the existence of the *Congress of Black Women of Canada* (CBWC). The organization was incorporated as a registered non-profit, with a membership list that included 300 names (1980 National Secretariat Newsletter). The CBWC hired Juanita Westmoreland-Traoré as its legal counsel on matters concerning fundraising and community issues.

At the 1980 conference, the delegates asked Dorothy Wills, an education professor, to give the keynote address. Wills (1980, p.5) stated that the reality of black women's experiences in the eighties is that: "many households are headed by females. Women are charged with the direct responsibility and position of raising future generations of black children. In my estimation, what greater challenge to black women in the eighties?" Thus, the "challenge for black women was to be found in raising their children and to leave them a better place than we inherited" (ibid, p.6). The Conference Report was not available, but organizational documents indicated that the keynote speaker was Dr. Dorothy Wills. In her speech "The Challenge for Black Women in the

Eighties," she talked about black women and their historical legacy of slavery and examined the connection between African roots and the issues affecting the diaspora in the twentieth century. Her focus was on the way the strengths, dignity and fortitude that have always characterized black women and the black race. Wills draws on a black feminist conception of social reproduction that places children, as both dependents and as active members of Canadian society, at the heart of social relations. The concept recognizes that the conditions under which children are conceived, born and raised produces not just individual adults, but the next generation. It views children as part of the networks of family, community, cultural groups and societal institutions that affect their well-being.

Wills's statements illustrated that the family was an arena in which black women's feminist organizing was visible. In the 1970s and 1980s, black Canadian feminist critiques revealed that white feminists had imposed their experience of the family as universal and it reflected a family form that was white, western, heterosexual and nuclear as culturally normative and rendered other family forms suspect. Heterosexual nuclear families were assumed to be responsible for generating a livelihood sufficient to support their members and were responsible for raising these children themselves. White feminists tended to produce a framework that took for granted the existence of privileges - two-parent nuclear families where women were primarily responsible for caring for children. To counter the basic assumptions of white feminists, Wills indicated that for black women, the family was less a site of oppression than one of affirmation and resistance to racism (Agnew, 1996). She saw single parent or mother-headed families as important for the successful rearing and

providing for the livelihood of black children.

A striking feature of many of the interviews was the support offered by many black women to men and children. Aone (Mills interview, tape recording, Toronto, July 23, 2003, A01) described the conference as follows: "Black women needed a forum to express their needs, but also to develop strategies and programs to assist them and their families." As a result of this, the CBWC welcomed men and children into their organization. The exclusion of men was seen as an aspect of white women's organizations from which black women wished to distance themselves. In many cases, black women were influenced by their common experiences of racism and did not turn a blind eye to oppressive gender roles. Sudbury (1998) argues that this apparent willingness to "forgive" sexism from black men and in particular family members, was rarely a result of a lack of awareness about the existence of sexism, rather it was a choice expressed by women facing multiple sites of oppression.

Several of the interviewees did associate sexism with black men. Atwel (Mills interview, tape recording, September 14, 2003, A012) stated "we had to take the lead in raising our families because some black men were not there". This interviewee was willing to address the issue of sexism. Atwel's response indicates that some black women consciously challenged the sexism of their partners and many found their relationships drifting away (Sudbury, 1998). These changes were linked to men's failure to deal with their partners' newly found confidence (ibid). Similarly, the CBWC was working with refugee women on issues of male violence against women and they were more likely to take a strong position against all forms of misogyny and to maintain an integrative analysis of racism and sexism (Sudbury, 1998).

The women were engaging politically with the notion of the family also involved support for alternative family structures. Central to the CBWC was their support for black single mothers. Black Canadian women were able to choose single parenthood for economic reasons without fear of community sanctions. The CBWC was active in creating alternative visions of single parenthood that recognized the strength and loving within many families with one resident parent and opposed this to the dysfunctional nature of some two-parent families (Sudbury, 1998). Women also found important support in creating networks of adults with whom their children could interact.

The workshops format was used to address a number of topics: the family and child-rearing practices, education and pedagogical methodologies; economic activity and careers taking a more active role in municipal, provincial and federal politics; religion and the family. A proposed draft of the CBWC's constitution was prepared in September 1980, for a discussion and ratification at the General Meeting on November 21-23 1980 in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Two intertwined factors shaped the CBWC's overall structure during this conference. First was the CBWC's adoption of a more formalized structure (see table 11).

Table 11
National Secretariat 1980

Name	Region	City
Delicia Crump	British Columbia	Vancouver
Berlye Jones	Manitoba	Winnipeg
Fleurette Y. Osborne	Saskatchewan	Regina
Cleata Morris	Ontario	Windsor
Aileen Williams	Ontario	Downsview
Eugenie Ames	Ontario	Mississauga
Esmeralda Thornhill	Quebec	Montreal
Nancy Warner	Quebec	Montreal
Sylvia Hamilton	Nova Scotia	Halifax

Soon after the start of the fifth conference, the CBWC participants and the national secretariat developed a centralized structure. The formal structure offered significant advantages to the CBWC. The national organization attached the black women to provincial secretariats that could sustain recruitment and fundraising efforts. According to Anin (Mills interview, tape recording, September 10, 2003, A09), "the general meeting was convened in Winnipeg. We turned to Winnipeg because the women had formed a Chapter. This is where the constitution was adopted and we were on our way as the Congress of Black Women of Canada. That was in October 1980." Out of this very concern, the CBWC was now the establishment. At the time of the fifth conference, Thornhill (1980) wrote that "the mailing membership presently tops the 300th mark."

The CBWC had no head office or full-time staff (see Table 14). To sustain the organization's structure and to influence policy makers and legislators, the members developed a formal leadership system, provincial structures, local Chapters and committee structure.[20] The core membership consisted of professional black Canadian

[20] My point was simply that more of the 1973, 1974, 1976 and 1977 conference resolutions were being put in place by 1980.

women who were sixteen years of age and older. The organization's leadership system was a clear chain of authority established through a hierarchy of officers or a two-year executive structure: chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary, and treasurer. In addition to the executive counsel, the CBWC hired legal counsel. Juanita Westmoreland- Traoré was hired as legal counsel for the Congress. She was with J. Westmoreland- Traoré and Associates Avocats and asked for a copy of the adopted Constitution and any instructions regarding further incorporations.

The CBWC's organizational structure featured a top-down relationship that privileged the national, provincial and local presidents in designating organizational objectives (see tables 12 and 13). An executive counsel was formed and entrusted with the following mandate for its two-year term: charting the CBWC, printing and distribution of constitution, establishment of Chapters and the continuation of regular newsletters. The executive council was to carry out the mandate of the CBWC. The CBWC was to network with individual groups, co-ordinate activities, act as an advisory committee, keep up-to-date mailing lists, maintain regular communication with women concerning CBWC events and ensure the CBWC followed the aims and purposes designated. It had to establish a national treasury; part of which was invested, solicit funds from the government, groups, and individuals; work with individuals and groups in different regions and help them to follow the aims and goals; be a sponsor for the national conferences.

Table 12
National Congress of Black Women of Canada
Two-Year Executive Council

Name	Position	Region
Fleurette Osborne	Chairperson	Saskatchewan
June James	Vice chairperson	Manitoba
Lucille Coward	Secretary	Quebec
Janis Waithe	Treasurer	Ontario

Table 13
Regional Representatives

Name	Region
Sylvia Hamilton	Nova Scotia
Jean Clayton	Nova Scotia
Mireille Metellus	Quebec
Nancy Warner	Quebec
Esmeralda Thornhill	Quebec
Cleata Morris	Ontario
Alcynia Crowley-Morrow	Ontario
Aileen Williams	Ontario
Beryl Jones	Manitoba
Fleurette Osborne	Saskatchewan
Glenda Simms	Saskatchewan
Marion De Shields	Alberta
Delicia Crump	British Columbia

The CBWC also had a system of ongoing and active committees to work on various tasks (see Table 14). Chapter committees included membership, issues, action, finance/fundraising, social, educational, programs and constitutional/bylaws. As a result, the CBWC was a large heterogeneous – in terms of political orientation on women's issues- group of a couple hundred women. All members were volunteers who met during the conferences or at scheduled meetings. The CBWC's programs were based on the concept of commitment. The CBWC has worked to create programs to focus on employment, economy, education, racism, job training, youth, child care

programs for poor and working mothers, teenage pregnancies, single women and poverty. The work of the CBWC had taken on new significance during this decade with the dramatic reduction in and the elimination of many government programmes, a retrenchment that only increases the burden borne by the poor and black Canadian communities.

The **sixth CBWC conference** was held in Edmonton, Alberta in 1982. Conference reports were unavailable at the time of writing, yet CBWC documents indicated that issues focused on: human rights/equity, childcare and developments, racism/sexism, workplace harassment, violence against women, family violence, employment equity and pay equity.[21]

Analysis

In this chapter, I argued that the CBWC's origins were linked to a series of conferences that took place between 1973 and 1983. The CBWC members were remarkably successful in organizing black women to attend their conferences. At the conferences, they discussed racism, sexism, education, policing, immigration policy, employment, health, immigrant women, adoption, youth and other issues. The members used the conferences, activities and campaigns to encourage black women to examine their problems and to develop organizations for social change. They established the National Congress Committee and the National Secretariat. The members worked to establish chapters and demand changes to the institutions that were ineffectively serving the black Canadian communities. Black women achieved this by embracing what the black communities and individuals were doing, rather than comparing them to white communities and finding them deficient (Sudbury, 1998). In doing so, I have

[21] The CBWC documents included newsletters and minutes.

shown that the CBWC was at the forefront of empowering black women, challenging oppression within black families and communities, as well as creating broad based demands for change at the local and national levels.

Leadership

The role that leadership plays in social movements has received some attention from scholars working within the synthetic perspective (Morris, 2004; Robnett, 2002; Meyer, 2002). Leadership is an important and complex phenomenon that affects the origins and development of movement communities. The purpose of this section is to draw on Morris' (2004) "notion of a configuration of leaders" to examine how the black feminist synthetic model can shed some light on an important source of agency in the CBWC.

Applied to the case of the CBWC, this model focuses on the activities of organizational leadership. Simply stated, what is the role of a leader? That is, what do the leaders do in the organization? An inquiry into the development of the CBWC clearly demonstrated that the idea of a single leader is misleading. Rather, a configuration of leaders (ibid., p.241) mobilized and guided the organization. My analysis suggested that a "pre-existing leadership was central to" the organization's origins and development (ibid., p.241). There were two types of leaders found in the CBWC: volunteer leaders and nonprofessional staff leaders (Staggenborg, 1999). According to Staggenborg, volunteer leaders are not paid and nonprofessional leaders act as organizational staff for a short period of time and do not regard organizational work as a career. They learned skills that they could transfer from one organizational context to another. In this case, a wide array of black organizations and institutions

existed in Canada prior to the emergence of the first conference, NCC, NS and the CBWC. Located at the top of these organizations were the leaders of the voluntary associations, community organizations and numerous churches. The networks, life experiences and strategic repertoires of many of these women such as – Kay Livingstone, Verda Cooke, Eugenie Allen, Aileen Williams, Rosemary Brown, Juanita Westmoreland-Traoré, Reverend Addie Aylestock, Gwen Johnson, Rosemary Sadlier, Glenda Simms[22], Dolly Williams, Delicia Crump, Beryle Jones, Fleurette Osborne, Cleata Morris, Esmeralda Thornhill, Nancy Warner, Sylvia Hamilton, June James, Lucille Coward and Janis Waithe - linked them not only to the CBWC but to women's, religious, political and community organizations as well. These women were able to mobilize the CBWC into a social movement community because of their prior leadership positions in other organizations. By focusing on leadership configurations within the CBWC, it became clear that "multiple leaders operated at the nodes of the indigenous networks" (ibid, p.241). The CBWC's leaders moved the mobilization process along by providing the organization with access to communication networks, frames, resources and organized constituencies. At the conferences, Atwel (Mills interview, tape recording, September 14, 2003, A012) stated:

> Black women in Canada were coming from everywhere, from different parts of the world and were being lumped into this one system. There was a need for the voices to be heard because there were so few black women who had any kind of power. So as a community, we came

[22]Glenda Simms was a certified psychologist (Doctorate in Educational Psychology, University of Alberta) and author. She was employed as an Associate Professor at the University of Regina, member of the Native Curriculum Review Committee, Department of Education, Saskatchewan and served as the CBWC's second president between 1982-87. Her leadership role is discussed in chapter 5.

together and developed a system where we could speak with many voices.

Aet (Mills interview, tape recording, August 13, 2003, A08) mentioned the names of a few leaders when I interviewed her.

> We have the names that we can point to, such as Jean Augustine, Anne Cools, Rosemary Brown and a number of people working behind the scene who were not as well known such as Rosemary Sadlier.

These leaders mobilized their constituencies to participate in the CBWC and were vital to its emergence and subsequent development.

Pre-existing leaders of community based organizations were also particularly important to the mobilization and tactical developments of the CBWC. Atwel (Mills interview, tape recording, September 14, 2003, A012) said: "I was part of the Committee for Racial Justice. I did a lot of work within my community." The presence of community leaders like Atwel in the CBWC was important because strong leaders were able to articulate powerful mobilizing objectives and attract participants because of their skills. Scholars have argued that social movement organizations play an important part in mobilizing and coordinating action, defining the goals and tactics of the social movement (Morris, 2004; 1984; McCarthy and Zald, 1977).[23] Morris (2004) argues that leaders in organizations must make choices out of a number of options.

In conclusion, the purpose of this section was twofold. First, by drawing on the concept of leadership configuration (Morris, 2004), I have argued that it was the cooperation among leaders of different types in the organization that were essential to

[23] CBWC leaders made decisions about interorganizational relations SMOs, who to build allies with. These factors were part of the external context and internal organizational dynamics influencing the development of the CBWC.

the success of the movement. Second, I have demonstrated that the concept of leadership was important to social movement research because it inserted the notion of human agency into collective action.

Ideology

Ideology and the framing of its elements are critical factors in the development of social movement organizations. Ideology refers to a newly developing system of meanings that "couples assertions and theories about the nature of social life with values and norms relevant to promoting or resisting change" (Oliver and Johnston, 2000, p.7). Drawing on this notion, Myra Marx Ferree and David A. Merrill (2004, p.249) argue that ideology involves a "cognitive and a normative or value dimension." In other words, ideology spells out beliefs about how to understand the world by attributing blame and offering a blueprint for action. Frames are the tools activists use to create new grievances, resources and constituents.

James Jasper (1992) argues that most participants in public debates search for irrefutable bedrock principles and images to clinch their arguments. Whether or not the organization mobilizes depends on how persuasive the frame is, how broad an impact it claims for the problems it addresses, and how it fits with the audiences existing frames (Snow and Bedford, 1992). Ideology connects a social movement organization's collective identity –its mandate- with the frames adopted by activists to make sense of their external context (Swartz, 2003; Meyer, Whittier, Robnett, 2002; Oliver and Johnston, 2000; Zald, 1996; Klandermans, 1997; Hunt, Benford and Snow, 1994; Goffman, 1973). Social movement organizations therefore draw on their "cultural stock for images of what is an injustice generating frames from a diverse set

of actors in relation to a variety of audiences within and outside of a movement" (Zald, 1996, p.266).

In this way, the CBWC had to persuade existing networks of contacts that they were affected by similar conditions. In terms of specific ideological commitment, it mobilized to defend equality in the face of widespread racism in Canada. Ideologically, concerns or belief systems defending equality and attacking discriminatory practices that were widespread in Canadian society shaped the CBWC. The CBWC relied on "injustice arguments" (McAdam, 1999/1982; Morris, 1984) to convince the black women that they should organize against class, race and gender discrimination. These arguments did prove successful for the CBWC. Increasingly between 1973 and 1983, the government enacted legislation to address a number of issues related to immigration, racism, housing, employment, status of women and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Yet, in light of the problems with the legislation discussed earlier, the CBWC was able to stimulate divergent thought about how these issues affected black women, causing the federal government to re-examine their policies.[24] The legislation and debates allowed the Congress to use their expertise and skills honed in organizational activities.

Similarly, the framing arguments of the CBWC concentrated on the abuse of power and the lack of accountability of government policies.[25] As a consequence, assertions about the inadequacy of government policies and injustice itself became conditions around which new activities were organized. One of reasons that CBWC

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[24] This claim will be supported later on in the dissertation.
[25] Examples included the deportation orders concerning Haitian immigrants, arbitrary searching, detaining and arresting of Haitian people in Canada, the case of Francesca Dufresne and Rose Pradieu and the incident concerning Albert Johnson discussed earlier in this chapter.

members were willing to align themselves with this position and demand justice was that they were willing to build alliances with other groups. As the CBWC strengthened its arguments, members were better able to see the link between their goals and those of other racialized and gendered groups.[26] Along these lines, a number of scholars have noted that groups with similar ideologies and goals are more likely to work in cooperative relationships than those without shared beliefs (Hathaway and Meyer, 1994; Staggenborg, 1996). For the CBWC this position contributed to the closing of the gap between themselves and the broader population. In short, the organization was able to find what Gamson (1995) calls "cultural resonance" that allowed them to mobilize many supporters in their efforts to reach their goals.

In sum, the CBWC's conceptual framework strengthened it in two ways. First, the CBWC's ideologies proved to be well suited for its external context. Second, the CBWC was able to present their perceptions and goals in a way that made them attractive to their constituents and the wider population.

The trajectory of the CBWC from a conference format to a national organization showed the importance of distinguishing the identities of the actors, their institutional sociopolitical and economic environment, and internal organizational dynamics (see Table 14).[27] Building on the black feminist synthetic model and interpretive organizational model that linked organizational processes to the external context, I have illustrated how a social movement organization that was numerically small developed. This type of analysis was important because the CBWC provided a

[26] The kinds of collaborations that developed are examined in chapter 5.
[27] It showed how the organization had pursued different issues and social policies that gave it some legitimacy. At the same time, it allowed the CBWC to develop its programmes of mobilization and social justice, to establish chapters in eight provinces, and to realize its goals.

critical starting point for studying black Canadian women's social movement organizations.

Between 1973 and 1983, Canada experienced a restructuring of it economy, structural changes in its population and ongoing problems of racialized conflict. Within this context, activists became concerned with the structural inequalities experienced by black women and their families. They organized conferences in Toronto, Montreal, Halifax, Windsor and Winnipeg to provide a space to discuss the restructuring of the Canadian economy, immigration, employment, education, discrimination, multiculturalism, status of women and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. At the participants' urgings, the conference focus soon shifted to developing a formal organization. The CBWC was founded to coordinate activities, share information, develop policy and elect provincial representatives to coordinate the activities at the local level. As a non-profit voluntary organization, the strength of the CBWC was its exchange of information, leadership, programs, and its capacity to draw on a social network embedded in its own communities.

In contrast to many studies of social movement organizations, Staggenborg (1996), Klandermans (1984) and Piven and Cloward (1977) have argued that small size impedes the mobilization of resources and success of social movements. This constraint was modified in the case of the CBWC. The problem of size and resources was overcome in the organization by working through many knowledgeable and politically active individuals, a network of small, formally structured social movement organizations at the municipal, provincial and national level. In this case, the collaborative action and mobilization was significant in making claims against

government policies and stimulating divergent thoughts about issues. The government was therefore more likely to respond to widespread demonstration of support that collaborative action strategies can mobilize.[28]

In the 1983-1993 decade, the challenges faced by the CBWC included the process of building its network, developing alliances, securing financial resources and coordinating the mobilization of black women. This is the focus of chapter five.

Strategies

The CBWC used three tactics to establish itself as a political force within black communities across Canada: creating a support base with politicians, establishing local chapters and articulating a rhetoric that had strong appeal to black Canadians. For the most part the organization was successful in all three areas, receiving support from black women's groups across the country, forming networks and receiving government funding for its conferences. Despite its criticisms of official Canadian policies, it showed a willingness to work with members of the New Democratic, Liberal and Conservative parties. CBWC events were attended by, among others, Rosemary Brown of the NDP, Lincoln Alexander from the Conservative Party and Herb Gray of the Liberal Party, which may explain its success in obtaining public funding for conferences. The CBWC established provincial secretariats in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia as places where black women could connect with others who were already working for social and political change. New members were often looking for assistance with health, daycare, employment, sexism and racism issues they were facing in their own lives.

[28] This point is fully examined in chapter five.

Table 14
Organizational Structures of CBWC, 1973-1983

SMO	Decision-Making Structure And Division of Labour	Membership Criteria/Records	Connection to other Groups	Leader
CBWC	major decisions made by membership at inaugural conference steering committees	list of supporters, rather than formal members, conference report	loose ties to completely autonomous organizations	volunteer members
NCC	decision-making by Congress Committee and informal division of labour created by a small number of activists, attempts to involve all members, implement Congress resolutions, fundraising, develop regional committees,	list of supporters, no criteria for active involvement, elected representatives, conference reports	loosely connected groups, organizations that were completely autonomous, chapters	volunteer members
NS	decision making by National Secretariat, division of labour among small number of activists, creation of committees by interested participants, regional representatives, causes, provincial secretariats	informal membership	committees form and act independently, chapters	volunteer members
CBWC	formal, changing structure consisting of executive counsel, regional representatives, local chapters, various committees, attempts to rotate tasks and include all members for active participation, provincial secretariats, legal counsel, coordinating committees	dues paying members, formal records membership open to any individual/group organization sharing principles, no criteria	formal connection to chapters in other cities, national coordination	volunteer members

Adapted from Staggenborg (1999, p.104)

Arguably the most effective CBWC strategy entailed articulating its political positions in a manner that resonated with its constituencies. By identifying itself as a voice for black women and a space for black women to speak about their experiences, the CBWC convinced black women in cities across Canada that it was the best organization for opposing discrimination in Canadian society. This intent was clearly expressed in the CBWC "Purpose of the Congress":

> We recognize the vitally important role that has fallen to black women. We feel that we can hold each other in respect only through understanding one another. This can be accomplished in dialogue with various other groups, by questioning, seeking and becoming knowledgeable about Canada. We feel that the items to which we address ourselves are pertinent to the work of Black women and the areas that we concern ourselves with. It is now time that black women from across Canada come together and jointly look at those problems to debate the issues and to find the solutions.

From a black feminist synthetic and interpretive organizational model of movements, the period between 1973 and 1983 contained the pivotal socio-political conditions for the emergence of the Congress of Black Women of Canada. According to my analysis, the organization emerged from five national conferences that were held to uncover the experiences of black women in Canada. Conference participants discussed issues of concern to black women and their families, established a support network and actively sought situations in which they could present their plans and

defend their interests. Through these national conferences, the CBWC became a national organization for social change.

Institutionalizing Identity

Soon after its formation, the CBWC developed a formal structure.[29] The executives initiated programs and developed a system of ongoing and active committees to work on various tasks (see Table 14). The committee's tasks focused on membership, issues, action, finance/fundraising, social, educational, programs and the constitutional/bylaws. All of the executive and committee members were volunteers who met during the conferences or at the scheduled meetings.

The CBWC's centralized formal structure with a set authority system and differentiated tasks and responsibilities is supported by a belief that equates structural development with goal accomplishment (Reger, 2002). The members believed that the developed structure was a source of efficient organizing, membership retention and leadership promoting organizational continuity.

Many of the interviewees recounted that the CBWC's formal structure kept the organization going: "I am the president of our chapter. We have a formal structure with roles, people and elections that really keeps us going (Afoute (Mills interview, tape recording, September 24, 2003, A014))." Aft reported that a formal organizational structure would aid in membership retention. She elucidates, "As president, I felt that it is important for me to help with my committee to make the meetings run smoothly. When I was president, our chapter had about twenty-five members because our organizational structure helped us to keep members" (Mills interview, tape recording,

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[29] I used Jo Reger's article to structure this section. See Jo Reger. 2002. "More Than One Feminism: Organizational Structure and the Construction of Collective Identity" in Social Movements Identity, Culture and the State. New York: Oxford University Press. Pp.171-184.

September 24, 2003, A015).

The members also perceived the formal structure as an important element in leadership development (Reger, 2002). In the CBWC, the organization's structure provided the best "training ground" for women to become leaders. The member's view is based on a belief that Canadian society constructs barriers that keep black women from leadership positions and therefore perpetuates inequality. Consequently, the hierarchical structure offers members a place to acquire important leadership skills. According to A. S (Mills interview, tape recording, August 12, 2003, A07):

> the conferences, activities, and chapters have helped members to develop confidence. The structure and leadership allows members to lead and members make activities happen to help others. I know that the CBWC' structure helps members to change their lives.

The organization's hierarchy and structure then facilitate the women's leadership and therefore changes Canadian society. The chapter's members have gone on to hold legal and political positions, including elected office, courts and positions in the universities and government.

Women who constructed black feminist identities came to the CBWC to find women with similar, not identical political beliefs. For example, Afoute (Mills interview, tape recording, September 24, 2003, A014) described the CBWC as organization "that I could readily identify with. So in a personal sense, it is comforting for me to fit into a group, that is obviously black and female, ...feeling Canadian and identifying with the problems that black females encounter. " In addition, the members described themselves as a group of black women who were brought together by a desire

to “bring about change.” According to Beth (Mills interview, tape recording, October 6, 2003, B003), participating in the CBWC showed that they are not alone and that there are ways for black women to fight together. She described this feeling as being part of the CBWC.

> I did not have friends or relatives. However, as an immigrant to Canada at an early age, I can recall hearing about the CBWC. I am very familiar with Kay Livingstone who was very much my mentor and my associate’s mentor. So this is a double whammy for me growing up and being able to be part of the Congress.

By drawing clear boundaries around themselves as black women, the members constructed black Canadian feminist identities that promotes goal oriented political action and personal empowerment.

In conclusion, the central goal of the fifth conference was to establish a more formal structure. The organization increased black female participation on issues affecting their lives and their families. In the wake of the fifth conference, the transition from a conference to a formal organization undeniably occurred. The CBWC emerged from the unique historical circumstances and reflected the diverse needs of its members, ways of organizing within the community and differential access to resources. In mapping the contours of this organizational history, this analysis took into consideration the specific political opportunities that affected the relationship between black women’s organizations and the government.

Chapter 4

STAYING CONNECTED: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF AN *INSTITUTION*

Introduction

How do institutions mediate the impact of ideologies on identity? This chapter argues that by applying a black Canadian feminist synthetic and interpretive organizational model of movements, we become better equipped for understanding the social construction of an institution in the Congress of Black Women of Canada. In this "staying connected" phase the role of institutions in mediating the impact of ideologies on identity is filtered through organizational structures. As the organization became more institutionalized with formal rules, divisions of hierarchy, specialized tasks, the organization was perceived as more embedded.

By carefully detailing what delegates pursued at the 1984, 1987, 1989, 1991 and 1993 National Conferences and by interpreting CBWC activities during this period, this chapter addresses the following question: How did the conferences contribute to the *institutionalizing* of a much needed social movement organization? The conferences allowed for activities that can be understood as a form of institutional work in various arenas. An arena is formed around an idea that brings together constituents with disparate institutional logics (Westenholz 2009). In these arenas, socially embedded CBWC members discursively shape a new way of engaging with the institutional logics of constituents embedded in multiple organizational fields (ibid, 2009). A field is formed around issues that bring together constituents with disparate purposes. This

chapter argues CBWC members are socially constructed and constructing individuals or collective units that create, change or break down organizational institutions. Organizational institutions are embedded in organizational fields that may constitute battle grounds for the CBWC that is attempting to draw on the contradictions of existing institutions to confront oppressive practices and drawing effectively on movement institutions to challenge the structural domination of the state as they promoted a new definition of black Canadian women and demonstrated a different ideology for mobilization based in oppositional rather than dominant meanings.

In this chapter, I examine the period from 1983 to 1993 to argue that i) the CBWC organized their national conferences to reach more women in the communities across Canada; ii) the CBWC established the National Foundation of the CBWC; and, iii) the CBWC engaged in an organizational review process. These activities motivated black women to organize at the local and national level to address racism and sexism, workplace harassment, family violence, employment equity, pay equity and support for the struggles of the Black Action Defense Committee (BADC) and Chinese Canadians.

External Environment: The Socio-Political Contexts and the CBWC, 1983-1993

The black Canadian feminist synthetic and interpretive organizational model of movements recognizes that organizations arise within institutions or fields, mobilizing insiders as well as outsiders. Moreover, organizations can drive change by opposing existing policies and they sometimes promote change by engaging in institutional processes. That is, organizations can emerge and operate within established channels and power structures, drawing on existing institutions and taken-for-granted understandings to challenge the structural domination of the state. In doing so, social

movement organizations may themselves become vehicles for the establishing the priorities for empowerment and authentic community engagement. In actual and symbolic terms the conferences sought to establish the priorities of identities, institutions and ideologies. In this section, I examine the CBWC's socio-political and economic contexts between 1983 and 1993 concerning: economy, immigration, systemic discrimination, multicultural, Status of Women, Charter of Rights and Human Rights: Employment Equity.

Canadian Economy

It would be difficult to overestimate the effects of the federal government's economic policy during this decade. It was a period when demand-management macroeconomic policies and social welfare programmes began to disappear. There was a period of slow economic growth, a ballooning government debt, massive unemployment and the rising popularity of neo-liberalism (Therborne, 1996; Clark, 1995; Carty, 1988). The Keynesian orthodoxy was replaced with the doctrine of neo-liberalism in Canada especially after the election of the Progressive Conservative Party in 1984 and electoral victories in 1988. These electoral victories enabled the government to enter into a number of trade investment agreements that intensified the processes of globalization. Canada signed the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement (CUFTA) in 1989, negotiated the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which incorporated Mexico in 1992, participated in trade and economic forums such as the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and entered negotiations on the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI).

The CBWC sought to understand the impact of these agreements on black

Canadian women. A telegram (1984 Report, p.47) sent to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney to lobby the government to dissolve the Free trade agreement explained the CBWC's position:

> The CBWC demand dissolution of all free trade negotiations and policies. We feel that black and immigrant women will bear the hardships and the costs of such a policy through the loss of jobs and chronic unemployment. Also the recommendations for retraining programmes for women who have lost their jobs due to free trade policies will not be of benefit to black and other visible minority women for a variety of reasons. There are black women who have difficulty accessing retraining programmes. Black women who work in the vulnerable manufacturing sector belong to an older group and have a lower education level. Retraining programmes have not been of benefit to these women. We urge you to take immediate steps to stop all free trade talks.

As Canada pursued trade liberalization and sought to maximize its export markets, it was inevitable that some industries and sectors declined. The trade-led adjustment that took place in the wake of the free trade agreement witnessed many American firms and some Canadian owned ones re-evaluating their commitment to manufacturing in Canada. Increasingly, many firms moved to take advantage of lower wages, lower taxes, weaker and non-enforced labour and environmental laws in the United States, especially in the southern states and Mexico (Cohen, 1995). These types of decisions combined with the 1990-1992 recession resulted in large-scale job losses

in the manufacturing sector. Competition from low wage areas –as well as corporate threats to relocate- were key elements, not only in job losses, but in the weakening of rights and benefits of those on the lower rungs of the labour market in many countries. The Canadian electorate responded by not returning the federal Conservatives to Parliament in 1993 with the election of a Liberal government. The mandate of this new Chrétien government not only focused on the Conservative's preoccupation with deficit reduction, ended the principle of universality in the provision of Canada's social programmes and sought to further dismantle the welfare state.

This articulation of the relationship of the economic institutions and the CBWC parallels the concerns of feminist economic scholars who argued about the affects of economic restructuring on Canadian women. The emphasis by these scholars was to examine the ways in which the economic institutions perpetuated women's subordinate positions in the workforce. Brodie (1997) and Volsko (2001) both focused on the effects of neo-liberal policy combined to produce a system of oppression. Thus, from the outset the CBWC realized that it had to address issues concerning black women's declining socioeconomic status and job losses.

These economic conditions were central to the major issues facing the CBWC. Black women had comparable levels of education, higher employment rates and lower public dependency rates than those Canadians in similar jobs. The 1991 census indicated that 20% of black Canadians were attending university or had a bachelor's degree and this 20% was identical to that of the general Canadian population. Black Canadians earned less money on average than the Canadian population as a whole. The average income for blacks in Canada was $20, 617 in 1991. The average Canadian rate

was 15% higher and stood at $24, 001 in 1991 (Worswick, 2004; Pendakur, 2000; Volsko, 2002). Black men earned on average $24, 343 which was substantially higher than black women. Black women earned close to the same as all Canadian women 94% from full time employment and earned more than all Canadian women for part time employment ($11, 801 for black women and $11, 244 for all women in Canada). But substantial disparities in income reinforced the fact that black Canadians had not gained full economic equity in Canada. This was particularly true in the higher paying occupations where black Canadians were greatly under-represented in upper and middle management positions, foremen/women, supervisors in skilled crafts and trade, in sales and semi-skilled work (Worsick, 2004; Mensah, 2002; Pendakur, 2000). This was also evident in the smaller number of black Canadians who were self-employed or who were principally supported by investment income. Black Canadians were over-represented in service and clerical occupations, manual work, semi-professionals and technicians. When asked to talk about employment, Atwen (Mills interview, tape recording, November 10, 2003, A12) said there were a number of "socioeconomic challenges. Jobs, you needed a job. In order to make different decisions, you have to have the economic structure in place to do it." Livelihood issues combined with economic policy concerns dominated in this period, as the CBWC's activities were directed towards the federal government's economic institutions.

Immigration

During this period the black Canadian population increased from 144, 500 to 557, 940 or from .59% to 2.06% of the Canadian population (Mensah, 2002; Torczyner, 1997). This rapid population growth was a result of increased immigration and higher

birth rates. The 1981 and 1991 Census indicated that close to 30,000 African blacks arrived in Canada during this period. More than one in four immigrants who arrived in Canada during this period was born in Africa. Women accounted for 52.1% and men accounted for 47.9% of the black population, and respectively for 50.6% and 49.4% of the total Canadian population. Black Canadians were overwhelmingly urban in their geographical distribution with 98.9% residing in the country's 25 census metropolitan areas (CMA) as compared to 61.9% of the total Canadian population.

Immigration issues continued to be a priority for the CBWC. According to the CBWC, the government's initiatives were discriminatory and racists because domestics coming from black countries would feel the impact. Supporting this view, Asevt (Mills interview, tape recording, September 28, 2003, A17) told me "one of the big issues was cultural conflict regarding refugees and immigrants." Anietheen (Mills interview, tape recording, October 8, 2003, A19) said, "we had a lot of new immigrants coming in from African countries." Expressing her view that the CBWC's workshops were intended to provide the membership with information about immigration issues, Atwel (Mills interview, tape recording, September 14, 2003, A12) noted: "I taught my membership about immigration issues and set up workshops." It was in this context that the CBWC organized workshops based on providing information and training to immigrant and refugee women.

Systemic Discrimination

The federal government examined racial discrimination in Canadian society in the Special Committee on the Participation of Visible Minorities in Canadian Society (1984). The committee carried out a comprehensive assessment,

receiving input from hundred of groups from across the country. The data indicated that "visible minorities" were subjected to "discrimination, non-acceptance, low-expectations by teachers and lack of respect for and recognition of the learners' past experience' (Federal Government 1984, p.133). The Special Committee recommended that educational ***institutions*** become more accessible and sensitive to racial minority students. This rhetorical concession by the federal government was central to the CBWC's battles during this period.

Kenneth Andrews (2002) argues that movement organizations may directly institute changes that benefit their constituency or they may co-opt state institutions and use state resources and authority for movement purposes. Within the CBWC, for example, activists participated in the government's assessment in order to reform public institutions[1], raised awareness about issues and exerted pressure on the government to enact policy to address issues related to discrimination. In this view, Diani (1997, p. 133) argues organizations may be "assessed in terms of the movement's capacity to achieve more central positions in networks of social and political influence."

Multiculturalism

The Canadian Multicultural Act (CMA) was enshrined in 1988 leading to the establishment of the Ministry of Multiculturalism. Multicultural policy recognized and supported all cultures in Canada. The CMA committed the government to a policy of preserving and enhancing the multicultural identity and heritage of Canadians, while working to achieve the equality of all Canadians in economic, social, cultural and

[1] The assessment I am referring to is the Special Committee on the Participation of Visible Minorities in Canadian society.

political life. Subsection 3 (2)(a) of the CMA recognized discrimination in Canadian society and articulated the federal government's commitment to ensure that no unfair barrier existed to employment and career advancement. The CMA committed federal institutions to enhance the ability of individuals and communities contributing to Canadian society by ensuring that government policies and programmes respond to the needs of all Canadians. Subsection 3(2)(c) provided assurances that government services were delivered in an accessible manner to everyone (Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, 1989-1990.)

The CMA supported the retention of ethnic minority's cultural distinctiveness while facilitating their integration into society. The goals of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act were to help ethnic minorities maintain their cultural traditions, to reduce barriers to minority's full participation in society and to encourage understanding between diverse ethno-cultural groups. It reaffirmed a policy promoting the freedom of all "to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage." During this decade many municipal governments were created and followed some form of multicultural policy. Currently six of the ten provinces (Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Quebec and Ontario) implemented multicultural legislation. Multicultural legislation was implemented within theses six provinces by advisory, councils, Cabinets, Committees or both.

The Canadian government's multicultural policy was a topic of great concern among CBWC members in 1988. According to Short (1991), the primary focus of multiculturalism is recognizing "cultural diversity, promoting pluralism and encouraging inter-group tolerance" (p. 33). Supporters claimed that inter-racial contact

reduces prejudice and that cultural exchanges hold value for race relations. The stories told were about cultural aspects of life such as food, traditions, clothes, religion, songs and dance. The notion of culture as being limited to lifestyle and customs was cultivated by Canada's official multicultural policy, ideas which resonated well with the general Canadian public. CBWC members, however, disagreed. Regina chapter member Heather Crichlow (1988) argued that any multicultural policy should be based on a strong commitment to equality among people, adding that "folk-dancing and amateur theatre were quite meaningless if people were excluded from participation in mainstream Canadian society."

Crichlow's criticism focused on folkloric representations of the activities of "ethnic groups." She also argued that such representations limited black women's participation in cultural domains and failed to earn them increased political participation. CBWC members believed that the legacies of a white settler colony were continuing to provide some citizens with greater privilege, entitlement and power to define "real Canadians" and to determine how major institutions were organized. Federal policy makers regarded prevailing norms and institutions as fundamentally sound, and considered acts of racial discrimination as either minor aberrations, or the actions of a small number of antisocial individuals. In response, the CBWC criticized government policies as not addressing the underlying causes of discrimination or systemic inequalities.

The CBWC'S criticism of multiculturalism was directed at how it conferred the perception that the activities of the groups were folkloric. In effect, the policy not only limited the emancipation of ethnic minorities especially in the cultural domain but also

failed to grant them real opportunities for increased political participation. It was within this context that the CBWC realized the importance of working within mainstream institutions to critique government policies that refused to confront underlying causes of discrimination and systemic inequalities.[2]

In conclusion, the federal government set up committees such as the Special Committee on Visible Minorities, Multiculturalism Act and the Employment Equity legislation, a guarantee of equal rights and freedoms for women in the Constitution and protection from sexual harassment in the workplace. To reiterate, the glaring absence of issues affecting black Canadian women in public policy was crucial for the organizational development of the CBWC during this decade. Omission of policies directly relevant to the experiences of black women provided fertile ground for the development of a distinctive organization of black Canadian women whose mandate concerned the social and political agency among diverse black Canadian women's groups.

CBWC also placed the issues of concern to black women -racism, sexism, employment, education, immigration policy and access to social services- at the forefront of the black Canadian community practices. The failure of the federal government to recognize and deal effectively with the issues affecting black women and their communities, illustrated with particular clarity the need for a national black women's organization to provide services and the facilities needed. It was in this

[2] Nourbeses-Philip (1992) argued that multicultural policy had no answers for the problems of racism, white supremacy, unless it was combined with a clearly articulated policy of antiracism. Fleras and Elliott (1992, p.320) noted that multicultural policy failed "to appreciate the nature, scope and impact of racial discrimination on victims." Bolaria and Li (1988) suggested that the failure of "multiculturalism was not so much a sound policy mismanagement. Rather it was a failure to solve non-cultural problems with cultural solutions. Issues of ethnic inequality and racial discrimination had political and economic roots in the history of social institutions of Canada and the solution lies beyond what multiculturalism can offer.

context that problems of black women in Canada were clearly identified. Black women's gatherings which had originally been places for women to meet and discuss their ideas and problems were transformed into sites for the development of distinctive black women's organizational practices which challenged the hegemonic discourse and politicized activities that were considered to be invisible.

Status of Women

In Canada, a second wave of the black feminist movement emerged in the 1980s and 1990s, which criticized the prevailing white feminism as a hegemonic discourse. In doing so, the former were confronting the problems arising from the complex race, class and gender differences among women in Canada. The black Canadian feminists who participated in the second wave of activism were eager to build alliances with black women because they perceived that the black Canadian feminist movement had the potential for great social change at all levels. Between 1983 and 1993, many black Canadian feminists, Glenda Simms, Esmeralda Thornhill, Agnes Calliste, Flourette Osborne and Jean Augustine participated in the CBWC's conferences. It was within the context of conferences that a black Canadian feminist synthetic and organizational model of movements can be used to address black women's concerns, make black women at all social levels aware of the oppression in their daily lives and to connect various oppressions to their wider social and political institutions. The CBWC's proselytizing efforts were successful because all of the women were concerned with discrimination and the process of organizing black women. In general terms, the CBWC's national conferences exemplified the initial ease in establishing alliances against discrimination.

The CBWC's 1984, 1987, 1989, 1991 and 1993 national conferences gave members a much clearer understanding of the issues that prepared them for this decade. The CBWC's conferences ensured that the members had begun to work together from the local to the national level; and all of this translated into a second decade of national conferences and activities that were reflective of the lives of black women in Canada.

The CBWC was successful in attracting women from all classes. The CBWC criticized racism in the women's movement, discriminatory employment practices, apartheid, free trade and the white normed and Eurocentric curriculum in the educational institutions. As CBWC chapters were flourishing, the CBWC enjoyed greater visibility. The difficulty of challenging racism in the police, immigration policies, educational institutions and in the women's movement remained a major challenge.

In this decade, the CBWC owed its successes, in part, to the feminist institutional work which was reflected in the work of the United Nations conferences. International conference arenas have broadened the dialogue on women's rights throughout the world. International conference arenas created during the United Nations Decade on Women (1975-1985) and in the wake of the United Nations Fourth World Conference in Beijing (1995) helped to put women's rights as human rights on the international agenda. Towards the End of UN Decade for Women in July 1985, a program entitled Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (FLS) was adopted by delegates from one hundred and fifty seven governments meeting in Nairobi. In 1995, one hundred and thirty-one countries had ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Black Canadian feminists were within the ranks of the UN personnel and government delegations, women's organizations. The CBWC's participation in these events was central in building an organization and a women's movement in Canada that incorporated and supported the institutional work of black feminists, scholars and advocates. It was within this larger conference arena that the CBWC was able to build on the momentum created by the UN conferences to build an organization and participate in a women's movement of the greatest diversity. Within Canada, women who might not have worked together in their own countries came to understand each other's perspectives and to discover what divided them – the interaction was not always easy as CBWC members pointed out the racism in the women's movement.

The CBWC has used their participation in the UN conferences to take advantage of the heightened awareness of women's roles and status to push forward for their own agendas for change in the laws and practices that limited their opportunities. An example of the mood of the 1983-1993 period was the decision by the Canadian government to set up a Royal Commission on Equality in Employment, also know as the Abella Commission. Judge Rosalie Abella's (1984, p.3) report stated that "sometimes equality means treating people the same, despite their differences, and sometimes it means treating them as equals by accommodating their differences:"

> We now know that to treat everyone the same may be to offend the notion of equality. Ignoring the differences may mean ignoring legitimate needs. It is not fair to use the differences between people as an excuse to exclude them arbitrarily from equitable participation. Equality means nothing if it does not mean that we are of equal worth

regardless of differences in gender, race, ethnicity, or disability Ignoring differences and refusing to accommodate them is a denial of equal access and opportunity. It is discrimination.

Judge Abella's report named four groups that should receive special treatment as compensation for the historical disadvantages and to accommodate their different circumstances: women, visible minorities, native people and disabled persons. In February 1992, the CBWC presented a paper on the Employment Equity Act (EE) to the Special Committee on the review of the federal EE Act. It was within this institutional field that the CBWC supported employment equity, pay, equity and affirmative action because black women faced discrimination in employment. However, Agnew (1996, p. 146-147) noted that "the royal commissions may set out programs of far-reaching changes, but their recommendations may only be partially and selectively implemented by politicians." The CBWC continued to express reservations about the weaknesses of the laws meant to address equality in employment. The CBWC claimed that the royal commissions and laws provide some formal recognition by the state of the diverse needs of different groups, but they are not themselves solutions to the problems of discrimination and inequality in Canadian institutions and policies (Agnew, 1996).

In conclusion, the work generated by the CBWC was unlike that of the previous decade. The black Canadian feminist movement and the UN conferences nurtured the CBWC which, in turn, was able to address many aspects of black women's lives from the personal to the political. The black Canadian feminist synthetic and organizational model of movements reflected a position to challenge discrimination in many spheres

and at many levels.

Charter of Rights and Human Rights: Employment Equity

The work of the Royal Commission on Equality in Employment, also known as the Abella Commission, focused attention on the need to ensure equal opportunities in employment for all Canadians and to achieve fairness in the process. Throughout its work, the Abella Commission sought to establish a means of obliterating the present and future effects of discrimination and of opening equitably the competition for employment opportunities to those arbitrarily excluded. Even as some Canadians were struggling with the relationship between race and restricted employment opportunities, the *Canadian Employment Equity Act (1986)* spurred interest in compiling accurate data to address this relationship. Asevt (Mills interview, tape recording, September 28, 2003, A17) said:

> We have a lot of black women who were well educated and were unable to carry on as doctors, engineers or whatever. They were doing menial jobs in order to get along because they were not able to find a job.

The EE Act mandated fair employment practices with respect to minorities. It addressed the need to overcome the discriminatory effects of past practices, policies and systems in employment. The stated purpose of this Act was to achieve equality in the workplace so that no person was denied employment opportunities or benefits for reasons unrelated to ability. The practical long-term outcome of this Act and similar legislation in the provinces was to make the workplace diverse, reflective of the workforce from which the workers were drawn. The federal employment equity act applied to all employers under federal jurisdiction with more than 100 employers.

Employers were required to identify and eliminate employment practices not legally authorized which resulted in employment barriers against persons in designated groups. They set equity goals for the designated groups and reported on their progress in achieving those goals, The Canadian Human Rights Commission reviewed the reports and they initiated an investigation where there were reasonable grounds to believe that systemic discrimination existed.

Although the CBWC's institutional work supported pay equity, there were a number of problems with the federal government's legislation. In Ontario, the CBWC (1984 Report, p.48) sent a telegram to Bob Rae, Evelyn Gigantes, Larry Grossman and Susan Fish in which they stated:

> We call for pay equity to cover all working women in Ontario regardless of the number of employees in the establishment. Bill 154 in its present form will perpetuate the exploitation of black and immigrant women.

Similarly in February 1992, a federal brief on the Employment Equity Act (EE) was presented to the Special Committee on the review of the federal EE Act. The Congress argued that the EE Act contained no penalties for failure to implement programmes, nor criteria for measuring success in terms of meeting goals. It lacked performance standards and did not include set benchmarks. Although the Canadian Human Rights Commission assumed a monitoring role, it had no enforcement role under the legislation. The EE Act contained no provisions for enforcement except for failure to comply with the reporting requirements.

The Act was strongly criticized in a number of quarters because of the limited coverage, lack of mandatory goals and timetables, and lack of standardized reporting

requirements (National Association of Women and Law 1991). Attempts to bolster employment equity opportunity programmes in the late 1970s and the early 1980s failed, prompting the government to introduce affirmative action programmes for women, native peoples and those with disabilities in the public service in 1983. Pay equity and employment equity laws were passed in several jurisdictions and the wage gap between men and women working full time narrowed from 53% in 1982 to 72% in 1992. Women represented 25% of business owners in Canada.

The fifth Annual Report of the Parliamentary Committee to the House of Commons (Parliamentary Committee on the Review of the Employment Equity Act 1992) indicated that the legislation failed to identify the type and extent of the changes expected of employers. It noted that an element of enforcement within the process was required to ensure that employment equity was taken seriously. At the time of the Act's enactment, the federal government exempted itself from the provisions of the EE Act. As a result, the federal workforce, as defined under the Financial Administration Act, had no statutory mandate to pursue employment equity. The treasury board operated a voluntary employment equity plan and the federal civil servants had no formal directive to achieve employment equity goals and timetables.

Funding

The need for continuous resource acquisition was an important factor that had shaped the CBWC's organizational structure. Between 1983 and 1993, the CBWC relied on funding from two main sources: government grants and fundraising events. First, given the CBWC's reliance on funding from the Secretary of State Women's programmes and the Department of Multiculturalism for core and/or project funding, it

soon faced serious problems. Between 1989 and 1990, the Conservative government reduced funding to Women's programmes by thirty percent (Gabriel, 1999). This reduced funding (to NAC, feminist publications and women's centers) and downsizing of this department came as a response to the federal government's commitment to neoliberalism. This situation created both opportunities and constraints for the CBWC.

A closer look at the practices of the Canadian State Department's Women's Programs and Department of Multiculturalism reveals a pattern of denial and dismissal when the CBWC applied for funding. For example, the Department of Women's Programs argued that CBWC institutional activities were race-based rather than gender-based, but the Multicultural Department disagreed with that assessment. The two departments resisted CBWC applications within the framework of the liberal rationality model. Simms, who observed first-hand the difficulties of applying for funding, describes this denial technique as a critical factor in denying funds to the CBWC. She argues that their denials reflected the social relations of race, gender and funding in an organizational field. The Women's Programs and Multicultural departments gathered the required information for CBWC applications to receive ongoing funding for conferences, services for black women and their families and public education. But whereas past requests for funding had been approved, in 1985 Simms and the CBWC could not obtain funding for affirmative action, parenting programs and overall operating expenses. Simms believes that the main blocking point was that both the Women's and Multicultural departments refused to accept black women's issues as belonging to their respective institutional fields or domains. She adds that while the two programs expressed token support for black women's empowerment, their actions

reflected a lack of willingness to take action.

The CBWC refused to back down. After meetings in Ottawa, several letters and over a year of negotiations, the Congress was victorious. According to CBWC president Glenda Simms, for the first time, the "Women's Programme was forced to accept the fact that black women's concerns were part of the mandate of its department and that it must not be seen as the sole responsibility of the Multiculturalism Departments" (1987, p. 40). As a result of these initiatives, the Woman's programme agreed to fund the affirmative action programmes for the Congress, and the Multicultural Department agreed to fund the Parenting programmes. The Congress received thirty-eight thousand eight hundred and fifteen dollars ($38, 815) for its affirmative action project, parenting programme, and operations (ibid., p. 40). The initial breakthrough also helped to fund the biennial conference and the CBWC received a grant of just over sixty thousand dollars ($60,000) which allowed the largest, broad based participation in any conference of the Congress to date. The Congress received thirty-five thousand dollars ($35,000) as the first payment and that allowed them to have a Needs Assessment study, communication, meetings and conference funding. The Needs Assessment provided an overview of the context of black Canadian women. Simms, chairperson of the Needs Assessment committee, presented the report.

In a progress report, Esmeralda Thornhill talked about the CBWC's looming deficit and how the Congress has forged ahead to make the organization debt free and even to generate funds through the selling of all occasion bilingual P-R Greeting Cards. It was not until April 1990 that the CBWC received a modest grant from the Secretary of State.

The decision to apply for charitable status was ostensibly linked to the ability to access funding at first instance. While the charity legislation ensured that the registered charities did not utilize their funds to support activities to present biased information, the CBWC interpreted this to mean that they could not be involved in political activities or campaigns. The charity legislation has been exacerbated by the federal government's refusal some years to recognize the terms racism or black in charitable objects.

One of the reasons for establishing the Congress of Black Women Foundation was to make the organization political. The Executive Report to the Membership 1991-1993 stated that "due to the cutbacks in funding from the federal government and the promise of further cutbacks, lead the organization to establish a charitable foundation." In 1991, a tax-exempt status for the Congress was also being pursued because the organization was a non-profit organization. Anietheen (Mills interview, tape recording, October 8, 2003, A19) described the purpose of the foundation in this way:

> It came about because the CBWC wanted to become a registered charity, but was prohibited due to the fact that they lobbied and did advocacy work. At that time, it was not permitted through revenue Canada. It was suggested that in order to do this we should set up a separate activity and that was where the foundation came in. The foundation was a registered charity, not a foundation. We were able to fundraise through the registered charity. It made it easier for all of the chapters across Canada to fundraise and we at the foundation were able to issue the tax receipts for them.

The CBWC announced the establishment of the Congress of Black Women National

Foundation in 1992. The foundation was the fundraising arm of the Congress and provided for the educational activities of the black Canadian communities. Two community scholarships, the Gwen Mackenzie Fund and the Dr. Glenda Simms Fund were administered by the foundation. The foundations head office was located in the municipality of Burnaby, British Columbia. The first Directors of the Corporation were Nalda Callendar, Alma R.Koo and Pam Lushington. The purpose of the foundation as set out in its Letters patent (1992, p.1-2) were:

> To fund, facilitate, develop, implement and promote activities and programs which will foster the advancement of education and in particular, educational programs for black women as well as providing funding through scholarships, bursaries, loans and other means to needy students seeking to pursue education;
>
> To receive gifts, bequests, funds and property and to hold, invest, administer and distribute funds and other organizations as are qualified donees under the provisions of the Income Tax Act which are charitable at law and for such other activities as are authorized for registered charities under the provisions of the Income Tax Act; and
>
> To conduct any and all activities and exercise any and all such powers as are necessary for the achievement of the forgoing and in furtherance of the objects of the Corporations.

The CBWC's foundation became a registered charity in 1993. They experienced few frustrating delays and difficulties in achieving their registration and once registered they had little interaction with the Canadian charities commission. No evidence exists

in the CBWC's documents to indicate that the organization suffered from any external restrictions because of the charity legislation.

To fund the tenth conference in 1991, the CBWC received financial support from membership fees for $4,190.00, $251.43 for interest earned on the account, registration fees totalled $9,174.00, and fund raising from sweatshirts and cards totalled $1,344.00 (See Table 15). Grants were obtained from the Government of Canada through the Secretary of State Multiculturalism that totalled $20,000.00, province of Quebec for $20,000.00, Ministry of Employment and Immigration for $15,000.00, City of Calgary for $1,000.00 and finally the Province of Alberta for $2,000.00 (see table 15). The report of the tenth biennial conference of the CBWC was submitted to the Secretary of State Woman's programme, Canada's employment and immigration commission and the Secretary of State Multiculturalism.

Second, when the federal government reduced funding for core projects it created a degree of dependency and vulnerability for the CBWC given its limited money and resources. Despite these constraints, it was rarely a case of complete dependency for the CBWC. The organization demonstrated its resilience by combining grants with other sources of funding in order to continue their activism on multiple fronts. The organization relied on monies from membership fees, conference registration and developed techniques for receiving private funding, and fundraising activities through their social network thereby attempting to minimize the steering effects of reduced government funding on their internal priorities. It secured grants from the government and from fundraisers such as the Kay Livingstone Awards (Ontario). David Peterson, Premier of Ontario and the Minister of Intergovernmental

Affairs gave a one-time grant from the Government Hospitality Committee that allocated two thousand five hundred dollars ($2,500.00) towards the cost of the inaugural Kay Livingstone Awards luncheon.

The Kay Livingstone Award was the brainchild of Sybil Garrick, president of the Ontario Region. The Ontario region decided to present an annual award in the name of Kay Livingstone. The first award was presented at the luncheon on Sunday September 27, 1987 at the Holiday Inn, Toronto. Jean Augustine was the first recipient of the award. The second award dinner was held on Sunday September 25, 1988 at the Holiday Inn in Downtown Toronto, honouring Mrs. Kathy Earles, Doreen Lewis was the guest speaker. A special one-time award was also presented to CANEWA as the founding mothers of the CBWC. In October 1, 1989, at the third annual Kay Livingston Awards Dr. Glenda P. Simms the guest speaker and Rella Braithwaite was the recipient

Table 15 Statement of Receipts and Disbursements 1991

Receipts		**Disbursements**	
Membership	$4,190.00	Accounting	$17,165.26
Interest Earned	$251.43	Accommodation	$105.64
Registration	$9,174.00	Advertising and Promotion	$4,045.85
Sweatshirts and Cards	$1,344.00	Bank Charges	$221.92
Grants		Delegates-Per Diem	$4,369.34
Department of Secretary of State	$20,000.00	Interpreter	$7,000.00
Multicultural Grant		Membership Fees	$365.00
Quebec	$20,000.00	Misc.	$99.51
Ministry of Employment and Immigration	$15,000.00	Office, Postage And Stationery	$6,721.50
City of Calgary	$1,000.00	Sweatshirts	$1,951.99
Province of Alberta	$2,000.00	Telephone	$7,880.00
		Travel	$28,258.08
Total	$72,959.43		$78,185.55
Balance	$5,226.12		

of the award. A criterion of the award was that this person shows a keen interest in the performing arts, education and used these skills to assist in voluntary community

organizations. The successful candidate had to show interest in at risk families as well as a willingness to intervene on their behalf politically at whatever level necessary to promote an understanding of the contributions of black people to Canadian society. That is, the chosen candidate had to demonstrate an interest in the history of black people and through the media raised the consciousness of black Canadians. Finally, the candidate had to be a social justice advocate for all individuals and in particular promoted the interests and activities of black people in the world.

Internal Factors: Organizational Structure, Objectives, Frames and Leadership

The black Canadian feminist synthetic and interpretive organizational model of movements facilitates a more comprehensive analysis of how the external context, funding and movement ideologies shape organizational structures. According to the model, organizational structures and goals adopted by movement organizations may be shaped by their ability to mobilize resources, recruit participants and supporters, affect policy-making and to sustain the organization over time (Whittier, 2002; Staggenborg, 2002; Reger, 2002; Freeman, 1999). Organizational strategies and tactics are shaped by movement ideologies that in turn influence the development of organizational structure. This section reviews the CBWC activities during its peak period of institutionalizing mobilization roughly 1983 through 1993.

To examine fundamental changes in the CBWC's structure, this inquiry examines various operating procedures. Drawing on Staggenborg's (1999, p. 103) analysis, formal social movement organizations (SMOs) have established procedures or structures that enable them to perform certain tasks and continue to function even when

there are changes in leadership. Formal SMOs have bureaucratic structures for decision-making, a developed division of labour with positions for various functions,

Table 16
Organizational Structures of CBWC, 1983-1993

Decision-Making Structure And Division of Labor	Membership Criteria/Records	Connection to other Groups	Leadership
formal, decision making executive counsel, division of labour, provincial representatives, local chapters, National Foundation of the CBWC, national office, provincial secretariats, various coordinating committees attempt to rotate tasks and include all members	dues paying members, attempts to encourage more active participation, lists of active members, activists, chapters, formal records	formal guidelines and ties to chapters, affiliate groups, funds and financial support to chapters, regional organizations created to further coordination, committees created to perform needed tasks and integrated into organization, formalized connection to members, communication with chapters as CBWC expands	volunteer members

Adapted from Staggenborg (1999, p.104)

constitution, explicit criteria for membership and rules governing subunits (for example, chapters and committees). The CBWC was classified according to these criteria.[3] For example, the CBWC's national council was able to meet five times during this decade (see table 17) to make organizational policy and administrative decisions.

At each meeting, the CBWC set aside agenda space to meet and dialogued with the local members and their friends (Congress News, 1990). In addition, the CBWC obtained not only free National Office space from the Ville de Montreal chapter until May 1991 but also office furniture from the Bank of Montreal. Esmeralda Thornhill stated "now we only needed to find the money to salary a permanent staff" (ibid, 1990).

[3] The classifications of informal and formal SMOs are ideal types.

Table 17
National Council Meetings

No	Date	Location
1	June 1989	Montreal, Quebec
2	October 1989	Winnipeg, Manitoba
3	January 1990	Vancouver, British Columbia
4	April 1990	St. John, New Brunswick
5	September 1990	Hamilton, Ontario

The CBWC's formal structure allowed it to perform a number of important functions such as lobbying and/or pursuing equality through institutional and government directed channels. By adopting a structural form resembling those of the institutions targeted (Reger, 2002), the CBWC promoted change through having a formal division of labour and identifying a clear chain of authority that allowed the organization to maintain itself over a longer period of time. In other words, the CBWC engaged in institutionalized politics during this period because institutionalized tactics were more compatible within a formalized structure and with the schedules of professional activists. For example, in July 1985 the federal government funded sixty women from a variety of organizations and interest groups who represented Canada at the third United Nation women's conference in Nairobi, Kenya. Fifteen thousand women represented one hundred and forty countries attended the End of the Decade conference. The event evaluated the status of women globally and analyzed the achievements of ten years of international commitment to the improvement of the status of women. The CBWC played a central role in using the Nairobi conference to talk about the global reality of women's oppression.

Glenda Simms was one of sixty women who made up the Canadian delegation to the nongovernmental forum at the End of the Decade Conferences in Nairobi, Kenya.

Simms argued that the previous conferences in Mexico City and in Copenhagen were dominated by a North American and Eurocentric ideology. The Congress argued that internationally "the challenge was for North American women to recognize their role in the elimination of inequalities at all levels-the unequal relationship between men and women, the inequalities between those who have and those who have not, the inequalities between nations and the unequal economic and political relations that pit nation against nation" (Congress News, v.1, no.1, 1986, p.1). Nationally, the Congress declared:

> we are very close to the end of 1985 and have seen the end of the United Nations Decade for Women. We saw a great assertiveness of women in this decade and changes for women and their families. Yet for us black women, the question remains...what has the decade really done for black women in Canada? We still face racism in all of its varied subtleties; we are still for the most part, the "invisible" ones, and we still have no great voice in the making of decisions which govern most of our lives (Congress News, v.1, no.1, 1986, p.1)

In other words, the experiences of black Canadian women in social movements resulted in a focus on their community activism, survival issues and active engagement with the Canadian government on issues of parenting (Dorothy Wills, chair of the Parenting Committee, offered workshops to members and the public), media, pay equity, affirmative action (Simms was appointed to the Advisory Committee on Affirmative Action to advise the treasury Board of Canada, and the CBWC established an affirmative action committee in 1985 that was chaired by Fleurette Osborne who

organized workshops across the country), women and the economy (attended a symposium sponsored by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women and discussed strategies for achieving economic equality for women), violence against women, racism and racial discrimination.

Coalition Work

The formalization of social movement organizations had implications for coalition work within social movement communities. The CBWC concentrated its efforts on participating in coalitions. Coalitions among formalized SMOs were easier to maintain because the CBWC had unpaid staff who were available to act as representatives to the coalition and routinely coordinated the coalition work. For example, membership was obtained with the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. Simms represented the CBWC at the Visible Minority and Immigrant Women consultations called by the Department of the Secretary of State in Ottawa. Dr. Pat Horsham, CBWC representative, was invited to breakfast with the National NDP in Ottawa and discussed the concerns and issues of women of colour. In 1986, a brief was presented to the Parliamentary Task Force on Child-Care when it traveled across the country. A brief was presented to the Ad Hoc Consultations of Women's organizations and the Department of the Secretary of State that discussed the mandate of the Women's programmes. Fleurette Osborne represented the CBWC at the Federal Advising Council on the Status of Women's Consultations on "Women and the Economy."

In 1987, Dorothy Willis represented the Congress at the consultations on "The Family" sponsored by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. Yolene

Jumelle represented the Congress at the Media Conference in Ottawa. In this case, the CBWC demonstrated that they had volunteers who were able to keep in contact with one another and coordinated their work without the assistance of paid staff. The vice-president participated in a meeting of the national Women's organizations in Winnipeg and discussed the participation of Canada's nongovernmental organizations at the UN Women's conference held in Beijing in September 1995. The Congress was part of the Interim Beijing Steering Committee that selected the Beijing Steering Committee and set up the secretariat that provided support to the coordinating committee. Justina Blake Hill represented the organization at the Canadian Labour Force Development Board meetings, and Adonica Huggins from the Toronto chapter was a member of the Women' Reference Group board, one of the groups that advised the Board about the training and development needs of "Disadvantaged Groups." She also represented the organization at the Youth Conference that was sponsored by the Canadian Advisory Committee on the Status of Women in 1992, and the symposium on Custody and Access 1993, held to discuss the federal position paper on custody and access reform. Health and Welfare held two consultations on Canada Pension Plan reforms: credit splitting and survival benefits. The Congress was a participant in these consultations - along with other national women's organizations in 1993.

Advocacy Campaigns

The organization was active on a variety of issues and consulted with policy makers. In this respect, an important source of national activities focused on advocacy. The Congress (Congress News 1990, p.8) sent letters to the Attorney General of Manitoba concerning the racist and sexist remarks made by a judge in his decision on a

case involving a Jamaican man; and, to the Honourable David Crombe, Minister of Multiculturalism about the lack of participation of black women in the Visible Minority and Immigrant Women Conference. Other examples included letters mailed to the chairperson of the Federal Advisory Council on the Status of Women regarding the exclusion of visible minorities from the Council's Action plan for 1987; and to the editor of the Globe and Mail about a cartoon which negatively portrayed black Canadian people and which reinforced the stereotype of the "primitive" savage cannibal. Lastly, the Congress sent a letter to the Honourable Barbara McDougall objecting to the designation of Immigrant and Visible Minority women as an "issue" in her department's plan.

In February 1988, Yolene Jumelle, Glenda Simms, Edla Belasco and Saundra Anierobi (CBWC executive council) went to Ottawa. The executive was in Ottawa to deal with organizational issues. They consulted with the Liberal and NDP caucuses becoming the first black Canadian organization to meet with government members. The discussion addressed issues about day care, employment, violence against women, health, racism, sexism, immigration and refugee policies. According to Congress News (1988), "all parties commented that this was the only black Canadian organization to meet with them on the Hill."

In October 1988, CBWC president Yolene Jumelle attended a conference in Ottawa organized by the Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies to deal with issues concerning the sentencing of women. More than thirty women analyzed the impact of sentencing on women and the proposed amendments were recommended in the Report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Solicitor General, which studied the issues

earlier in the year. Jumelle raised questions about the pattern for black women. She wanted to know whether they received worse treatment because of their social condition, economic status or because they were still considered to be immigrants, even though they were born in Canada and their ancestors helped to build this country. Since no one responded, it was suggested and agreed by the participants that the Congress host the next meeting that would focus on this issue. The Congress and the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada cooperated and worked on the meeting. Representatives of both organizations, including the presidents, held a preliminary meeting with Bonnie Diamond of the Elizabeth Fry Societies and discussed such a meeting.

Jean Augustine made a number of visits to the regions. She visited Vancouver and was the guest speaker at the Edmonton chapter's annual banquet. She criticized the Meech Lake and Free Trade Agreements. Augustine represented the Congress at the conference in Ottawa hosted by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. Meetings were also scheduled with Kay Stanley, president Status of Women to monitor the department's progress in implementing the equality and human rights international conventions as they related to women, and the recommendations in the "Forward Looking Strategies" which resulted from the discussion at the 1985 Nairobi conference. This conference marked the end of the decade against all forms of discrimination against women. In addition, the Congress met with Sylvia Gold, president of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, a group that advised the government of women's issues. The Congress discussed the issues of racism and sexism with both women.

In 1989, challenges facing the Congress included the organization and preparation of responses to the Meech Lake Accord and Free Trade Agreement. The Congress expressed its opposition to these two matters to the federal and provincial governments in reference to Immigration and Refugee Bills. By 1990, Esmeralda Thornhill stated that the goals for the Congress were: "the permanency of the Congress, sustaining organizational growth, maintaining a public profile, broadening our base, strengthening our ties with other organizations and hammering out our own specific programmes of response to Black Women's needs and to act as an advocate for black women and their families."

At the General Meeting in 1991, the CBWC's recommendations were to send a telegram to the Quebec Premier, Robert Bourassa regarding the shooting of a black man, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney regarding the deposition of the Haitian president Jean Aristide, and for the name calling incident in the House of Commons -Sambo to Howard McCurdy and slut to Sheila Copps. The CBWC wanted to register its dissatisfaction at the treatment of Emery Barnes, a long standing member of the British Columbia legislature who was passed over for a cabinet appointment and was made deputy speaker to an inexperienced MLA.

Justina Blake-Hill attended the consultations around "No means No" and talked with Justice Minister Kim Campbell and pointed out that minority women need clarification on the workings of the justice system. That was, they did not trust judges due to the personal questions they faced on the stand, and they often refused to report. The organization participated in the Constitutional debates, tried to be involved in consultations, but could only reach Joe Clark's round Table which was held in Ottawa

for women's organizations from across Canada. The CBWC also supported the Disabled Women's Network (DAWN), the National Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) and the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women (NOIVMW), Aboriginal Women. The Congress withdrew its support from the panel, so did NAC, NOIVM, DAWN for violence against women because women were not included and represented the organization on the visible Minority Council on labour force development

In February 1992, Congress representatives attended the federal Justice Department's consultations on amendments to the Canadian Human Rights Act. Telegrams were sent to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and leaders of the NDP and Liberal parties that deplored funding cuts for the Court Challenges programmes and requested reinstatement of funding for programmes. Congress representatives participated in the press conference in Ottawa around the same issue. The Congress made a submission in response to the Federal Policy Committee, Justice Department on the issue of shifting some criminal cases to summary convictions. The impact on cases of violence or assault and the implications for bias were the focus of the submission. CBWC president and vice-president met with the federal Minister in charge of the Status of Women to discuss funding issues. Akua Benjami and Lorna Murray made a presentation on behalf of the Congress to the Canadian Bar Association Task Force on gender equality in the legal profession, when the task force met in Toronto.

Strategy and Tactics

Staggenborg (1999) argues that formalization does not affect the strategy of SMOs for two reasons. First, formalized SMOs tend to engage in institutionalized

tactics and typically do not initiate disruptive direct-action tactics. Second, formalized SMOs engage in activities that help to achieve organizational maintenance and expansion as well as influence external targets. The history of the CBWC clearly revealed that formalization accelerated as the external context forced the organization into institutionalized arenas. Prior to 1983, the CBWC was an outsider to established politics, although it confined its activities to the institutional arena. Between 1983-1993, the institutional arena became the primary area for CBWC issues and the formalization of chapters within the social movement community accelerated. The CBWC used tactics such as lobbying because the organization had the skills and organizational resources to do so. The CBWC was able to maintain such activities because of its structural division of labour. For example, the Congress lobbied for legislative changes at the federal level, protested violence against blacks, Aboriginal Peoples and women. The organization participated in national meetings dealing with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, employment equity, status of Women and Economic Empowerment and the establishment of the James Robinson Chair in Black Studies at Dalhousie University.

Along the same lines, the organization tried to solidify ties with black organizations, while collaborating with other groups on issues of common concern. For example, the second project of their 1989-1990 programme stemmed from the ninth Conference workshop on Racism and the Law- a public legal information seminar in collaboration with the Chinese Community entitled: Singled Out By Law for Unequal Treatment. This national Education Project on Racism and the Law was to be carried out in collaboration with the Chinese Canadian National Council targeting such cities

as Montreal, Vancouver. The point was that law in Canada must address the reality of Racism and the Congress needed to address racist discourse in Canada. The historical experiences of the Chinese and black Canadian Communities had many points of comparison that were not yet common knowledge. Both groups "has survived being singled out by written and unwritten Law for unequal treatment" (Congress News, 1990). This information-sharing initiative was long overdue and provided a way to work on an issue of common concern as the CBWC celebrated in 1990 the tenth Anniversaries of the Chinese Canadian Council and the Congress of Black Women of Canada. Conferences were mechanisms that served to provide the organizational structure with continuity of dialogue, sustainability of interests and security of vision. As catalysts the conferences during this second phase institutionalized the "getting connected "phase.

Conferences[4]

Between 1983 and 1993, the CBWC continued to organize conferences. The conference objectives were to provide a forum to discuss issues and address any problems in the organization. As noted above, the CBWC's conference activity was therefore an important part in helping to maintain and develop the organization. This decade was a period of high activity and visibility for the CBWC during which black women were mobilized as the core constituency of the organization. This period produced a vibrant social movement community and five conferences in 1984[5], 1987,

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[4] In between conferences, the CBWC was busy establishing chapters, organizing workshops, participating in coalitions and lobbying the government. In other words, the organization was working to realize its mandate.

[5] The seventh CBWC conference held in Toronto, Ontario in 1984, the CBWC provided resources to newly emerging groups. Conference report was unavailable at the time of writing.

1989, 1991 and 1993. In this account, I argue that the external environment was central to explaining the CBWC's growth and development in local cities.

Table 18
Conferences, General Meeting, Year, and Purpose, 1983-1993

Conference	Year	Purpose
Seventh CBWC	1984	*
Eight CBWC	1987	To build the organization and engage in social action
Ninth CBWC	1989	Organizational growth and collective action
Tenth CBWC	1991	Reassessing organizational goals and Developing effective strategies
Eleventh CBWC	1993	Biennial General Meeting

* Conference reports and documentation was unavailable

Seventh CBWC Conference, 1984 Conference

The Seventh national conference brochure, Black Women in the '80s Facing Reality, reported that on November 16, 1984, the delegates met at the Chelsea Inn in Toronto to discuss "employment, the black family, health issues, employment equity" and to choose a representative to attend an international women's conference. On this occasion, the delegates chose Simms as their representative to the United Nations Women's conference. By participating in the international conference, the delegates were endorsing the organization's objective to "develop relations with other international organizations whose aims and objectives are in keeping with those of the Congress"(CBWC constitution). Simms could present the concerns of black Canadian women to an international community and in doing so she contributed to expanding the

CBWC's organizing at the transnational level.

Consultations

The technique of consultation as a strategy to manage allegations of racism, in which each member of a group is compelled to speak in turn about her thoughts, feelings and experiences, was used effectively when the CBWC attended a three-day consultation on Policing in Multicultural and Multiracial Urban Communities on October 14-16, 1984 in Vancouver, British Columbia. The purpose of the consultation was to discuss "new directions for the police forces in Canada, the intercultural training project for police tested in Vancouver and Ottawa, recruiting black people into the police forces and to develop police and community relations by extending the race relations programs now underway in many cities" (Mills interview, tape recording, September 14, 03, A12, 15, 10c). Approximately 60 police representatives, 80 community representatives and 40 consultants attended the conference.

According to Atwel, a CBWC member and government employee who lives in British Columbia and who attended the consultation:

> We did a lot of stuff on discrimination and the justice system. I sat on the Attorney General's Committee for Diversity and Policing. That was one of the issues that we were having here. We did training with the police, human resources, Ministry of Family and Children and human rights. (Mills interview, tape recording, September 14, 03, A12, 26, 10c)

Atwel's self-disclosure experience fit well with the idea expressed by the police representatives that all conflicts between them and the black Canadian community resulted from personal issues and uncomfortable feelings about themselves or each

other. For example, Dr. Hill, Ontario's Ombudsman, "noted that the minority community may have a deep-seated distrust of police due to a history of racism in the majority society and the perception of police as authority figures" (Hill, 1984). Atwel hoped that a concerted effort to discuss racism in a symposium led by the police would be helpful. However, as she found out, the forum often became overtly focused on personal feelings and did not result in any concrete social change.

Several CBWC members, however, expressed frustration with the personal disclosure model. In particular, Esmeralda Thornhill argued that members "had participated in a national consultation dealing with the Constitutional Charter that was irrelevant in a discussion that did not define racism or mention black Canadian women" (Thornhill, 1986). The CBWC criticized Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms legislation for its lack of specific protection for the rights of black women. The following quotation from Glenda Simms is typical of the CBWC's attitude:

> Equality, fairness for all are principles that are held in high regard by Canadians except that some groups, including Blacks, seem to be ignored or are minimally included in the drive to make these principles a reality ... The problem is, though, that neither Blacks nor people of color, or issues of race or discrimination are defined in the Charter. (ibid., p. 2)

CBWC president Glenda Simms described a similar conflict resolution tactic. She attended consultations concerning affirmative action programs, and reported that those programs were being implemented to address discrimination in employment.

The data indicate that the personal disclosure model presented discrimination as an individual problem. By mining personal experiences, the model hoped to either

discover the root causes of racism, or smooth racism over by teaching people how to talk to each other (Srivastava, 2002). Self-knowledge was an explicit goal, as was greater knowledge of people's skills. However, some evidence indicates that this approach reproduced certain kinds of knowledge of racism as prejudice and therefore overlooked systemic problems. Simms did not understand black women's employment problems in terms of employer-employee or other interpersonal conflicts. She recognized the limited value of formal equality within a larger structure of economic, gender and racial inequality and acknowledged that equal opportunity (in the sense that black women could achieve success according to their intelligence and initiative) did not adequately address the multiple sources of black women's inequality. Thus, Simms was not searching for a form of conflict resolution, but a policy that would use affirmative action to address racism as a systemic problem and then strengthen organizational support for anti-discriminatory practices.

Knowledge and Liberal Rationality

Although personal disclosure was supported as desirable and politically vital to CBWC interests, CBWC member discussions of oppression indicated that personal disclosures and the communities they built were gendered and racialized. It is important to recognize that women's organizations inaccurately universalized the role of experience in white women's lives and in feminist communities. The content in my interviews and CBWC documents highlight the fact that, despite the dominant liberal discourse of an open space, there was no space for equal sharing. Instead, while CBWC members were asked to share their experiences concerning racism, the federal government reacted by expressing silence and/or dismissal. The data show that the

personal is political concept had specific significance as a vehicle for expressing liberal rationality. Simms (1986) discussed how human rights laws and employment equity programs failed to provide space to help black people:

> Human rights laws have been put in place both at the federal and provincial level to protect the right to fairness and equality in employment. Although these laws have helped many individuals, the majority of members of the group have not really benefited. Now there are employment equity programs that are being implemented so that discrimination—the systemic kind—can be driven out of the practices used by employers to keep blacks and people of colour oppressed. (ibid., p.2)

These employment practices were buttressed by assumptions about links among equality, knowledge, rationality and racism. Common principles of liberalism include the rational individual and the supposition that all social arrangements are ameliorated by rational employment equity programs. Simms's statement underscores the association between knowledge and social progress. According to liberal principles, if truth is inherently opposed to power, then its uncovering can lead us toward liberation. Another guiding principle of liberal modernity is the assumption that morality flows naturally from rational thought. As David Goldberg (1993) argues, "The inevitable analytical outcome [is] that racism … [is] immoral because, and only when, it [is] considered irrational" (quoted in Flynn, 2003, p. 117). This also raises questions about the belief that racism can be eradicated through education. In other words, if employment equity policies are implemented in the workplace, the idea is that

employers will be less racist, since in order to act in a more rational manner, there is a need for knowledge and information. Thus, in assessing employment equity programs and employment discrimination, the federal Special Committee on the Participation of Visible Minorities in Canadian Society asserted that discrimination in employment can only be eliminated through government intervention (see Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Special Committee on the Participation of Visible Minorities in Canadian Society, House of Commons, March 1984). This policy was assessed in terms of its effect on the reasoning ability of employers, based on the assumption that holding to any particular attitude without good reason is irrational. The criterion for judging the value of inter-rational contact should be whether it helps participants to think more rationally about racism and employment.

The CBWC believed that contrary to liberal ideology, mandatory enforceable employment equity was insufficient for addressing the institutional racism and sexism faced by immigrant women in workplaces. Instead, the organization addressed racism, capitalism and sexism when analyzing black and immigrant women's experiences. The CBWC also argued that equal opportunity initiatives appeared to have had little impact in terms of real change in black women's employment patterns, especially in the context of labour market restructuring. The central issues of upward mobility, vertical segregation, and pay equity were generally untouched by liberal talk of equal opportunities.

As a result of the broad appeal of briefs and meetings, the disclosure of personal experiences became formalized as a form of political education in many organizational settings. In particular, discussions of gender oppression were dominated

by a range of techniques for producing knowledge through experience. The *personal is political* concept was common in UN Women's conference discussions, presentations and analyses of personal experiences of sexism—all of which were structured and formal. Early on in the conference process, various methods (e.g., small/large group discussions, go-arounds, and "everyone speaks one by one") were used to express and record personal experiences of sexism.

Simms (1988) also pointed out that black women's concerns were marginalized in the overall scope of the women's movement and that black women still faced "racism in all of its varied subtleties." She expressed frustration with the refusal of white feminists to acknowledge the impacts of racism and class privilege on their lives, especially the lives of black women in Canada. Simms recognized that black women's experiences in Canadian society had been shaped by a history of slavery and racism that produced a racialized, invisible and powerless group. For Simms, the feeling of invisibility, which came with being racialized against the backdrop of a white society, was a major reason behind her identification with being black and female. Her UN conference experience underscored the predominance of personal disclosure as a form of discussion and the belief that it offered a solution for women's individual and collective problems. Simms knew that despite the effort made at the UN conference to be inclusive of the problems that women face in developing countries, many of those problems were not relevant to the daily experiences of black Canadian women:

> the challenge is for North American women to recognize their role in the elimination of inequalities at all levels. [They must analyze] the unequal relationship between men and women, the inequalities between those

who have and those who have not, the inequalities between nations and the unequal economic and political relations that pit nation against nation. (ibid., p.2)

Simms believed that the challenge for North American women was to collaborate with other women to eliminate systemic barriers at all levels, exposing daily inequalities between men and women locally and globally. She also believed that an important element in building coalitions of women and men was establishing a critical understanding of systems of domination. She was concerned about exposing the daily inequality between men and women locally and globally. Operating from a black Canadian feminist framework, Simms rejected the notion of men as the enemy. Instead she identified some men and women's roles in upholding systems of domination and exploitation, but she recognized the potential for men and women to recognize their interests in dismantling these systems - this non-essentialist view of men enabled her to acknowledge that men could be allies in fighting against oppression.

Simms's goal was to forge alliances based on the sharing of information and experiences—part of the personal is political concept among feminist groups. She emphasized the diversity of personal experiences and lived realities as a source of knowledge (Dei & Calliste 2000), and advocated the use of experience and local knowledge from a black Canadian woman's perspective as a way to challenge universalism and racism in the women's movement. Simms perceived that the white women's movement did not recognize their role in the elimination of inequalities at all level and so this was yet another way of exonerating themselves from any implication in racism and imperialism.

The invisibility of black women in Canadian society and the racism in all of its varieties was the impetus for Simms to find her public voice and a space for black women. Racism in employment, hiring and promotions threatened a black woman's survival and well being in Canadian society. In 1986, Simms wrote in the Congress News that her "frequent trips to Ottawa to attend meetings with the Advisory Committee on Affirmative Action for Women acquainted her with the obstacles that black women experienced in employment in the cities across Canada." As the CBWC president, she tried to help black women to bring about social justice. Simms criticized how the government's programs designed to eliminate and compensate for the historical disadvantages resulting from race, class and gender oppression had omitted black women. She organized them to access state resources primarily in the form of government funding for the CBWC's programs and services.

The Congress News (1986, p.2) reported that the affirmative action programs were being implemented so that "discrimination, the systemic kind, could be driven out of the practices that were used by employers to keep blacks and people of color oppressed." Glenda Simms wrote:

> affirmative action goes beyond government legislation for private sector action. For black women, affirmative action must be translated on our personal levels. It must be a process of dealing with the historical hurts and pains, historical barriers of class, caste, and historical negative relationships that have made us suspicious of each other, of ourselves and of the actions. We need to take in order to validate our experiences. With this mindset, we the members of the Congress can seek to find

ways to deal with the systemic practices that have made black women the real slaves of slaves. (ibid., p.2)

In 1986, Simms recognized the limited value of formal equality within a structure of economic, sexual and racial inequality. She acknowledged that equal opportunity, in the sense that black women can achieve according to their intelligence and initiative does not adequately address the multiple sources of black women's inequality. Simms was advocating for affirmative action programs such as employment equity and pay equity.

In 1986, the chapters endorsed the CBWC's objective "to provide a network of solidarity for black women and to be a united voice in the extension of human rights and liberties for black women in Canada" (CBWC Constitution). Black women in the Scarborough chapter were recruiting university and college students. They gave them an opportunity to meet with other students and to make connections with them. The social interaction also helped them to make ties with the members of the black Canadian communities, thus forming a network for future help, support and solidarity. The Scarborough chapter recognized that the universities and colleges maintained a white Eurocentric culture where some black students experienced a sense of marginalization and exclusion. To address their feelings of isolation, black women in the Scarborough chapter invited the students to join their chapter and they provided support for their concerns. More importantly, black women were aware that some students perceived the universities and colleges to be a racist, sexist and oppressive environment and that the organization represented a vehicle to address their concerns.

In conclusion, the participation of the delegates in the 1984 Conference and Simms in the Nairobi Conference gave their local organizing special significance. As

the years progressed, the CBWC's members became increasingly visible in representing their concerns about racism in employment and the women's movement in Canada at the national level. The CBWC had come into its own national community and with this greater sense of their own identity, black Canadian women were redefining the notion of solidarity among women and gender as a basis for organizing for the women's movement.

As stated above, educational practices are based on liberal assumptions about the links of racism, knowledge and the rational individual as well as the naive supposition that all social arrangements can be influenced by rational reform. Such an approach to gaining knowledge of the other confirms static associations between racial identity and lived experiences. However, the data indicate that this approach was guided by a mistaken belief in the stability of representations, and in the obviousness of experience as the ground of truth—in other words, the wrong assumption that CBWC members who spoke to government officials or who worked in coalitions with other groups represented stable identities, and that their stories contained the most truthful knowledge. CBWC members would only serve as a ground for truth during pedagogical discussions of oppression; those with the most authentic experiences could use them as knowledge banks, from which withdrawals could be made on demand.

Eighth CBWC Conference, 1987

Building on the momentum of CBWC's pressing commitment to social justice, members were quick to challenge the white hegemony and racism in the women's movement at the 1987 National Conference held in Vancouver during from May 15th to 17th. The theme of the eighth conference was "On the Move Together." Glenda

Simms wrote, in her opening address as the outgoing president, "under this vision of black women as a growing force moving forward in unity. The two hundred delegates will examine the issues of employment, health, racism, sexism and feminism from the unique vantage point of the black woman, her family and the community." The conference theme of "On the Move Together" implied that conference participants were fighting a number of causes on various fronts and the conference format was therefore important in keeping alive issues that affected black women The conference was essentially concerned with the systemic barriers facing black women and how racism, sexism and classism intersected with poverty, poor health, unemployment, family violence and the overall breakdown of traditional support systems in black families and communities. According to Simms (1987 Report, p.37):

> we see the implications of the negative social forces and systemic barriers that generations of our women had to deal with and the intersection of these. It is this universal experience of oppression, marginalization and injustice that informs [our lives], and that we must take nothing for granted. We will, in the name of black women, challenge many issues. [One] issue is racism within the women's movement. This is an issue that we will tackle through the work of the Congress.

This statement reiterates the major goal of the CBWC – the importance of black women working collectively to overcome structural inequalities. To address what they saw as structural problems, the organization advocated policies that: promoted black women's economic autonomy; eliminated racism in the women's movement, sexual violence

against women; guaranteed employment rights; ensured reproductive freedom; and, included black women in the decision making process.

The delegates challenged the justifications conveniently invoked by white feminist excuse for failing to involve black women in the woman's movement such as black women were too few in number, absent, apolitical or uninterested in organizing. The existence of the CBWC and the 1987 conference highlighted the racism and marginalization embedded in the praxis of some white women. While it is important to note that some white women supported black women's right to organize, the motivation for this support is not entirely clear. For some white feminists, the existence of autonomous organizations that are putting forward a separate black Canadian woman's and black feminist agenda could be used to relieve themselves of rethinking their political analyses (Dua, 2002; Nathani Wane, 2002; Agnew, 1999). The CBWC and its chapters could them become a resource to be called on when a black woman was needed to give some necessary diversity to a conference platform or to provide expertise on black women's particular needs. This approach created a parasitical relationship between white women and black women and left white feminism fundamentally unchanged.

International Foci: Apartheid

CBWC publicly lent their voices to the mounting international opposition against the racist regime in South Africa. At the conference, the delegates adopted the resolution to (1987 Report, p.47):

> send a telegram to the Prime Minister Brian Mulroney to demand the immediate and mandatory sanctions against the oppressive South

African Regime, and the inhuman incarceration of black children in South Africa. The CBWC demanded that the Canadian government ask for the immediate release of these children.

The CBWC's telegram was prompted by the insidious apartheid system in South Africa that culminated in the pernicious imprisonment of black adult and child activists. Apartheid was a system based on the exploitation of cheap labor. The South African government used the ideology of racism as a justification for their exploitation and inhumane treatment of the student activists. In this case, the racist South African State played an important role in sustaining a racial order by limiting the rights of black South Africans. To the CBWC, black Canadian women were part of an international movement of people who fought racism and they were engaged in international activism that the organization linked with its local action. Through their telegrams, the CBWC's members were trying to pressure the Canadian government to place sanctions against the South African government and in doing so they helped to make the case of the South African children known in Canada. Therefore, the CBWC used its national activity to campaign for the rights of child and adult activists in South Africa (1987 Report). The above telegram helped construct the CBWC discourse as a political project shaped by power relations that spotlighted the illusion of organization-government equality within Canadian society. Admittedly, the telegram was not an effective strategy of social change but certainly clarified extant societal power relations. According to Simms (1987), CBWC members "questioned, challenged and defied the systemic barriers of racism, sexism, and classism, all of which have resulted in making black women an international underclass" (ibid., p. 37). In short, Simms viewed the

CBWC as challenging basic power relations in Canadian society by revealing the deeper roots of discriminatory practices:

> In the name of the organization, we will continue to confront an educational system that under-educates and miseducates our sons and daughters, and we will vigilantly monitor all other agencies that perpetuate and reinforce institutional racism and sexism. These are some of the issues that we tackle through the work of the Congress (ibid, 37).

Education

Education issues continued as one of the most important concerns in the black Canadian communities. By 1987, most black children in Saskatchewan attended schools with a white-normed and Eurocentric curriculum. Black students believed that they should be knowledgeable about the events in black Canadian and African history and culture. The Regina chapters of the CBWC took steps to make institutions more responsive to their concerns through the establishment of a tutoring enrichment cultural program that encouraged youth to become familiar with black Canadian issues and culture. This tutoring program revealed that there were very few black teachers, and none directly involved with the promotion of education for black people in the system. They concluded that the educational system was an institution that perpetuated inequalities.

In light of this tension, the CBWC's participation in the tutoring program was often the only available option for increasing their visibility. This engagement was an essential part of changing ideological constructions of black women in specific localities. For black women in the CBWC chapters located throughout Canada, where

black people were usually assumed to be immigrants, it was a matter of stating that they not only enjoyed a long history in Canada but have contributed to the politics of reforming education. For the black women in the urban centers, where black women were highly visible in politics and the community, the CBWC created a powerful counter-image of black women that supported the Black Canadian feminist organizing in their local communities.

Interrogating Identity: Blackness and Gender

Many young black women, disillusioned with the white feminist movement, led many of them to reject the term feminism given its grounding in whiteness alone. The tension led to increasing conflict between black women who felt that the CBWC's activism should be located within black struggles only and those who also saw it as part of the black feminist movement in Canada. Notwithstanding these obstacles, CBWC engaged in a programme of recruitment. In fact, all of the interviewees indicated that they tried to recruit new members.

The CBWC had been clear that its political agenda and black feminist organizing was one which was able to work in coalition with women in a broad based alliance against all forms of oppression (CBWC Constitution). Their stance should not be misconstrued as speaking only to the experiences of black Canadian women. As detailed in chapter three, the CBWC and its local chapters had a black feminist agenda. The failure of white feminism to include black women's autonomous achievements enabled the Congress to create a broader based women's movement which could have sustained its appeal to a diverse range of women.

Recent contributions to feminist thought have acknowledged that the challenges

to the women's movement were not due to black women or black feminists. On the contrary, it was the white women's racism and inability to listen non-defensively to the black feminists that created some stresses in mixed women's organizations (Dua, 1999; Agnew, 1996). More significantly, there were a number of other fault lines. Equally, lesbian women, disabled women and other groups accused the women's movement of failing to represent them. As Hamilton (2004) notes, the women's movement is heterogeneous and should include the excluded or marginalized voices of dissent. Failing to do otherwise was collusion in the oppression of women who were not able to participate in their particular safe space.

Between 1987 and 1989, the CBWC's members were attempting to expand the organization's reach. This was in part a result of the local and provincial differences that were becoming increasingly evident as black women from outside Toronto, Montreal, Halifax, Windsor and Edmonton began to assert their unique experiences. All of the interviewees agreed that the chapters were encouraged to organize and talk about the issues affecting black women and their families within their regions. Glenda Simms (1987, p.38) stated "my sisters, let us never forget that all black women of Canada are affected by the racism that oppresses us, the sexism that discriminates against us, and the poverty which entraps us as a people."

Many black women throughout Canada shared a sense of pride towards the black women in the Congress. They supported the assumption that all black women needed to become politically conscious and therefore they were able to define black women's struggles from their locations. Black women organizing in Canada were perceived with admiration and approval. However, the black feminist model claims that such shifts are

never linear and coherent. At times, Simms encouraged black women to call into question the notion of the universal black experience. In her Opening Address at the Eighth Biennial Conference, Simm wrote "and what of our internal contradictions? How have we tackled these as an organization." She goes on:

> We have challenged regionalism, insularity, elitism and shadism. We have built an organization that in 1987 includes descendants of the earliest black settlers of Nova Scotia the brave mothers who helped to build the villages and townships of Ontario and Quebec the brave women who helped to establish settlements such as the Amber Valley in Alberta and Maidstone in Saskatchewan and the black women who have more recently migrated to Canada from all regions of the world to work in a variety of profession, to pursue training, to scrub floors and to give unconditional love to one another generation of white babies. (ibid, 37)

The CBWC attempts to resist essentialist notions of what it meant to be a black woman and that would involve calling into question the notion of the black female experience. Between 1987 and 1989, the CBWC's members were involved in a genuine attempt to invoke a more open and plural notion of black women's identity. Aetn (Mills interview, tape recording, October 7, 2003, A18) stated:

> We joined [the Congress] because we felt that in Nova Scotia racism was and still is very rampant. Black women were not getting jobs and there was not a voice for black women. Human rights issues were not being addressed. We decided to form a chapter to deal with the issues affecting us.

Above all, Simms was influenced by the suffering that this conceptualization could cause to all black women who were caught outside of its boundaries and a sense that ultimately, no black woman could fulfill the rigid and yet contradictory requirements of authenticity or black identity. Many of the interviewees had struggled to distance themselves from a narrow notion of black women's unity based on the suppression of difference between black women. Simms realized that the emphasis on race was at times exclusionary, and the recognition of differences of race, gender and class is problematic in the way that these terms were interpreted and analyzed by feminist scholars. For Spelman, the recognition of differences among women has not shifted the focus away from gender oppression. Spelman (quoted in Agnew 1996, p.224) notes critically:

> Although it acknowledges that some women are black and some are white, some are rich and some are poor, if we insist that they are all the same, as women, that difference among women resides in some non-woman part of them, then these differences will never have to make a difference for feminism. For it is the women part of any woman that counts, and if differences among women's can't lodge there then differences among women finally don't really matter.

Black women, seeking to allow difference, took a number of different paths that this section explores under the following themes: recruitment, common problems and homophobia. All of the interviewees recruited members by hosting open houses, inviting their friends, handing out pamphlets, putting ads in the newspapers and through face-to-face encounters.

The techniques and discourses associated with the *personal is political* concept also shaped CBWC member discussions about identity and sexuality. From my interviews I came to learn that women who were confronted with criticism from members were the most likely to find support within the membership. But CBWC members who initiated organizational change described the confrontations they experienced as productive and helping to facilitate the change process.

The CBWC enjoyed strong approval from its membership, but it did sometimes struggle with the notion of a universal black experience. As part of her attempt to chart a more integrative and inclusionary path for the CBWC, Simms (1987) argued:

> that our organization reflects diversity. It is this diversity that has brought us to this stage where we can say with pride and a sense of dignity that the Congress of Black Women of Canada is the most significant national black organization in this country today. As such our mandate is broad and almost unlimited. As such, we cannot confine ourselves to the issues that are defined by others. We must chart our own path while we support and network with all those who are committed to fighting the injustices of our society (ibid., p. 38).

Simms was sensitive to the suffering that an essentialist approach could cause among black women whose situations were unique, She acknowledged that no black woman could fulfill the rigid and yet contradictory requirements of a universal description of black women. Simms realized that differences in terms of race, gender and class had long histories of problems in the ways they were interpreted and analyzed by feminist

scholars (Agnew, 1996, p. 224). The sharing of experiences was also subverted by the direct support given by the CBWC to competing stories, a phenomenon mentioned in several interviews. Likewise, interviewees explained how they purposefully struggled to distance themselves from narrow notions of black women's unity. An analysis of the data suggests that their comments are organized according to three themes:

Blackness

All of the interviewees participated in discussions regarding how an understanding of blackness was the basis for a unifying ideology. According to CBWC member Asevt, "In Winnipeg, any woman who considered herself to be a black woman could join the Thomson chapter ... there was a unifying ideology that valorizes blackness as the pinnacle of consciousness" (Mills interview, tape recording, September 28, 2003, A17, 07, 14b). According to Atwel, "In the British Columbia chapter we had a lot of women who emigrated from the Caribbean and some African women" (Mills interview, tape recording, September 14, 2003, A12, 08,14b). When arguing for a new narrative that valorized other ethnic experiences, Atwel mentioned that she was a member of the Afro-Caribbean Association of Manitoba, as well as the St. Vincent and Grenadine Association. Black women from Jamaica, Trinidad, Tobago, St. Kitts, Barbados, Bermuda, Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and South Africa made similar comments. In short, black women who had immigrated from the Caribbean and Africa refuted arguments about blackness as a basis for a unifying identity.

The problem inherent with this discussion is the creation of an alternative narrative of inclusion and exclusion. Women who opposed a Canadian-centered blackness might devalue the experiences of women born in Canada. Similarly, the

legitimacy of Caribbean and African CBWC members was based on their positions within their respective ethnic and cultural organizations. While it was important to establish histories that contrasted with those based on exclusionary practices, it was also important to avoid becoming nostalgic about those experiences.

CBWC examinations of issues affecting black women and their families implied commonalties among their problems, but also included analyses of "a valorization of difference," defined by Agnew (1996) as a recognition of the differences that exist among women. This notion refuted descriptions of black women as an undifferentiated mass. All of my interviewees agreed that black women do not represent a homogenous entity—as CBWC member Afoute succinctly stated, "We met with different groups of black women" (Mills interview, tape recording, September 24, 2003, A14, 14, 9c). According to member Atwensi, the CBWC made multiple attempts to use themes other than "sameness" to serve as a basis for unity:

> We were able to reach out and mobilize women from different sectors. We had at the conferences a broad program of discussion. We worked on language, immigration, health, education and employment issues. We had panels dealing with historical issues. Because we mobilized different people, we were able to deal with many different issues affecting different black women. (Mills interview, tape recording, November 10, 2003, A12, 01, 9c.)

CBWC members eventually accepted the idea that past failures to deal with differences, especially cultural differences, were at the root of conflicts among black Canadian, Caribbean and African women. Atwel told me:

> Regardless of where we come from, we have brought this colonial divide-and-conquer attitude to this country. I think that this has been part of our downfall to a small extent. We have not been able to rise above "I came from the Caribbean and you came from Africa" (Mills interview, tape recording, September 14, 2003, A12, 18, 9c).

A related theme involved the need to investigate and interrogate all issues that affect black women and their families. The examination of their issues implies a focus on the commonality of problems, but I argue instead that it also includes an interrogation of different issues or "a valorization of difference" (Agnew 1996, Dei 1996). This recognition of differences led to the creation of hyphenated identities ("black-Canadian," "black-lesbian," "Caribbean-Canadian" "African-Canadian," etc.) and invoked potential fragmentation based on group affiliation. Some scholars have attributed the fragmentation of black struggles to divisive tactics associated with government funding (Agnew, 1996; Hamilton, 2004). My data suggest internal contradictions between emotive cultural ties and a narrative of unity that requires the suppression of differences. The resulting tensions played a role in differentiating black women's organizations in terms of race, class, gender, sexuality, regional, national and religious affiliations. This tension has contributed to the establishment of black women's organizations .

This analysis points to an internal contradiction between emotive cultural ties and a narrative of unity that requires the suppression of difference. The next section will examine the ways in which unity in diversity (Dei, 2004; Calliste, 1996) has been forged by the CBWC. Here I will point to the potential for the celebration of diversity

to undermine the notion of a shared black womanhood based on common experiences of race and gender oppression which has been a powerful mobilizing force for black women's community struggles.

Identity, Diversity and Sexuality

This section further examines how the CBWC strove to create a sense of unity in diversity (Calliste, 1996). The CBWC has always resisted efforts to limit definitions when analyzing differences. The concept of diversity has emerged out of the black feminist discourse which has consistently acknowledged African and Caribbean realities. Some writers argue that black Canadian feminism offers what the black experience has been speaking about since enslavement - the fracturing of universalist narratives of stability and identity and the questioning of the dominant epistemological order. I argue that without suggesting that black Canadian feminists were the first intellectuals to unsettle, question and subvert modern certainties, Calliste's (ibid) integrative black feminist perspective unpacks identities that are assumed to be fixed and reveals their historically and socially constructed nature. In this sense, the interviewees also employed black Canadian feminist tools to interrogate the category of black lesbians in the CBWC. A.J. described a traumatic experience at a conference where a lesbian woman came out when she ran for the national president's position:

> The Winnipeg conference was suppose to be a conference about health, except that one of the women nominated for president disclosed that she was a lesbian and that caused conflict. When people went to vote, they voted for the least likely candidate. I became the vice-president and the basis for that shifting vote because the groups met the night before and

> decided who they were going to support as president. The woman had skills she was a long time member in the organization. Simply because she disclosed that she was a lesbian, many women decided not to vote for her (Mills interview, tape recording, November 14, 2003. A09, 25, 13c).

Black lesbian women participated in the CBWC's activities despite the opposition from many heterosexual women. The interviewee described the experience of coming out as an experience within the organization that frequently led to the alienation from mixed sexual groups.

The discussion of sexual behaviour was apparent in the treatment of lesbian women - particularly in this second decade of organizing In doing so, they utilized a stereotypical image of white feminism in which the middle class women mulling over their sexuality became a foil to black women's pragmatism, heterosexuality and community. Lamentably, lesbianism was inextricably intertwined with white feminism, which in turn became a reviled other. Thus, while homophobia is in part a response to external pressures, it has been a strong bonding mechanism, which, in turn created a rigid line between us and them and built a fragile and exclusionary unity among straight black women at the cost of marginalizing lesbian women's concerns and contributions (Sudbury, 1998).

Black lesbians participated in CBWC activities despite overtly expressed opposition from a significant number of heterosexual women. A. J. described the experience of the presidential candidate's coming out as creating a sense of alienation between the two groups. Hostility towards lesbian women was positioned within an

authenticity narrative that places heterosexuality at the center of black womanhood. More importantly, A. J.'s experience showed that issues of heterosexism and sexuality were discussed within the organization. By maintaining the myth that women's organizations were heterosexual spaces, some black women purposefully distanced themselves from the issue of sexuality. Some members rejected homosexuality due to their religious convictions, despite the fact that doing so contradicted their expressed desires to respect and support all black women. CBWC member A. J. told me during one interview, "When I was president, my goals were to open an office in Ottawa, prepare for the next conference and deal with the issue of homophobia in the organization. At a pre-conference meeting, I planned a whole section on sexual orientation and homophobia. It is still an issue that has to be addressed" (Mills interview, tape recording, November 14, 2003, 09, 26, 13c).

In an effort to accept lesbian women in the organization, CBWC members organized a workshop at the ninth national conference in 1989 to discuss the issue of homophobia. During the session, some CBWC members identified themselves as lesbians and expressed a willingness to openly discuss their sexual orientation. Their stance is an example of the political gains that were being made at that time by lesbians who resisted overt expressions of hostility aimed toward them and who wanted to establish a sense of mixed hetero/homosexual involvement in black women's organizations. My interviewees mentioned organizational efforts to take a proactive stance against homophobia and to acknowledge the specific experiences of black lesbian women.

Advocacy Work

In 1988, the CBWC's advocacy continued throughout this year and the organization engaged extensively with the federal government and was trying to create a voice at the national level. June Veecock (1988) reported that "in the free trade workshop that the delegates made some recommendations. They wanted the government to get a demographic profile of black workers in specific areas in relation to how free trade will impact on those workers." The women requested that the "government look at the implications for free trade and its implication for wages and to stimulate the national press regarding our organization and our position on free trade."

The women wanted the CBWC to lobby for institutional changes at all levels. As noted in the earlier section on External Factors under Simms's presidential stewardship CBWC continued to identify and systematically describe the employment barriers faced by black women in Canada and to assess the impact of these barriers on their pursuit of economic autonomy. Simms's argument provided a more nuanced analysis of the concerns expressed by black Canadian feminists and feminist scholars about the affects of economic restructuring on Canadian women.

The delegates at the Eighth Biennial Conference argued that black women see mandatory enforceable employment equity as a means towards redressing the institutional racism and sexism and immigrant women face in employment and called on the Ontario provincial government to legislate and implement employment equity. The organization wanted to highlight the ways in which black women's and immigrant women's pay and conditions that accompany employment in the sectors where these women work were structured primarily by racism, sexism and classism. In doing so,

they maintained an integrative analysis of black women's oppression in employment.

In addition, CBWC members were actively involved in campaigns in their local communities. The campaigns focused on abortion issues, affirmative action and employment equity. In the words of Atwel (Mills interview, tape recording, September 14, 2003, A12):

> we tried to keep members by exposing them to different types of political discussions concerning human rights and employment equity when it came into effect in the 1980s. Our focus was first on education and we were educating women in terms of employment and immigration concerns; and how to deal with the police, lawyers, and women's health issues.

Black women who were involved with the prior political issues did the bulk of the organizing for these workshops and public forums.

The Congress News (1987) reported that the "chapters participated in the government's consultation process." Women in the Saskatchewan chapter attended the federal government's committee on Employment Equity for visible minorities and the women's committee for the Canadian Labour Development task force, which included members from women's organizations in Saskatchewan. The goal was to pressure the task force to establish a provincial board to advise the National Labour Board on issues related to the training of women in the province. June James, Manitoba chapter, served as the affirmative action task force chairperson sponsored by the Manitoba Association of Humans Rights and Liberties and the Department of Urban Justice at the University of Winnipeg.

In conclusion, the significance of the eighth conference lay in the CBWC's initial ease of framing race, class and gender issues. The strength of these issues had at least two important consequences for the CBWC. First, the ability to frame struggles with the coordination of local chapters facilitated the maintenance of the organization. Issues focused on employment, health, racism, sexism and feminism. Topics focused on feminism as it applied to the black women, the consequences of the US- Canada Free Trade Agreement on black women in Canada. Second, a large part of the CBWC's constituency emerged from political organizations that pushed the organization into the institutionalized environment and helped to explain its ease in becoming a national social movement organization.

By May 1987, Congress News (1987) reported that "six new chapters were established in Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal." The members were forming a coalition of chapters and associate organizations (Constitution). Black women used their chapters to fundraise and offer a variety of programs and services such as summer camp, the big sister program, annual brunches, Mother's Day lunches, dances, bazaars and other ventures. The chapters were involved in workshops and seminars on health issues such as sickle cell anaemia, hypertension, AIDS, affirmative action, employment equity, education and youth among other issues.

The 1987 Conference did mark a significant advance over the other conferences in terms of the women's experiences, level of awareness of the complexity of the obstacles to black Canadian women's advancement and the willingness to tackle issues that were not addressed in earlier conferences. The CBWC's issues included apartheid, free trade, employment equity and affirmative action. In their activities, the women

revealed the challenges that they faced in Canadian society at the local, national and transnational level that motivated them to get involved in their community's activities.

The section above examined the three themes of a) blackness, b) Identity, Diversity and Sexuality; and, c) Advocacy Work to highlight how the CBWC dealt with rigid notions that impact on black womanhood. This analysis indicates that there has been a general shift away from limiting narratives of authenticity and purity towards a more nuanced understanding of race and gender identities. Black women have learned from their previous experiences and they have actively attempted to create more flexible notions of black womanhood. They have recognized that identities can and do change over time and have nurtured complex and layered notions of self within the context of one-dimensional images of black women. However, one should avoid creating her own master narrative of linear progress from simplistic to more complex identifications. Rather, one can point to the coexistence of often contradictory discourses of identity, at times deterministic, at times more nuanced, and always shaped by the contingencies of the sociopolitical context and the need to create strategies for change.

Ninth CBWC Conference, 1989

The ninth Conference was held from 5th to the 7th of May 1989 at the Halifax Sheraton, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Dr. Lynette Mensah, conference co-chairperson, wrote that the conference program was organized around the theme "*Our Possibilities are Endless*." The purpose of the plenary address and the panels was to identify trends and provide a framework within which the current issues, problems, and realities that can be addressed from a broad overview. The Keynote address delivered by Carol Ann Wright

on the conference theme was followed by a series of panel presentations and lunch speakers which included Kike Roach and Amenitou Ronote. What was available from a limited number of CBWC documents was the following list of workshops and the key principals: Blacks and the Justice System by Esmeralda Thornhill with facilitator Lucille Oko; Blacks and Aging Canadians by Dr. Noga Gayle with facilitator Mary Suzee-Weche; Young Black Women: The Challenge by Amenitou Knate with facilitator Michelle Sims. Racism as a Health Hazard by Dr. Glenda Simms and Dr. Yoland Barry with facilitator Wanda Thomas-Bernard; Economic Empowerment by Dolly Baron and Eunadie Johnson with facilitator Dell Stevens. The moderator was Juanita Westmoreland-Traoré. Dolly Williams, conference co-chairperson, noted that "the workshops were practical in nature and were designed to provide the individuals with an opportunity to share their perspectives and experiences in an information session." They were also designed to provide the participants with an opportunity to consider their recommendations and discuss the future direction of the Congress.

Between 1989 and 1999, the black women participated in black Canadian feminist organizing. While the CBWC began to forge a more inclusive conceptualization of black womanhood, black itself was a forceful unifying term that projected an uncompromising demand for rights and an end to discrimination and oppression. Yet during this decade, the term was linked to other racialized groups in Canada and their experiences with racism. The CBWC was at the forefront of the critique that argued that the term oppression and exploitation did not only center on the experiences of black Canadians, but is also linked to the history of racial oppression in Canada. Esmeralda Thornhill wrote in Congress News (1990) that:

the Congress has valiantly maintained a solid public profile in certain selected areas. On your behalf, we have made known our position vis-a-vis Canada's foreign policy. We have protested violence against blacks and First Nations Peoples and Women, and we have participated in a national meeting dealing with the constitutional charter, employment equity, status of women and Economic Empowerment, and we have established a national chair in Black studies. We have also come out last June to welcome the Mandela's to our country in the name of black women and their families across Canada.

Along the same lines, all of the interviewees stated that the CBWC tried to solidify ties with black organizations. Aet (Mills interview, tape recording, September 24, 2003, A13) stated that "the different chapters would respond to different issues and some were more political than others. For instance, Dudley Laws was an active force in the community and the Toronto Chapter always supported him." Central to most of the interviewees was their support for Laws's Black Action Defence Committee (BADC) and his focus on the shootings of black people. In this decade, black Canadians reported their widespread grievances, reports of hostility and unfair treatment from the police. The black Canadian communities' complaints included police brutality, such as beatings in police stations, and the constant harassment by police, such as being stopped for questioning or submitted to degrading body searches with no evidence.

In response to the perceived harassment and violence, the Black Action Defence Committee was formed in Toronto in 1987, by Dudley Laws, Darry Mead, Akua Benjamin among others, to monitor police behaviour, laying official complaints and

rally public opinion. The organization's relationship with BADC was revealing because it illustrated the CBWC's willingness to look at an issue which has been frequently overlooked by white feminist and the women's movement in Canada - some white people as the perpetrators of violence against black people. This insight was quite probably linked to an experience of some white police officers as the perpetrators of racist abuse. Having recognized the possibility of some white police officers as abusers in one context, it becomes credible that black people could also abuse one another. Encounters with BADC led the CBWC to turn inwards - this was also a feature of the organization to deal with issues of violence against women and to deal with the contentious issue of male violence. The need in this case to create a safe space for black women to talk about issues of violence was seen by one interviewee as allowing the organization to engage in community education which might bring about long term changes in attitudes. Congress News (1989) reported that "family violence was an issue discussed by all of the chapters. The Halifax Dartmouth Metro chapter organized a workshop on Violence in the Black Family. Wanda Thomas-Bernard, a social worker, led the workshop and covered topics on wife abuse, child abuse and the abuse of the elderly." More importantly, the women felt that educating men and women about family violence was their responsibility. The community was, therefore, a contested political arena where black women asserted their right to self-determination in the face of considerable challenges.

In conclusion, in 1989 the CBWC catered to more than one racialized community and therefore there were also multiple communities with which to communicate- Chinese, black Canadian, African and Caribbean. In doing so, the

CBWC focused on educating the different communities to recognize addressing their struggles and to resist the divide and conquer rule by local authorities.

The CBWC's discussions of oppression may be analyzed as echoes of the cultural celebrations of liberal multiculturalism to which they are frequently compared, with faulty knowledge addressed through performances of scenes from the lives of CBWC members and with voices of difference serving as points of nostalgia for what the government did not know or acknowledge. For example, between 1988 and 1999 the CBWC lobbied both the Liberal and NDP parties in an attempt to gain support for its agenda, but came away dissatisfied with the responses it received. The list of CBWC representatives who met with the two major political parties included Executive Council members Dr. Pat Horsham, Yolene Jumelle, Glenda Simms, Edla Belasco and Saundra Anierobi (Congress News, 1988). As in CBWC workshops, these meetings were based on assumptions about links between ignorance and racism and the effects of better knowledge. Knowledge originating from the CBWC was perceived as overcoming ignorance of racism and promoting ways of challenging racism. Little effort was made to explore the learning processes of the Liberal, NDP or Conservative parties.

According to the data, the CBWC workshops served as examples of how knowledge about racist groups and acts of violence was used to educate members about racism and how education influenced institutional efforts toward social change. As stated above, the CBWC believed in an association between knowledge and conduct; the need to create safe spaces for black women to talk about violence was perceived by

some members as part of a community education effort to make long-term attitudinal changes.

In 1990, the CBWC organized an effort to counteract racist groups in Alberta. They feared that some Canadians were receptive to white supremacist ideology because they were conditioned to believe that racism, intimidation and violence were acceptable. As part of this effort, the CBWC claimed that "racism as a palpable material reality runs just as rife through our individual and collective daily lives" (Thornhill, 1991, p.5). The CBWC joined the Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) in a court action in response to one specific act of violence: a Ku Klux Klan cross burning in Edmonton (ibid., p.8). This action was significant in two ways: it proclaimed a clear opposition to the Klan's open defiance of racial hatred incitement laws and it had the strategic power of showing that the organization was actively involved in resisting racism instead of passively sitting on the sidelines watching events unfold.

Police violence was another issue that the CBWC addressed in 1991. Rather than criticize individual officers, the organization critiqued law as a social institution that sustained acts of police violence against black men. As past CBWC president Esmeralda Thornhill explained,

> As an organization, it is not so much the individual aberrational behavior of the single police officer which we must target, but more significantly, how law as a social institution offers little or no protection to Black people and other non-white people, particularly in the matter of people of color. (ibid., p.5)

The CBWC spotlighted links between police violence and racism, especially data showing that shootings of black people by police in several Canadian cities occurred under circumstances that did not require such a degree of force. CBWC member Aet told me that different CBWC chapters responded to different issues, with some being more political than others (Mills interview, tape recording, September 24, 2003, A13, 06, 09a).

Tenth NCBW Conference, 1991

The Tenth Biennial Conference was held on the 8th November 1991 at the Westin Hotel in Calgary Alberta. The program theme was "Celebrate! Redefine! And Strategize!" Approximately two hundred women attended. The Honourable Zanana Akande, Ontario Minister of Community and Social Services gave the first keynote address entitled Black Women Celebrating! Redefining! Strategizing! Dr. Glenda Simms president of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women delivered the second keynote address entitled "The Rocky Road to Equity-Women in the Nineties." There were panel presentations, and workshops (see table 19).

Table 19 Tenth CBWC Conference Workshops

Workshops	Presenter(s)
I'm all Stressed Out-Black Women in the Workplace	June Veecock
Claiming our Legacy-Bridging the Generation Gap	Shirley Small
Organization Building-Stepping Stones to Collective Survival	Sybil Garrick (facilitator Patsy Jordan)
Ain't I a Woman? The Black Feminist Perspective	Dr. Noga Gayle
Strategies for Survival-Different Stories! Different Voices!	Yolene Jumelle (French perspective) Yvonne Brown (Caribbean Perspective)

As in previous conferences, a considerable amount of the CBWC's activities centered on challenging the structural barriers that affected black women. The CBWC attacked the negative social, political, economic and cultural perceptions about black women's experiences. To this end, the workshops covered a range of issues from workplace harassment resulting in occupation stress, anxiety and frustration, generation gap as a social, cultural, and economic spaces in our lives, racism and sexism as a source of oppression for black women and the Congress as a lobby group. The CBWC's statement of objectives declared that two of its goals were to "foster a climate in which it was acceptable for black women to openly examine issues which affect our families; and, to plan and implement a programme of education for Black Women in Canada" (Congress News V.1, no.1 1986, p.1). Connected with this goal was to draw on the expertise of the members while it encouraged participants to discuss how these issues affected their communities. Government agencies, doctors and "specialists" were generally considered to be the experts in managing social, political and economic problems, and they also controlled the organizations and resources utilized to address them. The CBWC was therefore committed to accessing and disseminating the latest information on the black Canadian community, while it negotiated a role for black women in the political process.

Organizational Review Process

The Tenth Anniversary Report noted that "the atmosphere of the Congress needs to be changed and there must be an image of acceptance of the diversity within the organization as opposed to an image of snobbishness." The delegates gave serious thought to redefining the organization to meet the changing needs resulting from the

CBWC's rapid growth and its role in a changing society. Deciding what needed to be changed and what to do next involved resolving three issues that explained the CBWC's growth between 1983 and 1993. There were three central issues to be examined: the structure, issues and funding of the organization.

By 1991, there were 23 active chapters in the CBWC (table 20). Interestingly, the organizational structure that worked well to incorporate the members had become the source of one problem as the organization grew larger. Delegates wanted more than one regional representative in an area with several chapters and in the larger geographical areas such as British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec. In addition, delegates wanted a more precise definition of the responsibilities of the regional representatives to ensure that the members continued to have access to each other's skills and knowledge.

A second problem concerned CBWC's ability to address issues. Simms recalled that the "Congress needed to make its voices heard in the corridors of the nation. Black women must speak out against the issues of the day such as the Canadian constitution, violence in the black community, sexual harassment in the workforce and AIDS." As a consequence of these issues, the CBWC's growth and expansion was partly contingent on the member's ability to mobilize the prerequisite informational resources. With the conferences, workshop and meetings, the CBWC's members had an established communication network and a black feminist community that could be called upon to provide assistance. In this regard, delegates wanted to establish a secretariat in Ottawa with an executive director and support staff. Atwen (Mills interview, tape recording, October 14, 2003, A20) discussed the importance of the resources:

> We needed to get our own building, initiate a big recruiting drive, and get the parenting issues under control because we don't want to lose more black teenagers to the criminal justice system.

There were many reasons for the salience of these issues in relation to the CBWC's viability. First, defining goals, necessary for any organization, was especially pressing for the CBWC as it faced new challenges. The CBWC placed a spotlight on the social and political goals and requirements in that the old goals were re-examined and redefined. This was the case, as the members wanted the organization to play a greater advocacy role and a more proactive role on issues, policies, and programs that would influence the lives of black women and their families. The members wanted the organization to focus on the consultations between the national and local chapters. Second, the general feeling was that the establishment of a permanent office helped to improve communications. The office would be a clearing house and resource center for all members and provided greater visibility to the organization. The unanimous location was Ottawa.

Finally, the members stated repeatedly that the search for material resources to sustain the organization had been one of the CBWC's formidable challenges since its inception. The Tenth Report stated that "both the national and provincial levels should initiate fundraising strategies. The organization should seek to obtain a tax number to conserve financial resources. It should eliminate travel. Attention should be given to the use of technology such as fax machines, teleconferencing, and computer networking." According to Aetn (Mills interview, tape recording, October 7, 2003, A18) "the biggest challenge facing the organization was the lack of dollars and funding for

women's groups." In the past, at least, the small number of participants in many chapters tried organizing fundraising events or funding activities themselves.

The conference confirmed a deep commitment among members to make the CBWC a viable organization that would continue to be sensitive to the needs of black communities by working to reform Canadian society. Members knew all too well that the CBWC provided a space for all of its members to make a contribution in whatever way they could and a place where they could feel comfortable with one another.

Local Chapters

The organization operated on three levels with a national executive council that supported provincial and local chapter activities. Although members were committed to a centralized organizational structure, all CBWC chapters remained independent of each other and often coordinated their efforts for conferences, while they disseminated information pertaining to issues which affected black women and their families. CBWC chapters kept official membership lists and anyone interested in attending meetings. In addition, the organization developed close ties with any local, national or international organizations whose aims, objectives and purposes were similar to the Congress. Each chapter elected a president, vice president, secretary and treasurer who were responsible for monthly meetings, activities and managing the day to day business of the organization. CBWC chapters elected representatives to attend provincial meetings and sit on the executive council. The executive council was comprised of seven executive committee members and representatives from each of the provinces where the CBWC was active.

All CBWC chapters had an executive committee that played a central role in making decisions about organizational activities, strategies, goals, finances and in representing CBWC members in consultations with governmental officials and professional social movement organizations. Although it had a formal structure, the chapters tried to "foster a climate in which it is acceptable for black women to openly examine the issues which affect them and their families" (CBWC Constitution, article 2.1) Group decisions were made by majority rule, depending on the size and preference of the membership. In their efforts to maintain a bureaucratic structure, the chapter's members were encouraged to draft a constitution/bylaws that described the purposes of the chapters, different committees, election procedures, funding and methods for organizing direct action. CBWC chapters did not have individual offices, although attempts were made in Ontario to establish a provincial office.

Though commonly perceived as a middle class professional black woman's organization, the CBWC explicitly defined itself as a heterogeneous and inclusive advocacy/political organization. They recruited a substantial number of their participants from black Canadian communities. CBWC's membership consisted primarily of middle class university educated women. Many members were drawn from a variety of fields including the arts, university, social sciences, social services, medical professions, law and business. As their statement of purpose (Congress News V.1, no.1 1986, p.1) declared, the objectives of the Congress were:

> To provide a network of solidarity for black women in Canada and to be a united voice in the defence and extension of human rights and liberties for black women.

To plan and implement a programme of education for Black Women in Canada

To develop relations with other local, national, and international organizations whose aims, objectives and purposes are in keeping with those of the Congress.

During this decade, the CBWC's chapters were small, large, all formal and had municipal, provincial and national affiliations. Asent (Mills interview, tape recording, October 14, 2003, A17) explained: "without national representation black women's voices were not heard." Aft (Mills interview, tape recording, October 7, 2003, A15) stated "we were a network of black women who could speak with many voices. We felt that whenever openings come to get into the boardroom, get into politics, to demonstrate, get into whatever it was. We articulated the position that we as black women held to understand our social location through discrimination and unequal opportunity."

An analysis of the data indicate clearly that the CBWC's formal structure allowed it to develop goals, strategies and opportunities that encouraged communication, cooperation and coordination between the chapters. Under these conditions, the capacity to develop linkages between chapters that were directly communicating constituted an important resource. Therefore, the CBWC's mobilization of indigenous resources, leadership and sustained challenges to authorities were important sources of organizational development that kept participants active even when the external context made mobilization difficult. By focusing on the interactions between the organization and its external context we see how each provided partial

insights into how the CBWC played a vital role in sustaining a social movement organization.

A primary goal of all chapters was social. All chapters attempted to recruit, train, educate the public and mobilize members and constituency to participate in the organization. Members were encouraged to attend social events and fundraise. Chapter membership committee members acted as purveyors of information and information brokers. National conferences and organizational assessment selected issues to pursue in local chapters, and the committee members performed the everyday organizing activities. The chapters in this category included all of the organizations listed in table 20, for example, the Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Regina, Thompson, Manitoba, Mississauga, North York, Scarborough, Hamilton, Toronto, Halifax/Dartmouth/Metro, Antigonish/Greysborough, Preston/Cherrybrook/Lake Loon/Westphal Area, Saint John-New Brunswick, Montreal, London, Ottawa, among others. The significance of the social committee was in recognizing the inextricable links between the positive influence of the organization on social activities, black women realized that these spaces gave them the confidence to step out and become more active in the organization. Many chapters initiated among their local constituencies regular social events. Chapters within the CBWC that engaged in advocacy activities included, for example, the following: Vancouver, Saskatchewan, Regina, Manitoba, Mississauga, Scarborough, Toronto and Halifax/Dartmouth/Metro.

Table 20 Congress Chapters and Founding Dates

No.	Province	Chapters	Founding Year
1.	British Columbia	Vancouver (BC chapter)	1984
2.	Alberta	Edmonton	1981
		Calgary	*
3.	Saskatchewan	Regina (Southern chapter)	*
		Saskatoon (Northern chapter)	1989
4.	Manitoba	Manitoba-Winnipeg	1981
		Thompson	*
5.	Ontario	Toronto	1983
		Scarborough	1985
		North York	1986
		London	1988
		Mississauga	1985
		Markham (York region)	1993
		North Eastern chapter	1988
		Brampton	1989
		Ajax-Pickering	1996
		York Region (Arora)	*
		Midland	*
		Ottawa	1990
		Windsor	*
		Hamilton	1987
		Waterloo	*
		Cambridge	*
6.	Quebec	Montreal Regional Committee	1974
		Ville Marie	1992
7.	Nova Scotia	Halifax/Dartmouth Metro chapter	*
		Preston/Cherrybrook/lake Loon/Westphal	1989
		Antigonish-Greyborough	*
8.	News Brunswick	Saint John	*

*** Founding dates not provided**

Table 21 CBWC Social Events

Events	Chapters
Fundraising	Calgary, Saskatoon, Regina, Manitoba, Scarborough, North York, Toronto, Vancouver
Mother's Day	North York, Ville Marie, Halifax/Dartmouth/Metro, North York, Vancouver, Calgary, Scarborough, Saint John
Father's Day Tea	Manitoba
Fashion Shows	Regina, Saskatoon, Manitoba
Dances	Manitoba
Children's Christmas Party	Manitoba, Vancouver
Banquet and Women's History	Calgary and Edmonton chapters, Halifax/Dartmouth/Metro, Preston/Cherrybrook/Lake Loon/Westphal, Vancouver
Residential Camps for Black Children	Calgary, Edmonton
Canada Day Dances/ Family Barbeques	Saskatoon
Kay Livingstone Awards Luncheon	Ontario Region

A number of local chapters (Saskatchewan, Vancouver, Manitoba, Toronto, Scarborough, Calgary and Edmonton) participated in workshops that focused on the Meech Lake Accord, Free Trade Agreement, abortion issues, affirmative action and employment equity by sponsoring recruitment drive for the RCMP. Our focus was first on education and we were educating women in terms of employment and immigration, dealing with the police, lawyers and women's health." Black women who were involved with prior political issues did the bulk of the organizing for these workshops and public forums.

The Saskatchewan chapter participated in the Federal government's committee on Employment Equity for visible minorities and women's committee for the Canadian Labour Development task force, which included members from women's

organizations in Saskatchewan. The goal was to put pressure on the task force to establish a provincial board to advise the National Labour Board on issues related to the training of women in the province. The Manitoba chapter released a brief to the news media and elected officials in regards to Meech Lake Accord agreements. June James, Manitoba chapter, served as the affirmative action task force chairperson sponsored by the Manitoba Association of Humans Rights and Liberties and the Department of Urban Justice at the University of Winnipeg. Evelyn G. Auchinvole of the Hamilton chapter met with representatives from local, provincial and federal governments spreading the organization's objectives. Finally, the Scarborough chapter participated in political workshops by Bill Davis (Tory), Alvin Curling (Liberal), and Bob Rae (NDP). Each candidate stated their party's policies and addressed how their policies related to the CBWC's aims and purposes. Carol Ann Wright, Toronto chapter, became a mayoral candidate for city of Toronto.

Activities

Due to the broad appeal of the *personal is political* concept, the act of disclosing personal experiences became formalized as a form of political education and conflict resolution in the CBWC. The organization's social and cultural activities were dominated by knowledge production in the form of vocalized experiences. Antiracist feminists such as Razack (1998) and Srivastava (2002) later criticized educational practices such as those used by the CBWC between 1983 and 1993 as too limited for producing useful dialogue for making social change. An inquiry into these relations would be facilitated by incorporating Scott's insistence "on the discursive nature of experience and on the politics of its construction" (quoted in Srivastava 2002, p. 118).

To analyse the conditions and effects of sharing experiences of oppression, Srivastava's claim that there are two manifestations of the personal is political approach is analytically fruitful:

> The first we might call the conflict-resolution or therapeutic mode, one that requires people to resolve their conflicts by expressing their concerns and feelings to each other. The second is the workshop or popular education mode, one that draws on a group's experience to produce knowledge about racism. While the two approaches are counterpoised against each other—the first more personal, the second more political—in practice both are integral to organizational response. (Ibid., p. 118)

My data indicate that when CBWC members spoke about their experiences, their efforts for social change were dependent on being members of a black Canadian community in which they could express their concerns in a non-judgmental setting. Interviewees explained that the organizing efforts of CBWC members received great support from black women. During the interviews, many members described their enthusiastic support and excitement over CBWC organizing activities. This excitement can be found in copies of the Congress News, the annual President's Report, and the various CBWC Conference Reports published between 1987 and 1991, which contained reports of chapters being formed across Canada. CBWC members saw chapter formation and social and cultural activities as counterpoints to the individual conflict resolution approach, based on a workshop model for drawing on group experience to produce knowledge for social change. By 1993 the 29 chapters operated

independently in community organizing and the dissemination of information of interest to black Canadian women and their families. They also are coordinating efforts in support of regional and national conferences. Interestingly, members reported in interviews that the social and cultural activities of these chapters were forms of resistance to oppression and as challenges to negative social and cultural perceptions about black women's experiences.

Social Activities

There were differences and similarities between the conflict resolution and workshop/popular education models. Each was rooted in the personal is political concept. Both ultimately focused on individual experiences while encouraging social rhetoric and sharing techniques toward a goal of knowledge production within egalitarian and participatory environments. CBWC members used both approaches, often concurrently. Combined, they formed a framework for discussions about oppression. As seen in the Congress News (1987) and 1989 Conference Report, black women's sympathetic responses to the CBWC were accompanied by broad expressions of support for representation and social change. As Bev, CBWC member explained:

> I wanted to be part of an association like the CBWC because there were so many opportunities to get involved. The Congress had a mandate that allowed black women to have a voice in the political arena. That really perked my interest because I felt that black women could organize to voice their concerns about racism, education and bring about change. (Mills interview, tape recording, October 6, 2003, B4, 02, 09a.)

Another CBWC member B. T. shared her own motivation for attending CBWC activities:

> I felt a sense of security knowing I could share my feelings with other women and they would know where I was coming from. I did not have to get in depth, whether it was a situation such as I needed support because I was not treated as an equal in the labour force or a discussion about my children. Anything I talked about, they could relate to, shared my views and we supported each other. I felt a sense of trust amongst everyone. I could say what I needed to say and I did not feel as if anyone was stabbing me in the back or that I could not trust them or they could not trust me. I felt at home in the organization. (Mills interview, tape recording, October 6, 2003, B1, 03, 9a.)

Many interviewees mentioned social activities such as tea parties, luncheons and brunches as personal-is-political and education model techniques that framed CBWC member discussions about oppression. These activities were explicitly aimed at shaping group dynamics and providing physical spaces for sharing experiences. The black Canadian women who attended these events acknowledged that the settings gave them confidence to step up and become more active in the organization. Accordingly, many chapters held regular social events as part of their organizing activities.

Cultural Activities

The popular education mode was a commonly used form of cultural production by the CBWC. Cultural production refers to activities that contribute to the production and distribution of ideas, knowledge and/or systems of beliefs (Calliste & Dei, 2000).

Examples include activities such as arts festivals, facilities such as libraries and museums and media productions. In some cases my interviewees commented on the lack of these efforts—for example, CBWC member Asevt described the different forms of silence that she came up against in her efforts to make social change: "Everywhere I went, my experience was not represented at the art gallery, film, books and the cultural life of Canada … We faced a number of challenges to racism—anger and refusal on the part of people to display our books in the library" (Mills Interview, tape recording, September 28, 2003, A17, 13, 9d). Many CBWC members used the terms "silence" and "typical" when describing individuals who raised objections to the subject of racism. Asevt's observations underscored the need for black Canadian women to recover their history, which was why the CBWC used some of its resources to organize events during black history month, including film screenings, black history celebrations, university library displays, donation of black history books to public libraries, scholarship presentations and cultural heritage workshops. In addition to emphasizing how Canadian norms erased black (especially black women's) culture, these cultural activities encouraged knowledge production as a means of addressing ignorance among the Canadian majority. A strong CBWC motivation was the belief that knowledge acts as an antidote to racism.

One of the hallmarks of the Congress between 1983 and 1993 was its success in establishing local chapters. The Congress increasingly viewed its mission as the provision of services to black women and the development of local chapters. The autonomy of the chapters was encouraged within the "framework of the constitutions, objective and policies established at the biennial general meeting" (CBWC

Constitution, Article 7.1). It was not surprising that participants expected, as Atwensi (Mills interview, tape recording, November 10, 2003, A26.) put it "to engage black women in political action. .... I think different people had different needs. We had a regional structure and we had chapters. So the chapters decided how they followed the resolutions that were made by the Congress and what their programmes would be." The CBWC's success during its peak period of mobilization illustrated how distinct constituencies joined forces to work towards organizational goals. CBWC members prided themselves on the fact that they were helping their communities while their strategies and tactics shaped their voluntary political action.

Leadership

The data indicated that a configuration of leaders (Morris, 2004) continued to initiate activities and form chapters during this decade. CBWC leaders were nonprofessional movement organizers and volunteer leaders (Staggenborg, 1999). They were volunteers and nonprofessional leaders who were dedicated to issues affecting black women as a result of their experiences that provided the most important indigenous organizational base for the development of the CBWC. Organizational growth was more likely the result of interactions among leaders at the local, provincial and national level than organizational documents acknowledged. In other words, while CBWC presidents played a unique leadership role, especially in sustaining and developing the organization, the configuration of leadership was enhanced when it included participants who were insiders to some constituencies but outsiders to others and who learned diverse collective action repertories (Ganz, 2004). CBWC's leader made the most of these attributes by conducting regular open meetings and being held

accountable by the multiple and diverse constituencies from which they drew their resources.

Consistent with the black Canadian feminist synthetic and interpretive organizational model of movements, CBWC leaders devised strategies as they interact with their external context. The leaders' collective identities were derived from their backgrounds as to race, class, gender, generation, ethnicity, sexuality, education, beliefs, family background and geographic location. Configurations of leaders within the CBWC thus combined access to a diversity of salient knowledge with the facility to recontextualize this knowledge creatively. CBWC leaders identified personally with their constituencies and were more likely to derive intrinsic reward from their work than those whose motivation was solely instrumental. In addition, leaders composed of persons with heterogeneous perspectives were likely to make better decisions than homogenous configurations, especially when resolving problems, because they accessed more resources, brought a broader range of skills to bear decision making and benefited from a diversity of views.

Jean Augustine, Cybil Garrick, Glenda Simms, Esmeralda Thornhill, Norma Walker, Dolly Williams, Heather Crichlow, Yvonne Ashby, Zanana Akande and Nona Gayle, for example, were all leaders who interacted with the environment within organizational structures. Although the CBWC's organizational form was Kay Livingstone's strategic choice, once established the configuration of CBWC leaders had a profound influence on its subsequent development in terms of the development of strategies, tactics, mechanisms of accountability and resource flows. Glenda Simms provided a case in point.

Glenda Simms was one example of effective leadership in the CBWC. Simms immigrated to Canada from Jamaica in 1966. She was a graduate of the University of Alberta, B.Ed (1974), M.Ed (1976) and Ph.D in Educational Psychology (1985). In July 1988, she went to North Bay, Ontario to work as an associate professor at Nipissing University College. She accepted a basic mandate to teach a course in education that focused on the concerns of First Nation's peoples. The goal was to develop and evaluate curriculum and training programmes to train as many First Nations people as possible to become teachers in Northern Ontario. In addition she had numerous publications[6], presentations, participated in research and projects[7] and public service[8]. She was the founder of the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women (NOIVMW) of Canada and was president of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW) between 1990-1996. She traveled across Canada speaking to women in their communities and listening to their concerns. She then reported to the CACSW and the federal government. "She had advised the Jamaican government and Canadian government about women's issues, poverty eradication, race relations, education, child labour and development issues for the advancement of women in South Africa, Philippines and Turks and Caicos Islands."[9] Finally, Simms was one of the first recipients of the Citation for Citizenship. "This award was instituted to recognize exemplary citizenship, particularly those Canadians whose volunteer

[6] See Glenda Simms. "Diasporic Experiences of Blacks in Canada: A Discourse." Dalhousie Review, Dalhousie University (Fall 1993).
See Glenda P. Simms. New York Law School Journal of International and Comparative Law Symposium, Guns at Home, Guns on the Street: An International Perspective, vol. 15, nos. 2 & 3, 1995: 237.

[7] Executive producer of Grandmother, Mother, and Me. "A six part video on the lives of women from different racial and cultural background who live in Regina Saskatchewan" (CBWC Papers, n.p, n.d).

[8] Member of the Native Curriculum Review Committee, Department of Education, Saskatchewan (1982-1984).

[9] See Glenda Simms biography document.

activities affirmed the principles that characterized Canadian citizenship-equality, diversity, and community."[10]

Simms played an important leadership role in the CBWC. She served as president between 1982 and 1987. She was assertive and effective in the organization during her five-year presidency. Simms was an activist who crusaded for social justice. She was a member of the Canadian Delegation to the "Forum 85"in Nairobi Kenya. As the United Nations proclaimed the need to examine the status of women globally. Simms wrote an article to the CBWC membership that asked the question what has the decade done for black women? She called for an end to inequalities at all levels. She was giving a clear message to black women that that they too were suited for leadership positions. For example, Simms was one of the leaders responsible for mobilizing resources. She obtained grants from the Secretary of State Women's programmes and the Department of Multiculturalism that financed CBWC conferences. This was an extremely significant event in the CBWC's history because Simms was successful in mobilizing black communities at the grassroots and developing leaders. Women attended the conferences, the grants paid for their accommodations and in turn when the conference participation returned to their local cities, much grassroots recruiting of members occurred with the formation of chapters, workshops, programmes, advocacy, coalition building, lobbying the government, speaking tours by leaders and meetings. In this way, under Simms' leadership, the CBWC was successful in developing programmes to meet the needs of black women and their families. Her approach offered information and knowledge to those black women that lacked access to such resources.

[10] Letter from David Crombie, the Secretary of the State of Canada, dated March 24, 1988. See letter from Eva Kmiecic, Registrar of Canadian Citizenship, Department of the Secretary of State of Canada, dated April 25, 1988.

The leaders were able to conduct regular open and authoritative deliberations about the organization or to "reexamine [their] objectives and purposes and adjust [their} efforts accordingly" (Congress News V.1, no.1 1986, p.1) by undertaking an organizational review (see table 22). Following the recommendations from the 1991 Biennial general meeting, the executive council applied for and received a grant to complete an organizational review involving the organization at the municipal, provincial and national levels. My data indicated that there was agreement among the CBWC's executive council and membership between 1983 and 1993 concerning the organization's goals. To realize success, the CBWC addressed seven problem areas: organizational diversity, visibility, secretariat, committees, leadership, fundraising and provincial relations (see table 22).

McAdam (1996) argues while every social movement organization should seek and be able to enjoy success, success is a very complicated issue. Organizational diversity can lead to internal conflict and factionalism (McCarthy, McAdam and Zald, 1996). Organizations need to attract attention and members to grow (visible). My data indicated that for the CBWC the nonprofessional and volunteer leaders were not compensated for their time. Furthermore, although the CBWC received an increase in funding, it did not hire staff or pay professional leaders who were likely to support the issues and causes of SMOs. In this case, it was the unpaid staff and nonprofessional leaders that were vital to the maintenance of the CBWC because they performed the day to day activities, contact with chapters, advocacy, coalition work and fund-raising in a routine manner. The formalized structure therefore allowed for continuity of tasks (secretariat, committees, fundraising, leadership and provincial relations).

The importance of the organizational review was that it allowed the CBWC leadership to enhance their capacity. CBWC leaders acquired salient information participated in a creative process by which they explored new ways to use this information, and were motivated by commitment to choices they participated in making and upon which they had the autonomy to act. Regular deliberations facilitated initiatives by encouraging the periodic assessment of activities. The CBWC had deliberations that were open to heterogeneous points of view and different perspectives that facilitated better decisions, encouraged innovation and developed group capacity to perform tasks more creatively and effectively. To realize these benefits, CBWC leaders tried to develop practices encouraging thinking that grew out of the expression of diverse views as well as critical thinking required to make decisions to act upon them.

CBWC leaders mobilized resources, devised strategies and implemented organizational programmes for outreach, funding and information dissemination. For example, since membership dues were a major source of support, CBWC leaders realized that it was vital to get members to pay dues. A reliance on limited government grants or tentative community based initiatives prompted leaders to be more innovative in securing resources from multiple constituencies. This strategy required flexibility and creative thinking. In other words, relying on more individuals than on money facilitated growth in strategic capacity to the extent that it encouraged development of more leaders who knew how to strategize. The more capable the strategists, the greater the flexibility with which an organization can pursue its objectives and the greater the scale on which it can do so (Weick, 1979).

For example, at the 1991 Biennial meeting- the theme was celebrate, redefine strategize. The executive was instructed to continue the process and included a review of the Constitution, and to develop an action plan. The review was an ongoing process. It was a means of defining goals, and to do this the CBWC critically reviewed the operations of the organization, assessed how the goals were being met, how the values were maintained and identified alternative ways of creating social networks between

Table 22 Organizational Assessment

Issues	Recommendations
Organizational Diversity	-a group of black women representing diverse occupations and interests; and not a group of professional with needs to be met
Visibility	- need a strategy and educational campaign to promote Congress to the public
Secretariat	- needs a main office in Ottawa to be staffed by an executive director and support staff.
Committees	-need personnel committee to develop job descriptions and recruit qualified staff, fundraising committee to secure financial resources and cover the costs of the Secretariat and other Congress projects; constitutional committee to review the current constitution and make amendments which will accommodate the identified needs. A draft constitution to be ready in 1992 for a preliminary general meeting prior to the ratification at the Biennial meeting in 1992. Development of a mission statement.
Leadership	-training for all members of Council
Fundraising	-initiate municipal, provincial, and national fundraising strategies
Provincial Relations	-re-establish communication network, minutes, reports, issues, newsletters and other publications

members in the organization. The review provided members with an opportunity to identify problem areas and to marshal their ideas around the most suitable ways to strengthen these areas of weakness. To allow for the greatest participation a series of

group sessions were held in Halifax, Montreal, Winnipeg, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina, Calgary and Vancouver. The provinces cooperated, planned the sessions and worked together to get to know each other and began a process of networking. The discussion centered on questions prepared to focus on structure, leadership, communication, areas of concern and issues on which participants felt were important to the organization.

These elements were illustrated by the Report of the Paths of Change Summary Report on the Review of the Organization (1994) which was funded by the Women's programme, Department of Human Resources and Development. According to the CBWC's constitution, " the organization had as one of its objectives the re-examination from time to time of what it is doing and the direction is hopes to go" (CBWC Constitution, Article 2.8). Between 1994 and 1995 delegates for the most part were unable to address outstanding issues from previous conferences. These issues were transferred to the next conference subject to further approval and implementation at future conferences.

CBWC interactions with Canadian government agencies and officials were frequently shaped by techniques that encouraged personal disclosure, with telegrams representing a form of speech or knowledge. Telegrams were means for immediately registering CBWC objections to free trade policies; a lack of response represented a technique of governance. In the above example, the CBWC disclosed its perspective that economic policy perpetuated black women's subordinate workforce positions and silence on the part of government indicated its lack of concern regarding black women's declining socioeconomic status and loss of jobs.

Analysis

i) Role of Identity and Ideology in Mediating Institutions

The "staying connected" or "being" phase consists of established roles, rules, division of labour, specialization of tasks that secure the maintenance of identity, achievement, stability and clarification and also advancement or promotion. Institutionalization is the objectification of the ideological, in terms of both its content and emotion, providing a place for the projection of the collective through the manifold, ever changing interpenetrations of culture and consciousness. By formalizing representations ambiguity becomes attenuated. Moreover, institutionalizing a movement affirms and extends the ability of members to self express and self–actualize. Indeed, institutions are particular ways of structuring and articulating experience. As will be reviewed below, an institution is linked to ideologies. The institution becomes just as ideological as identity. In other words, there is no autonomy of either institutions or ideologies; they remain connected to conveniently ignored contexts. The ideological-institutional nexus plays an unprecedented role in creating and congealing inequities. Recent years in particular have seen the adoption of a network of relations which seek to establish the ideological and institutional framework favourable to exclusionary practices.

For movements to be effective, contexts are significant. The ideological-institutional- identity forms are all mediated – complementary and contradictory. The institutional perspective accepts the baseline assumptions of ideologies, freedoms, equalities and rights. By contrast, the ideological perspective seeks a deeper explanation for the institutional practices by linking justice to prevailing social ideologies. But it has been argued in this chapter that both ideology and institutions

together ensure stability, equilibrium or justice while ensuring that uncertain environments do not result in dynamic disturbances and dislocations emerging from responses to systemic injustice. Changing institutional structures does not alter the basic ideological structures defined broadly by the dominant cultures of misogyny and racism.

Everyday CBWC practices are replete with significant ceremonies, signs, symbols, cues and clues that pattern gestures, rituals, or performances that in turn stage degrees of cultural affiliations. Social membership or a binding way of life constitutes and is constituted by the interplay, therefore, between specific behavioural circumstances **and** powerful ideologies that structure the movement. Unfortunately, institutions run the risk of becoming "naturalized" such that curiosity, challenges and confrontation become framed according to convenience and utility. To sustain the movement, systems of symbols act to establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations by formulating conceptions. Communicative action or symbolic interaction involves social or consensual norms, intersubjectively shared ordinary language, reciprocal expectations about behaviour, role internalization, maintenance of institutions involving conformity to norms on the basis of reciprocal enforcement, violations of norms punished on the basis of conventional sanctions and failure against authority and finally emancipation, individuation and extension of communication (interaction) free of domination (Habermas, 1971, p. 91). Like Weber, Habermas highlights the institutional framework in which normative categories guide symbolic interaction between actors. Weber's notion of rationalization, therefore, tends to characterize institutions. Rather than restricted to a task oriented or goal oriented

approaches, these activities become features of bureaucratic designs. To better understand how movements transform into organizations and *vice-versa*, it is essential to recognize the strong influence of rationalization. For Weber, rationalization seeks an increasing division of labour, bureaucracy and mechanization (Gerth and Mills, 1946). Weber expands on the world as depersonalised:

> Action is instrumentally rational (zweckrational) when the end, the means, and the secondary results are all rationally taken into account and weighed. This involves rational consideration of alternative means to the end, of the relations of the end to the secondary consequences, and finally of the relative importance of different possible ends (ibid, 55).

Note the following features that vitiate the spontaneity of movements but rather may serve to sustain the organization of commitment: i) *hierarchy* of authority: offices are ranked with information flowing up the chain of command directives flowing down (Weber, 1946/1958, p. 197); ii) *impersonality*, impersonal rules that explicitly state duties, responsibilities, standardized procedures and conduct of office holders. The operation of the organization is conducted according to an explicit set of rules and administrative regulations. These rules guarantee impersonality in the operations of the office (ibid, 1921/1968). iii) *written rules of conduct*, bounded rules set out specialized tasks, so that everyone knows who has responsibility for what, promotion based on achievement, on the principle of *trained competence*, ensuring that the individuals working within these offices have thorough and appropriate training for their level within the hierarchy administrative actions, decisions and rules are recorded in writing. Precision, speed, unambiguity, knowledge of the files, continuity, discretion, unity,

strict subordination, reduction of friction and of material and personal costs--these are raised to the optimum point in the strictly bureaucratic organization (ibid, 1946/1958, p. 214). iv) S*pecialized* division of labour. Offices are highly specialized occupations or "offices specialized qualifications rather than ascribed criteria. specialized duties are arranged in a hierarchy of authority or decision-making (ibid, 1946/1958, p. 229). v) *efficiency.* The resources of the organization are strictly separated from those of the individual in a hierarchical order. Unambiguous and predictable performance which is based on rules; they ensure continuity, unity and strict subordination, which reduces friction between officials; given high levels of efficiency, personal and administrative costs are reduced to a minimum(ibid, 1921/1968: 223).

Critical events can provoke movement communities to engage in collective action (Staggenborg 1991). Concerns about racism, racism in the criminal justice system, conflict between the police and the black Canadian community became one of the most significant battlegrounds for the chapters (Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, Halifax/Dartmouth/Metro). The Toronto chapter applied to the federal, provincial and municipal governments for funding to undertake two projects a housing project for black seniors and to produce a film on antiracism strategies for child care workers. The Halifax/Dartmouth/Metro chapters (March, 1989) participated in a walk commemorating the International Day for the Elimination of Racism. The Saskatchewan representative and alternate represented the Congress at the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People and submitted a brief on racism. Local chapters were able to connect unexpected events such as racial incidents, police shootings to their experiences with past injustices. The Toronto chapter protested the shooting of

two black men by police. The protest took the form of attendance at black community planning meetings, a press conference, presentation of a statement, attendance at rallies and memorial services. The Vancouver chapter provided an example of how movement organizations were important for the establishment of a programme, based on the history of blacks in Canada and Vancouver, to train the Vancouver Police Department to deal better with members of the black Canadian community. Two public forums were held in July and August 1989 to address the black Canadian community's needs, problems, and concerns related to the criminal justice system. Sergeant Jorge Lasso, Hamilton Wentworth Police, Ethnic Relations Division addressed the group on the topic of the Young Offenders Act and answered general questions pertaining to the concerns of parents. The Halifax/Dartmouth/Metro chapter accompanied youth to court, helped them obtain counsel and informed them of their rights. Moral support and counselling were provided to families needing assistance.

The Regina chapter Southern Saskatchewan focused on racial incidents in the community and the educational institutions. The chapter was assisted by funds from the city of Toronto to launch a tutoring enrichment cultural programme that encouraged youth to become familiar with African issues and culture; and members participated in workshops sponsored by the Secretary of State. Joan Lloyd made a presentation to the Winnipeg School Division number one task force on Race Relation on behalf of the Congress.

According to the data, the CBWC workshops served as examples of how knowledge about racist groups and acts of violence was used to educate members about

racism—another example of how education influenced institutional efforts toward social change.

The Silent Dismissal Practice

To understand more fully the meaning of the *personal is political* concept from a black Canadian feminist synthetic and interpretive organizational perspective and to understand its implications for CBWC's attempts to address oppression, this section examines organizational techniques that emerged from the identity- ideological nexus. As Hamilton (2004) notes, briefs, meetings, conferences, consultations and lobbying are the five primary practices that emerged from feminist development of the personal is political concept. To one degree or another, these practices represent *organizational and institutional* attempts to manage accusations of racism and discrimination. In the CBWC context, a brief is defined as a report that provides basic information about organizational policies, based on concerns discussed at the grassroots level that call for reforms to improve the lives of women at home and in the workforce. Other organizations such as the University of Women's Clubs, the YWCA, and the National Council of Women submitted briefs to the Canadian government in the 1970s and 1980s. A common brief-associated tactic used by feminists during the 1980s and 1990s was to send large numbers of telegrams to the government.

As a core feminist principle, the *personal is political* maintains a strong emphasis, both historical and contemporary, on using the personal as a primary route to analysis and knowledge. This raises at least two questions: What does it mean for the practices and techniques of women's organizations? And, what are the implications of the personal is political concept for CBWC's attempts to address oppression? Answers

require an understanding of the practice of personal disclosure as a technique that arises from the premise that the personal is political.

The practice of personal disclosure is directly linked to feminist development of the personal is political concept. The practice represents an attempt to manage accusations of discrimination. According to Roberta Hamilton (2004), the "practice of talking, with its stress on understanding and examining personal experience and on connecting experience to the structures that define our lives, is the clearest expression of the personal disclosure method basic to feminism" (p. 51). Especially common during the early years of third wave feminism, it was characterized by small groups of women who met regularly and spoke informally, usually without structure, on any and all issues relevant to women's lives. Similar to the personal is political principle, the personal disclosure technique was inspired by the importance attributed to consciousness in explaining historical change. Drawing heavily on this foundation, black Canadian feminists claimed that an effective strategy must include techniques for demystifying prevailing ideology, as well as for developing alternative forms of consciousness. Thus, according to an emphasis on creating political unity and common interests among oppressed peoples, the CBWC was key to establishing a common but not uniform identity among black women, as well as to overcoming isolation.

The personal disclosure technique has been used in organizational and community settings such as unions, social service agencies, Aboriginal Peoples communities, and community activist groups. Sherene Rezack (1998) asserts that this "story-telling has been at the heart of our pedagogy" (p. 35) for social change. In discussing her human rights course, she states that her goal was to "forge a politics of

alliances based on the daily sharing of experiences" (ibid, p. 63). It is thus inevitable that attendees of workshops and conferences, and participants in consultations and telegram campaigns, share a common history that emphasizes the diversity of "personal experience and lived reality as a source of knowledge" (Dei, 1996, p. 47). The use of experience and local knowledge from a black woman's perspective is a way to challenge universalism and racism in women's organizations.

According to Adamson et al. (1988), "the purpose of consciousness raising was to understand our personal lives and experiences, not to build a mass movement" (ibid. p. 241). They also note that consciousness-raising groups emerged very quickly as a "powerful tool for grassroots organizing. By focusing on the reality of each woman's life, it was able to reach, and ultimately, activate women in a way that more abstract calls to organize an issue would have done." (ibid. p.45). Other authors have described consciousness-raising groups as key to the success of feminism. Carty (1988) argues that feminism's "survival and consistent progress can be attributed to one of its most frequently trivialized symbols and political vehicles: the consciousness-raising session" (ibid., p. 5).

Due to the very broad appeal of this self-disclosure technique, the consciousness-raising model evolved into one that privileges personal experience and stories over political analysis. The personal is political principle thus implies equivalency between the two concepts. According to this analysis, everything personal comes to have political significance. This interpretation has become part of the culture and history of the feminist movement (Briskin, 1999), and is evident far beyond the peak of consciousness-raising groups in the 1980s and 1990s. Hamilton (2004) notes

that consciousness-raising groups continued in a far more informal form beyond the 1970s and were apparent whenever women gathered to talk about gender Issues.

Conversations: Beyond the Text and Towards the Talk

Meetings were the second most influential technique linked to the personal is political concept. Small group meetings, which were especially common between 1983 and 1993, emphasized the effort to understand black Canadian women's experiences and connect them to the structures that defined their lives. Small groups of CBWC members met regularly and conversed informally on any and all issues relevant to their lives. In some cases they met with government officials. In one meeting Sybil Garrick and a group of CBWC members raised concerns about racism, free trade, affirmative action, and retraining programs for women with Barbara McDougall, the Minister of State responsible for women's issues. Garrick hoped that McDougall would help focus the discussion on social change, but the discussion turned personal, thus evolving into a stage for CBWC members to tell their stories:

> McDougall told the women that free trade between Canada and the United States will offer many opportunities for employment and growth. She added that programs would be put in place to retrain people displaced by the trade deal. However, Sybil Garrick, the Ontario Representative for the Congress remained unconvinced by the ministered assurances. Garrick said that many visible minority women working in such industries such as shoe and garment factories could lose their jobs. Many women are frustrated. We are constantly trained and retrained for jobs and still remain at the bottom of the ladder ... The

Congress members pointed out to McDougall that federal affirmative action programs for women have not affected visible minority women. Affirmative action has helped middle class white women said Garrick. McDougall responded that she was sensitive to these visible minority concerns. (Maylor, 1987, p. 3)

This quote indicates a racialized dynamic between CBWC members and McDougal. While Garrick and other CBWC members spoke about their experiences of racism, McDougall alternated between expressing assurances and sensitivity for their sharing, while essentially dismissing their concerns and their experiences.

According to my findings, women's organizations that did not address the discrimination were a primary source of conflict for the CBWC. One reason was that CBWC discussions, workshops and conferences were shaped by organizational practices that encouraged members to personalize and express their experiences. Data from interviews, copies of the Congress News (a CBWC newsletter containing articles and reports of interest to local, provincial and national members) published in 1985 and 1987, and CBWC conference papers indicated that the focus of telegrams, workshops and national meetings was on CBWC member's explorations of their experiences with oppression in Canadian society. Members were encouraged to share their stories, but government officials and white women's organizations either politely listened without responding or simply ignored them. The result was a body of personal disclosure accounts—what Srivastava (2002) calls a "let's talk discourse"—that shaped knowledge about race, gender and oppression. This approach had a profound effect on CBWC organizational form and modes of interpersonal expression. The CBWC used

the personal is political concept to challenge oppression in Canadian society and to value the experiences of black Canadian women and their families.

An Organized Social Movement

Findings of this chapter concur with Whittier's (2002) conclusions that two general types of influence affect the formation of social movement communities between movement organizations. First, circumstances in the broader external context should influence the likelihood of an alliance. Second, dynamics within the social movement organizations themselves should also affect whether groups enter into a social movement community. In particular it is the interaction between the two, the ways in which organizations frame their arguments in support of their goals, along with resource levels and contextual factors are likely to influence whether an organization develops and expands.

The CBWC was active on a number of issues and established committees for improving the sociopolitical and economic conditions for black women and their families. For example, the organization was involved in projects concerning education, employment/job training, policing, culture, health, childcare, working mothers, teenage pregnancies and poverty. While each chapter had its own history, set of issues, resources, and organizational dynamics and external constraints, all chapters engaged in *four* types of activities: social, advocacy - oriented, service- oriented and cultural. These clarifications were derived from the actual activities in which the chapters engaged, but the terms imply something broader: namely, the overall strategy that guided organizational action (Minkoff 1995).

More importantly, social movement organizations are what Mario Diani (2003) called space bound: people often congregate in the same place at the same time to act in concert. CBWC organizing most often developed spatially: individuals became aware of the chapter because they were near it. However, there was no pure space and space itself was always socially organized. Neighbourhoods were usually segregated by class, ethnicity or race and often segregated by political orientation, so that different kinds of people were found in different kinds of spaces A wide variety of routine social structures within the CBWC therefore created organizational ties.

A second activity in which all chapters participated was *advocacy*. By engaging in advocacy activities, the chapters focused on challenging federal, provincial, municipal policies and programmes that ostensibly were designed to improve their lives through routine institutional means (Jenkins, 1983, p.297).

The third set of activities that all chapters participated in included networking with professional organizations that had paid staff and was expert-based. These service/resource organizations offered "divisible benefits, that is private goods that may be provided without actual changes in policy or institutional structures" (ibid). Services referred to tangible goods and/or benefits such as health care, financial aid, individual legal representation, vocational training and so forth. Resources referred primarily to intangible goods and/or benefits, such as education about legal issues, referrals to welfare services, informational about relevant issues, knowledge of other individuals' experiences, consciousness raising and so forth. Included in this category were all Ontario region chapters, Vancouver, Ville Marie, Calgary, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Northern Saskatchewan, Regina and Edmonton chapters.

An organization's maintenance or solidarity needs provide incentives for coalition participation as well. Movement organizations need to show their members or patrons that activities are taking place and policy gains are being secured and coalition can serve to facilitate these goals. Diani (2003) notes that being able to "sign a coalition policy statement" is important to show the group's members that work is being accomplished as needed solidarity boost from joint efforts and renewed activism as well (Gordon and Jasper, 1996). Moreover groups operating in isolation can experience fatigue over time, and consequently, coalition activities contribute to the sustenance of the movement organizations (Hathaway and Meyer, 1994).

Clearly, just as individuals joined groups for solidarity benefits, organizations joined coalitions for the same type of benefits. For example, the chapters networked with the YWCA, NAC, SISTEREN, research organizations, Regional Coalition for Social Justice, World Congress of Women, Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW). These organizations had donor members and organizational affiliates who participated in organizational activities. In the Calgary chapter to celebrate Women's history month an address was given by Vinetta Anderson, recipient of the YWCA Women of Distinction and lifetime achievement award and Gervais Collins Nominee, YWCA Women of Distinction. The theme was "Her Story of Work and Recognizing Women's Contributions." The Saskatchewan, Northern Saskatchewan and Regina chapters worked to increase visibility in the communities by networking with women's groups and sending delegates to workshops. To this end, the chapters networked with Sisteren, a grassroots Jamaican women's group who conducted a workshop on racism for chapter members. Rachelle Putman represented

the chapter at the Regional Coalition for Social Justice. In June 1987, Heather Crichlow, Saskatchewan chapter, attended the World Congress of Women held in Moscow. This conference was the follow up to the End of the Decade women's conference in Nairobi. The conferences theme was Towards the Year 2000 Without Nuclear Weapons for Peace, Equality and Development especially for the Third World. Mrs. Crichlow presented a paper in the workshop entitled "Women in Society," attended by twenty-eight hundred (2800) women from one hundred and fifty-four (154) countries. The Saskatchewan chapter participated in the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW), and presented in the workshop on "Women and the Justice System" in Toronto 1992.

Along the same lines, Mario Diani (2003) argues that movement organizations have ties to non-members through their members' other social relationships and memberships. These other ties include kinship and friendship, attendance at the same school, membership in the same recreational club, religious congregations, employment at the same workplace or membership in some secondary association that has no direct relation to the movement. In many cases these other ties become the basis for recruitment into a movement organization or its actions, as well as for increased support for the movement's opinions. Movements whose members have social connections to the larger society through many different social ties are likely to be better able to mobilize support than those that lack such ties. For example, Icylin Grant represented the Saskatchewan chapter at the Southern Symposium of Women's groups called the Saskatchewan Women's Programmes, Division of the Secretary of State. Justina Blake-Hill was the Saskatchewan chapter's delegate to the Biennial

conference of the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women (NOIVMW). She was elected as the Saskatchewan representative and served as a board member of that organization. The Congress participated in the Women Vote Coalition. It was an organization that worked in coalition with the Saskatchewan Action Committee on the Status of Women, the Regions Coalition of Social Justice, the Congress of Black Women of Canada (Regina chapter), and other women's group. The objective was to get women informed about issues that concerned them in the federal election- a special day of information was held November 5, 1988.

An organization may lack needed skills or expertise that can only be gained through coalition activity. In addition coalition work allows a group to share information that a larger network may possess and not be excluded from the loop (Diani, 2003). An advocacy coalition may be so dominant on an issue that an organization will gain no credit for a policy success as a noncoalition member. In short, when leadership of a movement organization views coalition work as important for policy success and the incentive to participate are enhanced. For example, Manitoba chapter activists June James, Joan Lloyd and other chapter members were in touch with many women's groups and exchanged information and strategies. Members were informed of issues *via* a newsletter and a weekly television programme ran by a member of the chapter. Members networked with the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, worked on International Women's Day Planning committee and the Manitoba Intercultural Council and were a member of the Citizenship Council of Manitoba. The Manitoba chapter also participated in the UN End of the Decade for Women Conference and NOIVMW's 1992 Biennial general meeting/conference. The

chapter continued its participation in the International Women's Day Celebrations. Manitoba chapter member Olivia Flynn was nominated for the YMCA/YWCA Woman of Distinction Award. Dr. June James received the Citizenship Award from the City of Winnipeg and Merle Fletcher participated in a consultation meeting called by the Women's Health Clinic and was invited to meet with the group.

By creating new bridges through their multiple personal involvements, either directly or indirectly, movement activists were actively spreading the messages of solidarity and plausible mutual trust among different groups and organizations. This was the case as the provincial organizations tried to provide black women with information about the important ways racism affected their lives. The Ontario region invited chapter presidents to a retreat, funded by the Ontario Antiracism Secretariat held in March 26-28, 1992 at Geneva Park. The session centered on racism and was led by Dorothy Ellis, Chariss Newton and Fleurette Osborne. At the June 1992 general regional meeting, a session on "Issues Facing Black Women in Canada" was video-taped featuring Akua Benjamin and all of the women at the meeting. The video was used at a Women's conference in Jamaica. At the municipal level, chapters focused on educational programmes. Manitoba president, Wendy Fraser, attended a preliminary meeting of the National Council of Black Educators and discussed projects to assist black youth. The North York chapter focused on financial planning and supported Sunnybrook hospital's mental health adolescent programme and Jane-Finch concerned Citizen's Youth Support programme. Manthe Bathelien, former Quebec provincial representative, presented a paper at a conference by the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women held in Toronto 1992. Ville Marie members

participated in launching the Feminist Economic Association of Multi-Ethnic Groups in Montreal in November 1992. The Toronto chapter and the Ontario Coalition of Visible Minority Women opened a cooperative housing project in November 1993. The Calgary chapter held symposiums on black women and their families, family violence, human rights and immigration issues, attended lectures at the University of Calgary on "racism in the women's movement."

Finally, the fourth set of activities in which all chapters participated was cultural production. Cultural production referred to action in such areas as the arts, media, humanities and /or social sciences that contribute to the production and distribution of ideas, knowledge and/or systems of beliefs. Activities that fall under this classification ranged from sponsoring arts festivals, maintaining a library or museum to media production efforts. Some examples of chapters engaged in cultural production were Vancouver, Manitoba, Ville Marie, Montreal, Saskatchewan, Thompson and Saint John. For example, most chapters focused on organizing events during black history month, showing films, participating in black history celebrations, displays at University libraries, donation of black history books to the public library, scholarship fund and cultural heritage workshops.

Black Canadian women were also united strategically with women on issues of common concern. In October 1992, the federal government declared the first annual women's history month for the status of women. Saskatchewan members represented the Congress at the international and national assemblies, for example, the United Nations End of the Decade Conference in Nairobi, Kenya. The chapters celebrated

with an evening of dance, dinner and drama. A scroll and poster, depicting black women and their contributions to Canada was prepared and displayed.

Ideology as a Challenge

The CBWC's ideological challenge to the government became meaningful to the black Canadian women for two reasons. First, the CBWC drew on pre-existing community organizations, individuals and groups that united black Canadian women and challenged the government to address issues concerning them. Given the CBWC's origins among working and middle class black women, they continued to construct resonant challenging frames out of a shared history and experience. The CBWC was able to construct frames that were built on the experiences and narratives of their targeted constituency. These frames tapped into the effects of education, high unemployment, income, job losses, immigration and discrimination faced by many black women. The CBWC claimed that black women were facing structural barriers that limited their opportunities and were at odds with a liberal democratic society. More importantly, the CBWC believed that black women had a common interest in ending systemic discrimination and believed that collective action was a vital part in ameliorating or ending the injustices (Mansbridge 2001). These emphases made the frames credible and therefore particularly resonant for black Canadian women. In this way, the CBWC became what Gamson and Meyer (1996, p.283) called "a self-conscious field of actors with grievances and common purposes, however shifting and negotiable.

Second, the CBWC's ideological challenge was aimed at targeting the government's policies and decision making at the level of public institutions. The

CBWC pointed out the structural inequalities that granted some Canadians opportunities while denying the same guarantees to them. By doing so, the CBWC pointed out that the state was not a monolithic structure-a federal, provincial, municipal governments and institutions represented it. These institutions were actors in a broader scheme. When coupled with the reduction of state resources by neoliberal policies, the result was the emergence of the CBWC that addressed multiple issues related to daily needs and survival that had consequences for black women and their families. For example, CBWC activists in their communities encountered local officials and negotiated with them to seek change. The organization used these networks to change policy in direct ways. Thus, this case showed how the CBWC used lobbying, formal networks, and organizations to target municipal, provincial or federal government at a formal level.

Clearly, ideology was important because it guided the CBWC's organizational deliberations about an opponent's vulnerabilities and strengths and was key in planning strategies and tactics. I suggested that such ideological processes not only served the obvious function of attributing blame to opponents, but they facilitated the construction of both contender and opponent identities. By specifying who was responsible for a particular social ill, in this case the Canadian government, the CBWC made explicit claims about its participants and its organization.

In addition to shaping organizational structures such as funding and movement ideologies, the synthetic model also facilitates an appreciation of how external contexts (ideologies of the dominant political economy, law and culture) shape identities.

Conclusion

This chapter highlighted how external and internal factors were important in *institutionalizing* the development of the CBWC. The CBWC's institutional activities and lobbying were designed to make the government more responsive to the issues concerning black women and their families. These organized activities included *inter alia*: coalition building, participation in multi organizational fields, the establishment of twenty-nine active chapters, establishing formal structures, expanding its resources, the configuration of leaders, pursuing a series of major social, cultural and political projects in education, employment, racism, health and the economy to provide informal educational information to its communities and the government, to name a few notable endeavours. The CBWC gave many black women who experienced discrimination in their daily lives a space for their frustration and a place to share their experiences, to forge a collective identity and an action plan. The CBWC was the catalyst that brought black women together from across the country to examine their issues concerning racism and sexism, apartheid, free trade, education, advocacy, youth, workplace harassment, family violence, employment equity and pay equity. This chapter also examined how the CBWC revealed the racism and hidden white privilege inherent in the women's movement. Yet in creating the organization and its chapters that were part of a local network developed by the CBWC primarily for discussions and exchanges of information, a new tension arose. When scholars place racism or black women as the core, new peripheries are created. Black women who did not share the same experiences because of sexuality, ethnicity, or region for example were decentered.

Within the black Canadian feminist perspective, the challenge was to empower black women, validating their knowledge and bring about social justice.

Black Canadian women in the CBWC were aware of this problem inherent in its failure to allow for greater diversity within the organization. Between 1983-1993, the CBWC attempted to challenge the notion of the essential black woman to allow for differences and celebrate diversity. Central to this project was the CBWC's commitment to forming chapters and building unity in diversity (Agnew 1996) between women of different experiences on a foundation of similar histories of race, and gender. Blackness is an important factor in this project because it expresses not only a shared history of racism, but also a common history of organizing in Canada.

This chapter also considered the ideological positions of CBWC members that drew them to the organization. The data suggest that ideological factors played a significant role in institutionalizing CBWC activities between 1983 and 1993. This period demonstrated the very active participation of CBWC members in workshops, conferences, consultations and telegram campaigns.

Thus, the CBWC's activities provided a rich source of innovation for black women. Its success during its peak period illustrated how distinct constituencies joined forces to build an organization when unified by a strongly shared goal. CBWC members prided themselves on the fact that they were providing a network of support for black women, while their creative use of strategies and tactics shaped political action within their community. Ultimately, internal conflicts did lead to organizational decline, a focus of the following chapter.

Chapter 5

DISCONNECTING AND RECONNECTING: IDEOLOGY

Introduction

Between 1993 and 2003, the CBWC was certainly less active compared to when it first organized over three decades ago. Where there were once many active chapters with large memberships, creating new opportunities and working for equality in the public arena, there were now more chapters in abeyance, decreased participation by members, internal conflicts, lack of a strategic vision, decreased funding, sporadic conference activities and events. While many activities kept the CBWC alive, the organization was in abeyance during this decade. Why? How does a black Canadian feminist synthetic and interpretive model of movements explain the relative decline of the CBWC? How does it address the issue of movement transformation?

To answer these fundamental questions, this chapter brings to the forefront key issues facing the CBWC. I argue that the decline of CBWC as a national organization is best understood as a complex by-product of two prevailing precipitating sets of factors: external environment and internal organizational dynamics.

As previously argued, the formation of the CBWC was an extremely challenging undertaking for black women. They have struggled to create an organization that reflected their varied and complementary agendas (Sudbury, 1998). At its best, the CBWC provided black women with a safe space where they can plan and create strategies for social change.

This chapter will further explore how the CBWC organized national conferences that focused on the women's experiences with racism in the health care system and the challenges inherent in community economic development schemes (CEDS). Between 1993 and 2003, CBWC worked in coalition with a broad range of women's groups. The latter activities and events sustained the organization during this period. More importantly, the participation of the CBWC in coalitions furnished it with the critical resources necessary for reconnecting and transforming itself organizationally. Lastly, the Congress of Black Women of Canada, as a national organization representing the interests of black Canadian women and their families, was shaped by the critical role played by its leadership in defining issues and determining the organization's ideologies. For the leadership, the experiences of black Canadian women framed a consciousness of common historical encounters with oppression.

This chapter demonstrates that the "let's talk" approach (Srivastava, 2002), discussed previously, facilitated further conversations within organizational settings about identities, institutions and ideologies. Interviews with CBWC leaders indicate clearly and compellingly the significance of authentic community engagement and the praxis of community organizing. One of the most noteworthy themes that emerged from interviews and observations were the defensive strategy of challenging taken-for-granted practices of the personal is political. Personal disclosure as an acceptable response to racism served to highlight a commitment to improve the lives of black Canadian women and their families. CBWC leaders engaged in community organizing described this strategy as being at the center of the change process especially with

discussions focused on organizational change as a way to resolve differences. This chapter identifies and discusses the world views of CBWC leaders in terms of a plethora of issues that relate to black families, black Canadian men, Canadian society, the woman's movement and CBWC priorities. In so doing, this chapter seeks to provide insight and clarity regarding how CBWC leaders defined organizational issues, CBWC politics, internal dynamics and context from which world views emerged. The data were elicited from conference reports and twenty-two interviews conducted with leaders between April and November 2003.

A black Canadian feminist synthetic interpretive and organizational model of movements succeeds in identifying factors both external and internal relevant to various stages of a social movement. Movements operate in structural settings that either liberate or restrain them. These existing contexts are often considered as "givens" and taken into account without much elucidation. Therefore, it is important not only to acknowledge the role of contextual factors in shaping movements, institutions and ideologies but to determine sociologically how they condition and ground in organizational contexts, power struggles, alliances, collective identities and legitimizing discourses (Whittier, 2002). Given this multi-layered view of movements, this study argues that a significant negative change in any of these factors impacts on the ability of the CBWC to engage in collective action. To this end, we examine the dialectical interplay of prevailing external factors and internal dynamics of CBWC especially in reference to the organization's decline.

External Environment: The Sociopolitical Context and the CBWC, 1993 - 2003

Canadian Economy

Canada was experiencing some profound transformations at the turn of this new millennium. The impact of the global restructuring on the Canadian economy resulted in active engagements in redesigning national economies to correspond to the perceived requisites of globalization and the global division of labor. The federal government continued to maximize imports, reduced social spending, curtailed state economic regulations and empowered capital to reorganize its national economies as parts of transnational trading blocs (Freidman, 1991, p.35). These tenets of neoliberal governmentalities guided profound shifts in public policy priorities, regulatory regimes and institutional forms in order to achieve abstract states of flexibility, efficiency and competitiveness (Vosko, 2002).

What did the above forces and trends mean for black Canadians? Many black Canadians had to deal with a labour market that experienced similar forces of restructuring combined with gender and racial discrimination that exacerbated their situation and made them vulnerable to a lower socioeconomic status (Galabuzi, 2001). Income and employment disparities (Galabuzi, 2001; Ornstein, 2000), higher unemployment rates, limited access, underemployment, limited mobility forced many black men and women into low paying, causal labor markets (Volsko, 2002) and in some cases poverty (Murdie, 1994; Ornstein, 2002; Mensah, 2002; Torjman and Leviten-Reid, 2003). These socioeconomic indicators suggested that the status of some black Canadians were in decline. Let me provide an example.

Canada's labor force grew from 14.2 million people in 1991 to 15.6 million people in 2001 (2001 Census). 78.2% of racialized minorities worked in the labour force in 1991 and 80.3% worked in the labour force in 2001 (Statistics Canada, 2003). The unemployment rate for immigrant and visible minority women was very high standing at 7.9% and 12.6 in 2001 respectively (Galbuzi, 2001). Data compiled from the 2001 Census indicated that nearly 66% of black women and 76% of black men worked in the labor force. While black women were more likely to be university educated, the average employment earnings of Canadian-born blacks (aged 25-54) was substantially lower than all Canadian born persons ($32, 000 versus $37, 200). Foreign-born blacks aged 25 to 54 earned less than all foreign-born persons in the same age group ($28, 700 versus $34, 800). Similarly, black Canadian women were still under-represented in managerial and supervisor occupations, law enforcement, firefighting and teaching (Volsko ,2002).

The segregation of the labour force along race, class and gender lines in which black women were over represented in low paying service sector jobs and experienced employment discrimination in terms of wages, hiring and promotions was the focus undertaken by the CBWC. As Aothre (Mills interview, tape recording, July 23, 2003, A003) explained:

> You heard of the glass ceiling, but for me it was not the glass ceiling but the sticky floor. You were just there and stuck. Women by and large may have made strides, but not so much for black women. Black women were just as qualified or in many cases even more qualified so why weren't they in certain jobs at certain levels?

This remark was especially valid for the CBWC in cases where black women realized the need to organize around issues related to how differences in earnings and occupational status contributed to their declining socioeconomic status. These factors were linked to the age-old issues of inequality in the labour market in which black women encountered persistent forms of exclusion that generated unequal access to work.

Immigration

The political activism of the CBWC was directed at factors that conditioned opportunities. Between 1993 and 2003, the black Canadian population grew from 557, 940 to 662, 210 people or from 2.06% to 2.2% of the Canadian population (1991 and 2001 Census). In 2001, nearly one half (45%) of blacks were born in Canada, about 48% of black immigrants who came to Canada in the 1990s were born in Africa, virtually the same proportion as those born in the Caribbean, Central and South America (47%). The black foreign-born communities consisted of people from many parts of the world, but predominantly from Caribbean and African countries. Aonet (Mills interview, tape recording, October 7, 2003, A018) recalled how the CBWC organized to help immigrant and refugee women:

> There were women refugees from African countries coming into the cities. I think we had to redirect our energies to helping those women get settled and helping them with their children.

According to the 2001 Census, about 139,800 black immigrants who resided in Canada had arrived between 1991 and 2001. One fifth (20%) were from Jamaica, followed by Haiti (12%), Somalia (10%), Ghana (8%) and Ethiopia (5%). In 2001,

almost all black Canadians (97%) lived in urban areas and nearly half (47%) of the black Canadian population about 310, 495 lived in the Toronto census metropolitan area (CMA), one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse urban areas in the world (Mensah, 2002).

This concentration provided the CBWC with a base for political mobilization. The CBWC took the insights of immigrant women and directed them towards the federal government's immigration policies. The recognition by the CBWC that their communities had common interests and concerns transcending national boundaries was prevalent in many of its statements. Sending telegrams to the Minister of Immigration concerning the proposed changes to immigration law was a primary activity involving the CBWC. Similarly, the organization urged the federal government as a member of the United Nations to join with other countries to take the necessary immediate and on-going action to intervene and to end the violence, degradation and inhumane treatment suffered by "black women, men and children in Rwanda and Haiti. The CBWC implored the government to send financial, medical and other forms of aid and support to the Rwandan and Haitian people" (1994 Report, p.7).

The CBWC continued to work in coalition with different ethnic groups. This pattern of broad participation was continued during this decade. Norma Walker, Winnipeg chapter was the organization's representative on the National Organization for Visible Minority and Immigrant Women of Canada's (NOIVMWC) board. Demonstrating the importance of the CBWC developing connections with the elderly, black Canadian women, immigrants, refugees, the poor and youth through churches, the

CBWC Foundation serving immigrants and refugees other groups, Anietheen (Mills interview, tape recording, October 8, 2003, A019) observed:

> We had a lot of new immigrants coming into the group from different African countries. So everybody came to the foundation for every issue whether it was housing, tutoring, immigration, social services, HIV and AIDS.

Anietheen's statement pointed to understanding the circumstances of immigrants within which the CBWC was required to organize. These circumstances included health issues, transnational linkages, education, social services, housing and employment –all of which provided the impetus for activism from small numbers of diasporic communities in networks of cooperation. It was within this context that CBWC organized to address the problems encountered by immigrant and refugee women.

Multiculturalism

The *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* (CMA) and its 1996 Amendments provided the CBWC with a new and different political opportunity. Again, government policies were aimed at preserving and increasing the cultural diversity within Canadian society, playing a leading role in reducing discrimination and promoting culturally sensitive change at the federal level.[1] The establishment of the multicultural programme at Heritage Canada was fully in line with the government's policy. Heritage Canada pursued three overall policy goals. First, the policy focused on identity or respect for cultural diversity such that individuals felt a sense of belonging to Canada. Second, a crucial development was the policy's emphasis on social justice or the fair and

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[1] See the Annual Report on the Operation of the Canadian Multicultural Act 2002-2003. See www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/ multi/reports/ann2002-2003/index_e.cfm - 11k - 6 Dec 2005

equitable treatment of all people. Third, the government saw the policy as a crucial stepping stone for civic participation to encourage individuals to participate in shaping the future of their communities and their country.[2] In addition, the federal government's action expanded over the years to cover a much larger range of issues that focused on the implementation of the Act by federal institutions, agencies, departments who incorporated responsiveness to multiculturalism in their programmes, policies and services. The government's approach to multiculturalism was therefore based upon the "cooperation of governments, communities and groups, to build a society in which all Canadians can realize their full potential."[3]

In October 1996, the Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF) was established and the Foundation was open to the public in November 1997.[4] The CRRF attempted to alter the political environment among governments, communities and groups by eliminating racism against racial minorities and Aboriginal Peoples, with particular emphasis on systemic discrimination in education and employment.[5] To accomplish this task, the CRRF hosted summits on racial profiling, developed linkages with the black Canadian community (Coalition of Black Community Organizations) and worked in coalition with the Ontario Human Rights Commission. It established working groups to address concerns and provided small grants to

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[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] The origins of the CRRF were linked to the 1988 Japanese Canadian Redress Agreement. The purpose of the agreement was to work at the forefront to eliminate systemic inequalities in Canadian society. Under the terms of
the agreement, the CRRF was given a one- time endowment of $24 million.

[5] Research commissioned by the CRRF in 2002-2003 investigated issues such as the lack of policy and legislative support for Aboriginal post-secondary institutions, the racialized impact of welfare fraud control in British Columbia and Ontario, Aboriginal homelessness in Sioux Lookout and systemic racism in employment in Canada. See www.crrf.gc.ca.

organizations working to systemic inequalities affected by Aboriginal peoples and racial minorities.

The increased involvement of the federal government in amending the CMA did not play a significant role in eliminating the discrimination that black women experienced in their daily lives. The CBWC realized that black women continued to experience discrimination, racism and barriers to full participation. The CMA clearly was one structural factor that afforded the CBWC the opportunity to criticize government policy. The use of criticizing government policy as a mobilizing and organizing tool reflected the manner in which prior political experience within the CBWC's history informed organizational politics in this 1993-2003 period. The CBWC therefore played an important role in being a vehicle for black women's issues within communities across the country. For example, the CBWC attended consultations held by the Minister of Multiculturalism, Jean Augustine, to discuss the Act.

Employment Equity Act

Finally, on October 24, 1996, the federal government launched the Employment Equity Act (EEA) and the Employment Equity Regulations.[6] Under the EEA, four hundred private sector employers and Crown corporations were covered. The significance of this Act was that it included all federal departments and agencies for which the Treasury Board was the employer and all separate employers with one hundred or more employees. This Act required employers to collect statistics or workforce information on its employment equity plan to address issues of equality for

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[6] See Human Resources Development Canada. Annual Report: Employment Equity Act 1998. See employment equity.gc.ca 2002-2003.
See Human Resources Development Canada. Annual Report: Employment Equity Act 2002-2003.

women, visible minorities, disabled people and Aboriginal Peoples. Importantly, a provision of the Act allowed the government to fine employers who failed to file an employment equity report or to include in the report any information that was required; or provided false or misleading information in the report.

The EEA surfaced as a major issue for the CBWC. Work by its Regina chapter helped the issue to surface on the local level, as employment equity in general was becoming central themes in local politics. For example, the Regina Chapter organized the first national pay and employment equity conference that was held in Saskatoon. The CBWC also spent a considerable amount of time targeting the federal government through lobbying and participating in consultations. The organization attended the amendments to the Federal Employment Equity Act forum sponsored by the federal government and a consultation held by the Minister for the Status of Women to discuss the federal budget. The work of the CBWC was facilitated by the fact that black women still experienced gender and race discrimination in the workforce. Black women still had not achieved representation and participation in federally governed private and public sectors, and continued to obtain occupations and employment at the lower rates of remuneration compared to their counterparts.

Status of Women

In the 1993-2003 period the context, in which the CBWC's national conferences and activities were shaped, was linked to the processes generated by the third wave of black Canadian feminists in the universities. Many black Canadian feminists continued to raise questions about mainstream feminist theory and practice for perpetuating racial differences between women (Dua, 1999). These writers pointed

out that the experiences of women of colour with all aspects of gender, femininity, sexuality, marriage, work and family vary substantially from that of middle class white women. These differences raise questions about the universality of gendered experiences.

Black Canadian feminists in the universities were determined to study the situation of black women in a more systematic manner. They noted that despite the increasing awareness of the ways in which mainstream feminist praxis created divisions among women, transforming feminist organizations and theory was not an easy task. They argued that the black Canadian feminist's attempts to work with women's organizations, immigrant women's services and cultural institutions were met with resistance and hostility and their struggles were well-covered by Canadian newspapers (Agnew, 1996, p. 17; Cayene, 1986). They stated that despite the increasing numbers of women of color in the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), black women were dramatically underrepresented in leadership positions. While NAC took the steps to make the organization more inclusive by electing two women of colour presidents, many NAC members did not support this decision. Beverly Bains, a NAC member during these years, stated "we do hear from some white women their perception that suddenly black women's or non white women's issues are becoming important. These women are not seeing the connection between black women and white women's issues" (quoted in Dua, 1999, p.17).

Black feminist academics and activists found it equally difficult to challenge the pedagogical paradigms and canons of various disciplines, including feminist theory (Dua, 1999; Bannerji, 1995; Carty, 1991). This paucity needed to be set within the

context of black women's intellectual production in Canada. Despite the increasing numbers of black women accessing higher education in the 1993 and 2003 period, black women in Canada were dramatically under-represented in academia. Equally, their theoretical and intellectual work was not widely disseminated. Black women had continually pointed out that most disciplines including women's studies had largely ignored black feminist thought (Carty, 1991). Carty (ibid) noted that despite the call for more inclusive writings, most feminist work continued to be written as if racial differences did not exist between women. She (ibid, p.9-10) asked, why "is Canadian feminist scholarship still not representative of the racial-ethnic diversity in Canadian society?" The exclusion of black women from the institutional notions of what constitutes legitimate knowledge production is being explored in the Canadian context (Dei, 1996; Calliste, 1996; Agnew, 1996). However, it is clear that Dei's call for the physical representation of racialized bodies in the academy was, in part curtailed by the exclusion of black women from the positions where their intellectual work is recognized and paid for. Where black women's groups have addressed this problem by publishing their own work and documenting their achievements of such organizations, the resulting publications rarely achieve the wide readership and distribution they deserve.

The black Canadian feminist movement has opened the space for the CBWC to raise concerns about the difficulty of challenging racism in the health care system and in the community economic development schemes. The CBWC knew that the construction of Canada's health care system and the CED schemes were not entities in themselves, but were enmeshed in a racialized and gendered construction of nation that

organizes black women's everyday lives. Thus, the health care system and the CED schemes could not be treated separately from the broader sociopolitical and economic contexts.

Drawing on the black Canadian feminist synthetic and interpretive model of movements, this inquiry argue that for individuals to be self-sufficient and resilient in the management of their own health care and employment opportunities, one must consider how levels of ideological embeddedness underpin the construction of the Canadian nation. This perspective indicates that the ideologies of egalitarianism and individualism assume mythically that all citizens have the equal opportunity to achieve their optimum health, opportunities in employment and access to education. Thus, a level playing field is projected wherein individuals are seen as being largely independent of the social constraints. The ideologies of individualism and egalitarianism make it easier for those charged with providing access to education, health care services and employment to consistently avoid examining the sociopolitical barriers to maintaining and perpetuating people's education, employment and health - these ideologies lead to a rhetoric of equality even in the face of inequities and racism.

It was within this context in which black women came together to address racism in the health care system in 1994. In this way, the CBWC was sustained by a black Canadian feminist politics and praxis that offered new insights and ways of conceptualizing the issues that were derived from an analysis of the diverse experiences of black women – those mostly negatively affected by the health care system. Their analysis came out of the workshops and consultations between women from diverse backgrounds and who were health care professionals.

In 1997, the CBWC's conference drew attention to the fact that the CED's were created by the Canadian government and was anything but a poor attempt to address the problems of employment and racism. For the CBWC, the member's response to the CED schemes was mixed and they were largely open to the insights offered by using a black Canadian feminist synthetic and interpretive organizational model of movements. The members generated a number of criticisms that could be used to analyze the CED schemes. According to this perspective, black women realized that the notion that equal opportunity is available to all and that the individual's effort is responsible for success is as much part of the ideology of employment schemes and it lead to contradictions that reinforce a system of inequality. Thus, the CBWC drew attention towards the disjuncture between the discourses of the state and the actual employment practices.

By 2003, the CBWC had organized many activities around specific issues. The organization developed alliances with many groups such as black men, black women and women of colour that empowered the organization. Not surprisingly, the CBWC's process of inclusion and unity in diversity had been difficult. The CBWC's working in coalition with a range of feminist organizations had also created some tensions. The coming together of feminist organizations with the CBWC created the demands for representation and participation that challenges the existing hierarchies and practices. I argue that the diversity of membership made it challenging, but not impossible for the CBWC to devise a strategy or political agenda that can satisfy all. Unity in diversity (Agnew, 1999) was viewed as providing a foundation for the survival and continuity of the organization.

Funding

Financial reports were unavailable to examine the CBWC's funding sources during this decade. However, the organization received government grants to organize its 1994 biennial general meeting. Funding sources included: Health Promotions Directorate, registrations, Health and Welfare Canada, Women's Programmes, Human Resources and Development Canada; Language Services, Heritage Canada; Multicultural Grants, Advisory Council, the City of Winnipeg Manitoba. The CBWC used the government grants for antiracism training for elementary school teachers. The projects was completed in Regina and continued in schools in Vancouver and the Lower Mainland B.C. Partnerships with Multicultural Council extended the sessions into the fall 1997 (Table 23).

In conclusion, this section highlighted four factors affecting the CBWC's external contexts. The external contexts are defined by global restructuring of the Canadian economy, external politics of immigration, the limitations of multiculturalism, the Employment Equity Act, status of women and funding. As in the past, black Canadians continued to advocate for improvements in representation, recognition and rights within a pernicious political economy of racism governed by ideologies of exclusions and manifested in education, employment, income, job security, families and poverty. However, the possibilities of further building upon and sustaining a national organization were vitiated by external factors. Moreover, the exacerbating internal organizational limitations of CBWC also presented numerous challenges.

Table 23
Financial Statements/Revenues/Report of the CBWC, 1994

Income	**Actual**	**Budget**
Federal Grant	$43,425.00	$43,425.00
Health and Welfare Canada	$15,000.00	
Human Resources - Women's Programmes Heritage Fund	$ 4,250.00	
Total	$62,675.00	
Income From Other Sources		
Registrations	$9,359.00	$27,000.00
Travel Assessments	$7,790.00	
Total	$79,824.93	$70,425.00
Expenditures		
Child Care	$530.00	$2,000.00
Honoraria	$2,900.00	$5,500.00
Postage, Stationery, and office	$3,500.00	$7,000.00
Premises	$1,212.17	$2,450.00
Rent-Interpretation sound equipment	$2,877.65	$6,900.00
Report Preparation	$484.24	$375.00
Telecommunications	$3,143.93	$2,000.00
Translation	$3,370.50	$2,500.00
Travel Accommodations	$17,607.27	$12,000.00
Transportation	$41,879.18	$29,700.00
Total	$77,504.94	$70,425,00
Excess of Revenue Over Expenditure	$2,319.99	-

Internal Factors: Organizational Structure, Objectives, Frames and Leadership

Strategy and Tactics

The CBWC utilized a variety of direct action tactics (e.g. consultations, attending meetings, workshops, forums, coalition work and lobbying) during this decade. CBWC president Fleurette Osborne attended consultations on Human Resources Social Reform held by the NAC in preparation for the National Criminal Justice Conference sponsored by the Justice Department. She attended a meeting with the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women (CCLOW) and discussed the issues of Cooperative Fundraising in light of cuts to the federal funding

for women's organizations. The CCLOW discussion on cooperative funding led to further consultations and the establishment of the women's future fund. The CBWC was a member of the Steering Committee whose major work emphasized the establishment of the foundation, and discussion of ideas and projects for fundraising. Rosetta Cadagib, Ville Marie chapter, represented the organization at the National Women's Reference Group (NWRG) conference on labor market issues. Status of Women consultations was held across Canada during the spring of 1996. The Congress was represented at the March 1996 session held in Montreal. The purpose was to consult with women about the research programme it inherited due to the closing of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women and its relationship to non-governmental organizations. The Congress also targeted international organizations. Between 1993 and 1995, the vice-president was a member of the Beijing Facilitating Committee and served as the Congress' representative on the Canada preparatory Committee. Following this, the CBWC received accreditation from the United Nations (U.N.) to allow a representative from the organization to attend the fourth U.N. Conference on Women in Beijing China in 1995 as an observer. CBWC president Florette Osborne and Dolly Williams from the Preston/Cherrybrook chapter attended the nongovernmental organization (NGO) forum.

In 1997 Janis Jones was elected president at the Twelfth Biennial Conference and General Meeting at the Delta Meadowvale Conference Centre in Mississauga. Jones wanted "the CBWC to encourage national and international liaisons with other groups, enhance its research base, and make use of new technologies to educate and

communicate with members."[7] She wanted to use the Internet and email to facilitate better communication between the chapters, and the CBWC's executive. Jones added: "Apart from all this, our major emphasis will be advocacy on behalf of the black women and the black family as we review national government policies to ensure that there is equality in every sense of the word."[8]

Jones's first task was to analyze the organization's effectiveness as a lobby group to get a sense of where it stood and in which direction it needed to go. This was a major focus of the organization that was dictated by the general membership. Her goals were to network with representatives from across the country to plan and implement strategies. Apparently, after the conference ended, Jones could not follow through on her promises. Consequently, she resigned the same year and Vice-President Fleurette Osborne took over. Osborne argued that it was important for the CBWC to decide how to address this challenge.[9]

From 1996 to 1997, the vice-president attended the follow-up session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, the body responsible for the implementation of the recommendations coming out of the Beijing conference. In 1996 NGO's were invited to make application for the consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This provided opportunities for the organization to become involved in the work of various U.N. bodies; as well as speak on their behalf at sessions such as the Commission on the Status of Women. The CBWC's application was received and approved in May 1997. In addition, the organization's priority was to

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[7] See Share Magasine, May 22, 1997, Black Women Elect New Leader.
[8] Ibid.
[9] See section on the CBWC's decline for a discussion of why some chapters were in abeyance, how it happened and their impact.

create transnational linkages with black women and this was accomplished with membership in the International Network of Women of Colour (INWOC).

Race issues continued to be a major impetus for CBWC activity. This was particularly true when the organization was invited to join the African Canadian Legal Clinic to intervene in a case before the Supreme Court of Canada – *R.D. vs her Majesty the Queen*. The CBWC requested that Akua Benjamin attend the hearing at the Supreme Court. The organization's role was to participate in the development of arguments to be presented to the Supreme Court, since racism was believed to be an issue in the case. As this history shows, CBWC activities were taking place continuously in Canada between 1993 and 1997, despite the regular turnover of the local population.[10]

Between 1993 and 1997, organizing conferences was identified by interviewees as one of the most important problems facing the organization. During this period, CBWC leadership sought to exploit this importance by devising strategies designed to highlight the organization's strengths. By reminding its constituents of the latter, leaders hoped to tap into the success of the organization engendered by the changing pattern of black activism in the mid- to-late 1990s. Consequently, the conferences did more than simply mirror the declining organization, it contributed to the decline as well when the CBWC president resigned. The conference format continued as the CBWC responded to the issues facing black women. This is the focus of the next section.

[10] The CBWC's activities were continuous over the years. By continuous I mean that the CBWC's activities represented a continuous process, repertoire, from emergence to decline.

Table 24 Organizational Structures of CBWC, 1993-1999

Decision-Making Structure And Division of Labor	Membership Criteria/Records	Connection to other Groups	Leadership
formal, decision making executive counsel, committees, division of labor, provincial representatives, local chapters, National Foundation of the CBWC	dues paying members, attempts to encourage more active participation, lists of active members, activists, chapters, formal records	formal guidelines and ties to chapters, affiliate groups, funds and financial support to chapters, regional organizations created to further coordination, committees created to perform needed tasks and integrated into organization, formalized connection to members, communication with chapters as CBWC expands	volunteer members

Adapted from Staggenborg (1999, p.104)

Conferences

Social movement scholars (Koopmans, 1993; Melucci, 1989) argue that social networks provide the basis for collective action. Social movement communities need "issues and tactics to develop and transform networks into collective action campaigns" (Staggenborg, 1996, p.145). Often it is the social movement organizations that create campaigns that bring together networks of activists to address critical issues. Movement organizations need to create issues that help to maintain the organization structurally. My data indicated that the CBWC needed to draw on a common routine (conferences) which brought newcomers into contact with long-time activists and organizational tactics. This was the case with the CBWC as it organized conferences between 1994 and 2001 (see table 25).

Table 25 Conferences, General Meeting, Year, and Purpose, 1993-2003

Conference	Year	Purpose
Eleventh NCBW	1994	To disseminate information and solutions on black women's health issues
Twelfth NCBW	1997	To discuss Community Economic Development (CED) and to develop an action plan for the next three years
Thirteenth NCBW	1999	*
Fourteenth NCBW	2001	*

* Conference Reports and documentation was unavailable

Eleventh CBWC Conference 1994

The eleventh CBWC Biennial conference and general meeting was held on May 13th to May 15, 1994 at the International Inn in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Approximately 250 women (doctors, nurses, health care professionals, community workers, domestic workers and black women with various illnesses) attended the event to offer expertise and support concerning numerous health care issues that impacted black women's lives. The theme of the conference was "Black Women Taking Care of Ourselves", organized around issues of mental, spiritual, physical, emotional individual and community well being. These health concerns, however, were vitiated by experiences with racism in the health care system. The conference offered participants the opportunity to reflect on their collective identity and status as outsiders to the medical practices. Many black women were professional, clients and consumers and frustrated by their lack of choices and control under the Canadian system. According to one member, "as black women living in a society which devalued us, everything and everyday life affected our health and well being, physical, emotional, psychological, social and spiritual" (1994 papers). According to Florette Osborne

(1994), conference chairperson, the "conference theme focused on a number of factors that impact the lives of black women and their families and affect their health and well being." The delegates discussed racism at the North Western Hospital, the impact of violence on black women's health, AIDS/HIV, sickle cell anaemia, lupus, hypertension, cancer, poverty and menopause.

According to the 1994 Report of the Biennial Conference and General Meeting, the conference had workshops that focused on "Racism as a Health Hazard-Northwestern Hospital" by Akua Benjamin, Amanthe Bathalien: "The Impact of Violence on Black Women's Health"; Lynette Mensah, "Black Women and Health Issues"; AND Dell Stevens "Black Women and Poverty."

In the first workshop, Vuyiswa Keyi, Dr. June James, Marian Napier and Madeline Edwards, black doctors and nurses, used the conference to encourage black women to talk about their experiences as medical professional in the hospitals. Keyi, James, Napier and Edwards were well aware that there were few black doctors and nurses working in the hospitals. Moreover, programs dealing with the diseases affecting white people were disproportionate to the programs dealing with AIDS, hypertension, sickle cell anaemia and cancer affecting black woman. In examining the power relations in the health care system, it is generally agreed that a system of social stratification exists between white doctors and black nurses that shape the roles of both groups.

The medical profession in Canada historically has been racialized and gendered. While white doctors occupy the top of the doctor's hierarchy in high technology and high-status specialty areas where there are greater opportunities for further training. By

contrast, black nurses are concentrated at the bottom of this division of labour: as staff nurses, they work in the least skilled and least desirable areas, where the jobs are low status, boring and dead end (Calliste, 1996). Thus, black nurses experience the interlocking system of racism, sexism and classism.

The first workshop serves as an illustration of the racially stratified medical profession. Racism and sexism in the medical profession is having a disproportionate impact on black nurses, particularly blacks who are vulnerable and relatively powerless. They are more likely to be summarily dismissed or have their health concerns ignored. For instance, Keyi recognized that racism influenced one white doctor's perception of her health issues. Keyi was a nurse and a cancer survivor. She had a check up and was told that "nothing was wrong." She challenged her doctor's diagnosis and spoke out to other doctors about her case and only then did she received a screen test, a biopsy, lumpectomy and she went into treatment. Keyi's experience was not an isolated incident, but captured an important dimension of black women's experiences with the health care system. Keyi became racialized within the health care system. To repeat, racialization is the process whereby certain meanings are attached to the presence of black women within the medical system that influences not only how they were viewed but also their interactions with white doctors.

The idea that black women suffering from a disease are often undiagnosed is a phenomenon that is endemic to the medical profession. Dr. Carole Pugler Christensen said "the contradiction is due in large measure to the discrimination, racism, sexism embedded within the health care system and that the black woman's needs were not being met by the existing programs and services" (1994 Report, p.10). The idea that

black women expressed their concerns to health care professionals, and that their concerns were often dismissed by white doctors, shows how racism, sexism and classism continue to permeate the workplace culture, where black nurses knowledge and health issues are devalued and ignored. The panel pointed out that incidents such as that experienced by Keyi, were indicative of what can happen in "a racist and sexist culture when a black woman challenges the status quo to receive a proper diagnosis and treatment" (1994 Report).

The second panel discussion on "Racism as a Health Hazard" provided an ideal illustration. Akua Benjamin, Lynette Mensah, Dell Stevens and Patsy Jordan (Moderator) were on then panel. The activist's role was to educate and guide participants in developing their oppositional identity. Nurses had been struggling against racism in a Toronto hospital. The nurses worked for several years on the same chronic floor where the work entailed heavy work, lots of lifting and were victims of a historical stereotype of black women as mules. Patsy Jordan talked about the experiences of nurses who experienced racism in a Toronto hospital. According to 1994 Report:

> they endured patient abuse and disrespect from visiting family members. They were harassed and intimidated. They were subjected to emotional, psychological and physical stress, denied promotion, received low wages in comparison to others; and suffered racial and sexual harassment. After many years at the hospital, their credentials and standards were questioned, and other nurses were not treated in the same manner. There was family breakdown, loss of homes, psychiatric

illnesses, and children being taken away by the Children's Aid Society.

The women worked together and won their case (ibid., p.12).

These nurses contacted the CBWC and asked the organization to act as their advocate against racism in the workplace. The nurses went to court and their complaints of racism against the hospital were upheld. The 1994 Report stated that "it was a landmark case of discrimination because it was not simply an award of money to nurses, but a series of remedies to remove systemic discrimination that were to be implemented by the hospital" (ibid., p.15) For example, some of the remedies included access to continuing professional training for all nurses; and all of the staff were given anti-racism training every three years to ensure that they were in compliance with the order to the tribunal. In this case, the law not only provided activists and their organization with an institutional site wherein policy battles can be fought and organizational goals could be advanced, but it also constituted a source of financial resources.

The existence of racism was recognizable to the nurses at the Northwestern Hospital and they were cognizant of the ways in which race and gender structured social relations in the hospital. The nurses who worked in the hospital recognized the power imbalance between white and black nurses affected the types of work or wards where black nurses predominated. Osborne (1994, p.12) believed that the "black nurses were concentrated in jobs where they experienced emotional stress, isolation, poverty, job pressures and family stress contributing to their situation." The nurses recognized that racism influenced the white nurse's perception of black nurses and they were aware of the tensions between white nurses and black nurses. For many black nurses, conflict emerged on the wards between black nurses who had more education and experience

than their white counterparts. The black nurses felt that despite having the education and training, white personnel were granted even more authority if they had less education. Edwards (1994) recalled "working on the floor where black nurses spoke out when the head nurse made a decision to put a nursing assistant in charge of them." According to Edwards, "I was removed from the ward and not allowed to go where the black nurses were." Edwards (ibid) said that despite "the fact that she spoke out and encouraged the nurses to pursue legal action, she was glad that she focused on the issue of racism."

Racially specific gender and classist ideologies have been used to justify the racial division of labour and exploitation and devaluation of black women's labour and this was the topic of the third workshop. In the third workshop, the delegates discussed the topic of Family Responsibility, Work and the Impact on Health. The delegates stated that black Canadian women had a long history of working outside the home that is rooted in different historical processes such as slavery. For example, three deprivations suffered by black Canadian women and men distinguish their experience from that of other groups or other enslaved peoples. First, slave relations were characterized by "super exploitation, brutal repression and the ideological subjugation of African by Europeans" (Calliste, 1996). Second, the slave's family and tribal social structures were destroyed by separating tribal and family members from one another - weakening the personal and familial bonds that give sustenance and strength (Mensah, 2002; Winks, 1996). The slave system hindered attempts to develop a stable family life. Black womanhood and black manhood were violated as slaves were treated as subhuman and reproductive animals.

The third deprivation stemmed from the first two. In order to justify slavery, an ideological system was needed that made its victims less human so an elaborate theory of inferiority based on colour was socially constructed. African cultures were denigrated. This racist ideology and its underlying assumptions became part of the North American culture; it confronted black Canadian women and men everyday and continued to be revived and reinforced during periods of racial unrest.

Evidently racism and sexism in employment increased during an economic recession and cutbacks in health care and this intensified during the 1990s fiscal crisis (Mensah, 2002). The economic restructuring was having a disproportionate impact on black female workers and particularly those who are vulnerable and relatively powerless.

Similar to other social movements, activists focused on changing individuals and institutions. They have employed, what Lichterman (1996) calls, personalized political strategies (Taylor, 1999; Taylor and Whittier, 1992). Activists engaged in personalized political strategies in their everyday lives, not only through their participation in social movement organizations (Lichterman, 1996). Some of the participants contended that there was a unique set of conditions that posed a different set of circumstances and struggles for black women. It had to do with their history as immigrant women and as Canadian-born, the cultural context of migration. Their struggles were related to gaining their rightful place within Canadian society and their constant struggle to remain in chosen workplace and career. In other words, black Canadian women had a long history of working outside the home in both skilled and unskilled labor force. Work was always necessary for their survival and that of their

families. Black males had received meager rewards and it was always necessary for black women to provide a portion of the income for the family to stay above the poverty line.

Like other immigrants, some black women came to Canada to improve economically and fully intended to enter the labour force and make a contribution to their new society. The intersection of gender inequity and racism presented many added challenges and often when there was a shift to the bottom of the pyramid. To reverse or slow down the negative impacts on their health and well being, it was vital to understand the external context in which black women were positioned.

In the workshop, "Killing Us Softly,"panelists Vuyisaw Keyi, June James, Marian Napier, Madeline Edwards and Betty Lough discussed AIDS and the Black Woman, hypertension, cancer, and sickle cell anaemia. Just as boundaries are oppositional, activists develop a political consciousness that is based on opposition to existing frameworks and understandings (Mansbridge, 2001). Political consciousness involves interpretive frameworks that emerge out of a challenging group's struggles to define and realize its interests (Taylor and Whittier, 1992, p.114). Individuals began to evaluate and critique the Canadian health care system as they interacted with activists in social movement communities. The CBWC enabled activists to blame their grievances on a structural rather than personal cause in order to develop an oppositional or political consciousness (Feree and Hess, 1996). For example, conference participants argued that AIDS was on the increase in black women and it had to do with how black women were viewed; it took much longer to diagnose the disease or was harder because AIDS-related symptoms may be caused by hormonal

changes and weight loss. The latter was often missed in women and women in general were more vulnerable. Similarly sickle cell anaemia was a genetic condition that afflicted black Canadian people. Lack of doctor training resulted in a misdiagnosis and symptoms go undetected. The Sickle Cell Association of Ontario was pressured to have newborn babies screened and tests for early identification of the disease so the treatment started as early as possible.

The final workshop focused on "Violence and its Impact on Health." Many black women were victims of domestic violence and this was a major problem that was addressed. The Congress was challenged to speak out against violence and abuse. Participants concerns focused on the growing violence amongst adolescence. Young males were resorting to intimidation and the sexual harassment of young women. While some of the behaviour was related to what was seen in their social setting, poverty, violence of racism in the society cannot be ignored as other factors contributing to the situation. The CBWC argued that youth must be taught that violence in any form cannot be condoned or tolerated and must not be emulated. Violence destroyed the self-esteem of the victims and caused physical and mental problems and stress.

Thus, the CBWC's conference promoted racial awareness that addressed topics of major concerns to workers, such as systemic discrimination and its affect on black women's health. The CBWC also sensitized the delegates to the concerns of some black women that work in occupations where they were unable to take time off for routine health care. Treatable health problems, such as cancer, cardiovascular disease and gastrointestinal disorder go undetected and jeopardize their chances of survival. For example, "a black woman who was hypertensive was four times more likely to develop

kidney disease" (1994 Report). Black women faced discrimination in employment which made it more likely they would work in low paying jobs which did not allow easy access to medical services. They were denied the health care that white, middle class women take for granted.

The conference ended by activists making a number of recommendations about health and education. The recommendations focused on two levels: micro and macro. Activists believed that individuals were responsible for their health. Consequently, they wanted to encourage participants to be come more involved and have more control in their health care. It was important to pay regular visits to the doctors; use the appointment to ask questions about any health issues; and include spirituality in their work and daily lives. At the conference's end, the CBWC's recommendation, as reported in the 1994 Report, were to:

> 1. Conduct a survey of the resources available and support groups in the provinces for sickle cell anemia, lupus, and other illnesses affecting black women and their families.
> 2. Lobby the provincial Ministers of Health to institute the testing of babies for sickle cell anaemia.
> 3. Establish support groups where there is freedom for women to talk about their experiences in taking care of themselves and to share their solutions.
>
> And at the biennial general meeting, the delegates adopted the motion that:
>
> The Congress of Black Women of Canada send letters to the provincial Ministers of Health informing them of our concerns around the lack of testing of new born babies for sickle cell anemia, and urging them to initiate such testing within their jurisdictions.

The delegate's demand for access to the programs dealing with the diseases affecting black women and their families was not viewed in isolation, but as one of a number of interrelated struggles. The CBWC found that a black Canadian feminist synthetic and interpretive organizational model of movements to health issues was vital, not only

because it reflected the reality of black women's lives, but also because it deals explicitly with oppression.

In linking the various struggles, the members were able to maintain the organization through their conferences in which black women across the country could participate. Black Canadian feminists like Vuyiswa Keyi, Dr. June James, Marian Napier and Madeline Edwards spoke at many of the CBWC's events about the needs of black women, the racism they encountered in seeking services, and the need for the organization to address these issues.

The CBWC tried to make it clear in its black feminist organizing that it is a fundamental right for black women to make informed decisions about their health and to have access to programs dealing with their health concerns. For the CBWC, they were aware that for all women to truly have choices in Canadian society regardless of race, class and gender that they required services and programs in their own communities, decent jobs, education and an end to discrimination –all of these issues must be fought for in order to black women to address their health care issues.

In brief, at the eleventh conference, I have considered the ways in which the delegates were discussing black women's experiences with racism in the health care system. Central to their social justice project was the participation on the part of all black women in the health care system and the knowledge of their rights to health care and work at all levels of society. Hence, the health care literacy plays a critical role in creating social justice. By leading the drive to promote discussions concerning the health care system that affected their lives, the CBWC empowered black women to learn about their issues and to advocate on behalf of black women for antiracist policies.

Members asked the organization to distribute *News at 6.* News at 6 was a brief statement about activities taking place at the national, provincial, and municipal levels that was circulated every six weeks.

The conference participants urged the Congress to intervene in the schools by advocating for an inclusive curriculum and equity programmes by schools boards. Other recommendations included recruiting black women to join the organization, especially the elderly, black Canadian women, immigrants, refugees, the poor and youth through churches, organizations serving immigrants and refugees. The organization wanted to create a space for women to talk about their experiences in taking care of themselves and share solutions, planned and conducted workshops/workgroups, and focused on parenting (ways in which their sons and daughters were socialized). Participants called for organizing cultural activities to reduce feelings of marginalization and advertised meetings and special events in local newspapers.

Social movement scholars argue that organizations need to stimulate participation to ensure that jobs get done. It is a task that is particularly important for organizations that depend entirely on the active participation of members. The conferences were always a way of expanding opportunities by introducing new members, events and issues into the life of the organization. Conferences aided the CBWC's continuity because participants valued the organization itself, it encouraged members to voice their positions and above all else persuaded members not to exit the organization. For example, conference participants wanted the Congress to encourage the recruitment of African women. By including new members, the CBWC was able to

broaden its agenda to include issue concerning female genital mutilation (FGM), worked actively work with women from countries where it was practiced, engaged in education, prevention, child protection and advocated towards the eradication of the practice of FGM.

Activists began by talking about how to challenge the Canadian health care system and influence medical professionals to address their issues. These activists created boundaries that positioned themselves as alternatives to the extant health care system. Conference participants developed a political consciousness as they learned that others had the same frustrations and experiences. Their personal troubles became public issues that required collective and structural solutions (Mills, 1959). Activist turned the conference and the workshops into a form of activism that politicized everyday life in order to improve upon Canadian medicine and supported their concerns. The collective identities though retained by some of the activists, was also prevalent at the beginning of the conferences in 1973. Activists were trying to justify their place, however narrow, within the health care system.

Participants attempted to create collective identities that clarified their opposition to dominant representations, beliefs and discourse. Developing their collective or oppositional identities requires that activists establish boundaries that define who are inside or outside the movement (Taylor and Whittier, 1992). First, the activists constructed a boundary between black women's health care and the outside world by differentiating themselves from the larger society. Second, activist defined their interests in opposition to dominant groups since they drew a boundary between themselves and the Health care system. The activists positioned the CBWC as part of a

larger social movement, introducing alternative values and questioning the dominant views of medicine.

Twelfth CBWC Conference, 1997

The twelfth CBWC conference and general meeting took place on May 16th until May 19th , 1997 at the Delta Meadowvale Resort and Conference Center in Mississauga, Ontario (1997 Report). The Mississauga chapter (Heather Whittaker, Madeline Edwards, Rita, Ruth, Carole) and the Brampton chapter (Veronica, Maurine, Donna and Silvilyn Holt) hosted the conference. Linda Morowei, executive director of the Jane-Finch Concerned Citizens Organization, delivered the keynote address. The conference theme was "Our Possibilities are Endless, Black Women in Motion to the Year 2002 and Beyond." The conference focused on Community Economic Development (CED): A Step Towards Self-Reliance. CED provided the CBWC with an approach to discuss how the transition to sustainable economic development could help the organization and improve the quality of life in black Canadian communities. Approximately one hundred women attended the event (indicating that the participation rate was well below that of other previous BMGs in 1994).

CED strategies were important to the CBWC because they initiated a way for women to think about economic issues. Aet (Mills interview, tape recording, August 8, 2003, A08) noted in regard to CED schemes:

> I think there were a lot of areas where women needed help like investment opportunities. This was something in our black community that we really didn't have a lot of. Entrepreneurial activities, how do we get loans, how to maintain a business? That seemed obvious, but we

> needed to have a structure that would lend itself to that and that required a bigger financial base than we had. Women needed help with investment opportunities. In our community we did not have many entrepreneurial activities. How do we apply for a loan? How do we build a business? We needed to have a financial base for our activities.

The significance was that collective action occurred at the community level and black women's oppositional consciousness imbued them with the sense that they could be effective in changing their economic surroundings and their lives. This was in response to the effects of neoliberal policies: downsizing and restructuring processes in the private and public sectors that left many black Canadian women unemployed. CED was an approach that included community members in the planning and decision making process to develop business partnerships and generate economic activity that built on community resources (human, skills and finances) to enhance community development through cooperation with other organizations, businesses and government. To this end, the conference raised awareness about the concepts and principles of CED as an economic alternative, identified priorities and developed strategies for the next three years.

Three workshops were offered: (1) "Developing Partnerships for Community Development" featuring Kay Blair, executive director, Rexdale micro skills and the facilitator was Lynette Mensah. (2) "Processes and Strategies for Implementing Community Economic Development" featuring Carol Cayenne, "Programme Manager, Self-Employment Development Initiatives", and the facilitator was Janis Jones. (3) "Business Plan/Proposal-Planning, Preparation" featuring Rose Cadogan, new

entrepreneur, former provincial representative, Quebec, Olivia Daniels, Quebec representative and G. Foster, Entrepreneur, the facilitator was Olivia Daniels, former GNN real estate Co-ordinator, Bank of Montreal.

The goal of the first workshop, "Developing Partnerships for Community Development", was to familiarize participants with the different forms of partnerships and processes for business development. The objectives were to explore the concepts of CED and entrepreneurship, and examined the importance of CED to the black Canadian community. Blair argued that women had obtained information, established their place in the community and strived to access the opportunities and resources that will develop their community.

The discussion started with the group defining the two concepts of partnership and partnering. According to Blair (1999 Papers), partnerships were the mutual relationships formed between individuals, community groups, business and government. They were legal entities in which two or more persons were co-owners sharing profits/losses. Partnerships took many forms given the current socioeconomic and political climate and as a result were driven by shifts in the labor market; increasing technology; resources; increases in self-employment or small business development; governments and other funders for CED insisted on forming partnerships for projects and programmes.

The workshop ended by discussing how to initiate a partnership, contracts, financial management of limited resources; mutual goals and expectations; the business operations; equity principles and contributions of all partners. In addition, the participants talked about the barriers facing black women in implementing CED. These

included the systemic barriers related to racism, sexism and discrimination; difficulty in obtaining sound business advice; access to capital, training in enterprise develop, unemployment and under employment and access to government and other funding initiatives.

The goals of the second workshop, "Processes and Strategies for Implementing Community Economic Development (CED)," were to broaden black Canadian women's knowledge of CED and its place in the local economy; and explored four strategies for effective Community Development. Jones defined CED as working together as a community to build businesses. It meant a sharing of ideas and increased control. The four strategies of CED included (1) being inclusive and representative of the community's needs, (2) collaborating with members of the community who were part of the planning process; (3) generating economic activities to increase employment and sales; and finally; (4) these strategies built the capacity of the community to develop business plans focusing on strategies, assessment, marketing, and promotion. These four strategies represented a "plan for success" that included the four "c's": capital, commitment, connections and community. The session ended by participants talking about the balance between socioeconomic and political success for themselves individually and collectively as Congress members. But more importantly, the participants agreed that it was important to pass on their successes to the younger generation.

The goal of the third workshop, "Preparing Business Plans/Proposals," was to assist participants in starting a business venture. Most of the participants in this workshop indicated an interest in starting a business and approximately eight to ten

percent were already engaged in some business enterprise. An important point made was to develop a business plan that incorporated the following: clarified the business ideas, sharpened the focus and research of the product/service and the prospects; provided a frame of reference within which to develop the ideas and follow-up on business strategies; served as a basis for discussion with partners, founders, banks, agencies; provided a tool for measuring and evaluating performance and progress of venture.

A short plenary and a general meeting to discuss constitutional amendments were held on Sunday May 18th , 1997. First, a short plenary followed in which there was a review of the day's activities and direction given to the provincial representatives who facilitated discussion in the caucuses. Four questions were distributed to help focus the discussion. The questions were what CED projects were currently undertaken in your areas? Were they projects in which black Canadians or other racialized minorities were involved? What were projects that the CBWC could initiate? What individuals or organizations were willing or suitable partners for Congress on community projects?

Each caucus chose one person to serve on the CED committee. The ideas generated from the caucuses included: owning and managing a senior citizen's day home and drop-in day care center (1997 Report). This project would provide jobs, training and was inclusive of all members in the community. There would be a cadre of personal care attendants to provide in-home care services. Follow-up meetings on CED were held to further inform and develop a needs assessment or identify projects; establish a black Canadian book store; restaurants serving African and Caribbean cuisine; black Canadian hair stylists and schools to train hair stylists. Other projects

included a financial cooperative, a group home with a component for counseling at-risk teenage black women.

Feminist scholars argue that the focus for the economic activity is to provide for local needs in small-scale goods or services industries, but CED could involve larger-scale industries that meet the consumption needs outside the local community as well. Attempts are made to encourage women's cooperatives, to create credit unions to provide the funding the commercial banks would not usually give to businesses initiated by women and to help women develop skills to start their own work projects. None of these initiatives by themselves was presented as a single solution to economic development. It is not a comprehensive strategy, but it is a way to provide what women needed-money.

As stated earlier, CED strategies were important because they initiated a way for women to think about economic issues. The promise was that action could occur at the ***community*** level and women were imbued with the sense that they could be effective in changing their economic surroundings and their lives. This was in juxtaposition to the dominant notion that the type of development that occurred in the economy was inevitable; ideas about taking charge locally challenged the notions that development needs to always be organized, planned and directed by the interests of larger, international, business organizations.

The limitation of the CED schemes was clear. Drawing on the integrative black feminist framework, the CED schemes operated from an often-unstated ideological framework. Scholars operating from a stated or unstated liberal democratic framework tended to view access to material and political resources by some members of the black

community as a sign that black people were being accepted as equals. Liberal scholars looked at one area as evidence of socio-economic mobility in the black community - the establishment of ethnic enterprises.

According to the liberal framework, the black middle class played a key role in first, refuting the damaging image of all blacks as angry, radical and alienated (Sudbury, 1998). Second, the black middle class helped to regenerate urban communities and provided employment. Third, they provided role models to inspire underachieving black youth. In this sense, they were perceived as an asset to the black communities, as well as representing the possibility of achievement for all blacks in Canadian society.

The liberal framework failed to acknowledge the structural barriers of institutionalized racism and economic exploitation. The government had an unjustified faith in the political goal of enabling black women to access the existing system and they provide no empirical evidence that the advancement of a small elite actually made any difference to the vast majority of poor working and unemployment black women and their communities (Sudbury, 1998). Furthermore, they failed to question the pay and context that accompanied employment in these ethnic enterprises or to acknowledge the vast amounts of unpaid labor by women family members which underwrite the success of many small scale ethnic businesses.

Thirteenth National Conference 1999 and Fourteenth National Conference 2001

Available documentation (1997 Report) indicated that the Montreal chapter was the host the thirteenth biennial conference scheduled for May 21-24 1999. It was twenty-five years since the last conference was held in Montreal and to commemorate

the event the Montreal Planning Committee decided to document its history with a booklet.

Much of the primary sources for the CBWC's conferences are derived from the CBWC's conference reports when they produced pamphlets, booklets and correspondence. The CBWC's writings covering the 1999 conference and the 2001 are incomplete. Consequently, I am unable to provide an analysis of the workshop topics other than to note that the Twelfth biennial conference and General Meeting Report stated that "the CBWC conferences continued to be held in 1999 and 2001." The Montreal chapter was to host the thirteenth biennial conference scheduled for May 21-24 1999, and Osborne wrote that "Quebec would support Nova Scotia's bid to host the fourteenth biennial conference in 2001."

Proliferation of Provincial Fora, Events and the Activism of Local Chapters

Workplace Racism[11]

The Toronto chapter of the CBWC took an active role in one workplace struggle against racism in "1990, when Sharon Palmer Luddington, a nurse who had been dismissed from North Western General Hospital, approached June Veecock, Director of Human Rights, Ontario Federation of Labour and CBWC member, for assistance" (Calliste, 1995, p.3). After many telephone conversations between Palmer Luddington and Veecock, they held a meeting with Toronto CBWC chapter member Akua Benjamin, members of the black Canadian community, and fifteen health care workers who had been dismissed or suspended by North Western General Hospital: fourteen black and one Filipina Canadian. The participants identified a pattern of discrimination

[11] I use Agnes Calliste's (1995) report and (1996) study to write about the CBWC's role in the nurses' workplace struggle with North Western General Hospital.

at the hospital and the CBWC advised the health care workers to file individual complaints with the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC), and to request that the Commission file a complaint against the hospital. Nine of the fifteen filed complaints charging racial discrimination, harassment and reprisals, but the OHRC were reluctant to initiate a separate compliant. Therefore the CBWC organized a Coalition for Black Nurses, which held a rally and press conference in the OHRC lobby to put pressure on the commission to "investigate the nurses' complaint as a systemic complaint and lobby the Ontario Nurses Association, the union, to support the nurses with their human rights complaints and to represent them in labour arbitration" (Calliste, 1995, p. 3).

According to Calliste, the "OHRC found evidence of widespread individual, institutional and systemic racism at North Western General Hospital" (ibid, p. 4). This finding that was supported by studies conducted by the Doris Marshall Institute and Arnold Minors Associates (1993, 1994). Some women were reinstated following arbitration hearings, but the hospital fought against other claims, arguing that the dismissals or suspensions were based on evidence of incompetence; negotiations were stalled for over two years. The CBWC tried to pressure the provincial government to settle the complaint, and in May of 1994, seven of the nurses received $320,000[12] (Veecock, 1995). The hospital also agreed to implement policies and practices designed to eliminate all forms of workplace racism (OHRC, 1994).

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[12] Veecock does not indicate if each nurse received $320, 000 or the nurses as a group received $320, 000.

Black Health Care Worker Conference

The above publicity generated many new requests for assistance from black nurses throughout Ontario who were experiencing similar problems. CBWC leaders saw a need to organize a forum for black nurses and other health care workers to share their experiences with workplace racism, and to discuss strategies to enhance their abilities to act as advocates for themselves and their coworkers (Calliste, 1995). A Black Health Care Workers Conference was held in Toronto on May 25th and 26th, 1995, under the theme, "End the Silence on Racism in Health Care: Build a Movement Against Discrimination, Harassment and Reprisals." The main objective was to

> bring together black nurses and other racial minority health care workers to share their experiences and discuss issues in the workplace that impact their lives, identify racism in the workplace and to be able to respond effectively, to make recommendations to government and other institutions to effect policy and programs aimed at redressing racism and other forms of discrimination. (ibid, 1995, p. 1).

The conference was attended by 211 participants, including members of community groups and the Ontario Nurses Association and other health care workers. They passed 30 resolutions in support of all black health care workers and presented their recommendations to the Ministry of Health.

Hazel Washington, a workshop presenter, used her experiences as a nurse at North Western General Hospital to discuss manifestations of workplace racism and their impacts. She defined racism as "an attitude and/or behaviour which is institutionalized with policies and practices differentiating and segregating people on

the basis of superficial physical characteristics" (Washington, 1995, p. 13). Among the manifestations she outlined were "scapegoating of workers, targeting one person and using it as a basis for differential treatment, [and] denial of opportunities" (ibid., p.13).

Shaheen Ali, guest speaker and former co-chair of the Operation Mental Health Committee, showed a video entitled "Hear What We Are Saying" to talk about coping strategies for dealing with racism, sexism, and classism and their impacts on individuals, families, and communities. The video addressed institutional barriers to mental health delivery that are common in Canada.

In a workshop entitled "Strategies for Dealing with Racism in the Workplace," a registered nurse, Joyce Lee, used her experiences with racism as a backdrop to discuss multiple strategies, especially documentation (including location, date, time, the persons involved and witnesses), which she emphasized as a means for showing "pattern[s] of harassment, because racism is difficult to prove. The documentation should prove that it happened" (Lee, 1995, p. 16). She encouraged nurses and other health care workers to "get legal advice, file a human rights complaint, and to keep changing [your] strategies in order to survive" (ibid.).

Joan Grant-Cummings, a presenter in a workshop entitled, "Building an Anti-Racism Health Care Movement in the Community," argued that the Ontario government had "been pressured into acknowledging that racism is a serious health issues" (Grant-Cummings, 1995, p. 18). She explained how staff employees at an organization called Women's Health in Women's Hands and the community occupied the centre in 1990 to retain control of their anti-racism struggles after the Chair of the

organization's board questioned the hiring of two black women, since she felt that three black women on staff were too many.

The CBWC leaders' world view and the politicization of racism in Canadian society supported efforts to identify, name and challenge racism in the nursing profession in Ontario. According to Flynn (2003), CBWC leaders were able to identify ways that race "structured social relations in the [North Western General] hospital to create a power imbalance between white and black nurses of colour, the division of labour in the occupation, and the over-representation of black nurses in specific departments" (p. 264). The data indicated that the leaders were advocating for a specific group of black women who had experienced racial discrimination in the workplace.

A study by CBWC leader Agnes Calliste (1996) on state contributions to the subordination of Caribbean immigrant nurses spotlighted the differential position that black women occupy in nursing. In a separate study of black nurses, Flynn (2003) reported that the Ontario health care system placed black nurses in a fragile position. She also showed how black nurses had used their experiences with racism to launch multiple attacks against their unequal working conditions, as well as against the expectation to silently accept labels as troublemakers.

A common theme expressed during the Black Health Care Worker Conference workshops was that the leaders were engaged in a crusade against discrimination (Calliste, 1995; 1994 Report). According to Essed, (1991): "everyday racism is also infused with familiar practices, it involves socialized behaviours and attitudes. ... it involves socialized behaviours and attitudes" (p. 3). Black nurses' experiences with everyday forms of racism included, among other things, differential treatment with

respect to issues affecting them as black women. A conference delegate named Betty Lough (1994) recalled that "there was a lack of understanding about our reality and situations that we were describing to the health care providers, and there was little that anyone was doing about it" (p. 8). Workshop participants described health care providers as doing little to address racism, AIDS/HIV, anemia, hypertension, lupus, sickle cell anemia, cancer, poverty or menopause—all problems that affect black women. They stated that many black women suffered from undiagnosed diseases.

Lough's comment captured an important dimension of black women's experiences with the health care system. According to Dr. Carole Pugler Christensen (1994), another workshop participant, "The contradiction [is] due in large measure to the discrimination, racism and sexism embedded within the health care system, and that the black woman's needs [are] not being met by existing programs and services" (p. 10). Cheryl Gilkes (1993) argues that:

> black women's assertiveness and their use of expressions of racism to launch multiple assaults against the entire fabric of inequality has been a consistent and multifaceted threat to the status quo. As punishment, black women have been assaulted with negative images (p. 121).

Stereotypes of black women as mammies, matriarchs and welfare recipients resonate in Canada to a lesser degree than in the United States, yet Gilkes's argument that assertive black women were often punished still holds. Nevertheless, the black Canadian nurses at North Western General Hospital developed a resistance strategy that resisted portrayals of them as long-suffering victims. They took their case to court and won. The remedies included access to continuing professional training, and anti-racism

training once every three years for the entire hospital nursing staff. In this case, the personal is political principle provided a means for initiating social change. Racism was recognizable to the North Western General Hospital nurses; they were cognizant of the ways in which race and gender structured social relations in their workplace. They recognized how the power imbalance between white and black nurses affected the types of work that each group performed. The black nurses were "concentrated in jobs where they experienced emotional stress, isolation, poverty, job pressures and family stress" (Osborne, 1994, p. 12). They recognized that racism influenced the white nurses' perceptions of black nurses. Conflicts emerged when black nurses with more education and experience than their white counterparts did not receive the workplace authority they deserved. According to Das Gupta (1987), the reactions of many white nurses to black nurses provide a

> glimpse of what can happen in a racist, sexist, culture where black women workers with high levels of skill and leadership qualities challenge the status quo. Individuals who have much to gain from the status quo, i.e., those with relative power, White in most instances, struggle to put black women in their ascribed place. (p. 76)

Racism could be difficult to prove in court, but the black North Western General Hospital nurses were successful in showing that the various incidents they encountered could be characterized as racist. Since social structures perpetuated race, class, gender and other inequalities, the black nurses proved that many such experiences were not imagined, but real. As Flynn (2003) notes, the treatment of black nurses by their peers can disrupt the association between nursing and caring. All of the black nurses firmly

believed that racism played a major role in their treatment and they expressed satisfaction about their decisions to pursue justice.

Local Chapters

Between 1993 and 2003, the chapters operated within a network that linked black women with community organizations, national and local conferences and a coalition of groups. The Congress continued to focus on issues concerning education, racism, employment, gender, human rights, health and nutrition, youth, and advocacy. These activities at the local level provided varied perspectives on the issues facing black women and their families in this country. As in the previous decade, the chapters organized a number of events and workshops related to social activities. These activities were concerned with membership (Montreal, Manitoba, Regina), AIDS in the Community (Edmonton received funding to establish the "Black Health Committee." This was done in collaboration with the AIDS Network of Edmonton Society). Other activities focused on Community Outreach Information Sessions, Financial Planning, Nutrition, and Total Body Care (Calgary). Events included fundraising (Edmonton, Montreal, Manitoba), a banquet (dedicated to "Youth and the Future" was organized by the youth in the organizations (Calgary), International Women's Year (Ville Marie, Regina, Manitoba).

Cultural activities included guest speakers at various organization's events (Regina chapter's independence anniversary for the Saskatchewan Caribbean Canadian Association and the Biennial General meeting of the National Council of Jamaica and Supportive Organizations (NCOJSO); black history month celebrations, poetry, Kwanza, brunches and entertainment (Manitoba, Regina).

The chapters' activities focused on lobbying (Regina, Manitoba, Montreal), antiracism (Montreal, Regina) and press conferences (Montreal). For example, the Montreal chapter was part of the Platform of Centre deRecherches Actions sur les Relations Raciales (CRARR). It also demanded that a public monument in honour of the black porters of Quebec. The Montreal chapter attended a press conference by the McGill Consortium for Ethnic and Strategic Social Planning released its publication Diversity Mobility and Changes which documented the findings of the Canadians Black Communities' Demographic Project.

The chapters attended consultations with governmental and nongovernmental organizations (Regina chapter met with the Honourable Joanne Crafford, Minister responsible for the Status of Women, Saskatchewan and presented the CBWC's views and concerns, particularly regarding funding for projects). The Regina chapter participated in the Regina leg of the CUPE antiracism and discrimination awareness conference to mark 1996 International Day for the Elimination of Racism and assisted and facilitated at a Post-Beijing workshop on "Women's Rights as Human Rights" hosted by the provincial Immigrant Women of Saskatchewan.

Workshops focused on leadership training and stress management (Regina). Other activities focused on participation in rally's (Regina chapter presented at a poverty rally hosted by the Regina Anti-poverty coalitions, national march against poverty in 1996 –(Regina, Montreal) - and the Quebec Bread and Roses rally in 1995 (Montreal).

Coalition work was continued with the Saskatchewan Coalition Against Racism (SCAR) to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Racism). Chapters

attended meetings with the National Organization for Immigrant and Visible Minority Women (NOIVMW)(Manitoba, Regina), Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba IWAM (Manitoba), coalition for human equality (Manitoba), and the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (Manitoba). Some chapters participated in the Status of Women Canada's cross-country consultations in Edmonton, Alberta, the convention for the "Federation des Femmes" in Montreal in 1996 (Montreal) and represented the Congress as a member of the Board of Directors for the Saskatchewan Actions Committee on the Status of Women. Thompson chapter supported "Red Roots/ Keepers of Fire" in an Aboriginal initiative-presentation of a brief by programme chair in support of Home Care Workers.

The Regina chapter, for example, lobbied the Regina Public School Board to use its resource kit entitled "Recognizing Diversity." The kit included diversity and audio visual aids depicting black culture, its diversity and contributions provided support to teachers within the Regina Public School Board. The collection was available to students from kindergarten to high school in the public school system. Similarly, the Montreal chapter participated in the preparation of the McGill Publication Working together for Change and Antiracism Document for use in teacher training (1993-1994). In a similar vein, the national past president of the CBWC attended a preparatory meeting with the Regina Public Schools Board and assisted Ettie Rutherford in conducting the Antiracism workshop for teachers within the public schools.

The Transformation of the CBWC: Disconnecting and Reconnecting:

From the Fall of the National to the Rise of the Local

Between 2001 and 2003, the CBWC's organizational structure still reflected a centralized, hierarchical organization but with a very weak division of labour (see table 26). The activities developed by the organization were limited and could only be performed by a small group without a major division of labour. At the local level, the work of many chapters sustained the organization. Chapters constituted the core of CBWC activity but often without a strong national representation. At the local level, activities were primarily oriented towards education, advocacy and sustaining social events.

Table 26

Organizational Structures of CBWC, 2001-2003

SMO	Decision-Making Structure And Division of Labor	Membership Criteria/Records	Connection to other Groups	Leadership
CBWC	cochairs Informal decision making zero budget greatly reduced number of chapters, provincial representatives, committees	greatly reduced active membership formal records	minor participation in coalition work	small core of volunteers

Adapted from Staggenborg (1999, p.104)

The CBWC provided an interesting example of institutional decline. The CBWC was created to be a national lobbying organization. From the beginning it required national dues to be paid by all members. Chapters in turn, apart from paying dues, were largely autonomous units. However, the maintenance of a national organization and the chapters proved to be difficult. Without a financial base and declining membership, some chapters were in abeyance. According to the CBWC

Executive Report (1996), "there is a feeling that the organization has become stuck in some places. We must decide what we want to do and where we want to go over the next few years and into the next century."

Deciding what to do next involved resolving issues that explained the CBWC's decline between 2001 and 2003. These factors included:

i) the lack of a strategic vision;

ii) declining membership;

iii) national leadership ineffective at coordinating communication and activity among CBWC structures; and

iv) the absence of funding or the loss of a financial base;

Troubled Strategic Vision

In the last two years of organizing, the CBWC faced a series of problems. One problem was the *lack of support* for many of the stated goals of the organization. As Anietheen (Mills interview, tape recording, October 8, 2003, A019) reported to this researcher:

> I think before we can go and look at those issues we have to look at ourselves as black women and analyze what we want as a group, to figure out how we can use the Congress of Black Women to get us further ahead.

Anietheen painted a picture of the CBWC as broad based united for advocacy. The focus was on building an organization that is needed to mobilize black women to gain power for themselves so that they could begin to take control of their lives. She thought that internal validation by members and issues could rebuild the organization.

To Anietheen the sense that the organization shared many of the concerns of black women and supported their actions was an important step in the right direction.

A second problem was *the inability of the co chairs, provincial secretariats and local chapters to initiate core programmes*. This meant that the CBWC soon began to decline. Aetn (Mills interview, tape recording, August 13, 2003, A008) explained how some CBWC initiatives were not accomplished:

> I think there were a lot of issues that needed to be addressed. I don't know what the national organization was doing, but our issues have changed and we needed to come up with the facts to address funding, welfare, job training and programmes.

It was almost impossible to conceptualize an organization that persisted over time without engaging in activities. In my interviews, many members raised issues to be addressed: employment, family violence, date rape, education and violence in our society. Aft (Mills interview, tape recording, September 24, 2003, A015) raised the following issues:

> The workplace was still not conducive to joining the organization. I still think that some people were intimidated about being part of that. We must also address the issue of violence in our society.

A.T. (Mills interview, tape recording, September 10, 2003, A010) proposed that the CBWC "needed to focus on family violence and touch on date rape." Afrout (Mills interview, tape recording, September 14, 2003, A014) stated that an important issue was "education and to focus on issues around schooling, helping black mothers in the raising, enhancing and education of their children. I think they should be involved in

police shootings." Finally, Atwensi (Mills interview, tape recording, November 10, 2003, A026) recalled:

> I know that immigration, education and employment were always a priority. I know that we had this objective of providing for renewal and involving younger women. But I was not sure that was always easy because young women perceived the organization as being older and not really attuned. It was probably one of the things we wanted to do and was not really successful at.

Along the same lines, Aonet (Mills interview, tape recording, October 7, 2003, A018) said "our priority was to find a home, re-establish our phone number and get ourselves on our feet again." Anietheen (Mills interview, tape recording, October 8, 2003, A019) stated: "we have not met as the Congress of Black Women in any one space. I think they have regional meetings, but other than that there was nothing happening right now." There were many reasons for the salience of these resources in relation to the CBWC's viability. First, having a reliable place to meet not only centralized the CBWC's day-to-day operations, but also lessened the prospect of the CBWC constantly conducting its business in facilities intended for other activities. Second, a reliable meeting place was important symbolically in that it signified the acquisition and control of a physically bounded private space (their own property). Aone (Mills interview, tape recording, July 23, 2003, A001) raised the third reason: "we needed a strong national presence in this country." In other words, the provision of office space by the CBWC grounded its commitment to the organization and helped to legitimate it publicly.

The CBWC was created in order to address the discrimination experienced by black women in Canadian society. Between 2001 and 2003, the organization dictated very few policies to the national, provincial and local levels. It did not publish a newsletter, have a national office or elect a national executive committee. Most activists did not have access to each other's skills and knowledge; and the absence of a communication network meant that most organizations were in abeyance. In-depth interviews with CBWC members suggested the problems and solutions to this enigma lie in the CBWC's mandate and pursuit of goals. According to the A.S. (Mills interview, tape recording, August 12, 2003, A007):

> You know this was a global situation now and we were in some instances standing still. We needed to identify what we could manage and we really needed to focus on national issues.

A strategic vision facilitated the CBWC's viability in two ways. First, statements of support for national issues provided legitimacy for the organization among other organizations in the social movement community. Second, moral support given to other movements gave the CBWC a sense that others were behind them, an important moral boost.

In the last two decades, the openness of the CBWC's structure allowed it to encompass a broad diversity of views and led to an organization that was tightly structured. Between 2001 and 2003, national and provincial officers tried to keep communication open between chapters, provincial bodies and national officers and provided whatever advice they could. Yet, the national organization was always short of money, behind schedule on mailings and record keeping. This left the chapters free

to pursue the issues they chose more or less, and the national conferences that were so vital to the organization in the early years ceased due to the absence of funding.

The CBWC's hierarchical structure did not work well to incorporate members when the organization was declining and this presented a problem as the organization decreased in size. Given the lack of communication between regions, the organization started to decline. But, local chapters with large memberships thrived and exercised power.

Activists wanted to focus their efforts on the emotional well being of members. The goal was to address issues (Table 27) concerning building self-confidence, development of leadership skills, awareness and exercise of talents, a feeling of solidarity with other black women, a sense of family and sustaining members' commitment to the organization. Some CBWC members suggested that some portion of the funds raised by the chapters be allocated to the National.

Table 27 CBWC Issues

Category	Issues
Youth	-youth and the justice system, teenage pregnancies, education, youth-at-risk, training skills programmes, job readiness programmes; life skills programmes
Health	-access to health care, especially for the elderly, stress, cancer, new reproductive technologies, fibrosis, alternative health care
Financial matters	-fundraising, financial planning, how to establish small businesses
General information and education	-workshops, seminars, newsletters, and chapters to plan campaigns and projects and use local resources whenever possible.

National Leadership: Ineffective Coordination of Communication and Activities of CBWC Structures

Between 2001 and 2003, there were more chapters in abeyance and a number of chapters indicated that they had decreased their activities (Edmonton, Calgary and Quebec). The organizational structure that worked well to incorporate members became a source of the problems as the organization grew smaller. The CBWC's problems included limited resources and agenda. Leaders had become very concerned that most members did not have access to each other's skills, knowledge and a limited communication network meant that the organization was in decline.

My data indicated that respondents talked about how the CBWC needed to focus on circumventing a number of problems. Asevt (Mills interview, tape recording, September 28, 2003, A017) explained: "the priorities were to build the network so that black women had a strong political voice and that we enhanced the rights and opportunities of black women." This included knowledge about organizational building, maintenance and knowledge about potential supporters in the area of black Canadian organizations. Atwel (Mills interview, tape recording, September 14, 2003, A012) described the situation:

> We needed to focus on leadership, recruitment and succession planning. We needed to focus on prioritizing and looking at the things that we can win rather than looking at everything. I think that we had this huge agenda in the past where we tried to be all things to all people. We needed to pick our fights and pick the things that we can win that were most important.

Along the same lines Aet (Mills interview, tape recording, August 8, 2003, A08) added:

> There was a lack of cohesion. There was not a lot of direction from the national, albeit the national was only the sum of all the regions. But there was not a lot of coming together and opportunity for participation from the regions into the national. At the national level, the executive positions were .primarily voluntary positions. The executives were chosen by election, but they could come from any other area of the country. So it wasn't always easy for them to liaise with the rest of us. So I felt that in and of itself presented a challenge, where were we going? What were we doing? What was our outlook, even if we participated in different activities, what together we were telling the world?

In other words, the CBWC needed to focus on leadership. Leaders and members were always important for the CBWC. They were the primary source for critical information mobilized by the organization. The importance of these resources to the CBWC was not difficult to understand. Most members came from a middle class background, they typically were university educated and their experiences, and skills were usually associated with their jobs.

The viability of the CBWC was partly contingent on their abilities to mobilize informational resources. Similarly, A.S. (Mills interview, tape recording, August 12, 2003, A07) explained how it was important to strengthen the organization:

> It was important to strengthen the organization across the provinces. Get on-line somewhere and we had to find ways of supporting a means of communication across the country. We were looking towards technology

> for that.... We were also going to work towards not necessarily an annual or biennial conference as we changed to recently. But how can we find multiple ways of networking across the country? We use to have a newsletter that formed a vital function. It was not running recently. What we wanted to do then was coordinate these chapters so that our newsletter was sent out to other groups - and exchange newsletters so that we can always be in touch with one another.

It was important that the organization kept meeting. The *conferences* allowed the CBWC to plan and conduct activities. These activities referred to the collective actions organized around particular issues. All CBWC chapters planned activities, but much of this activity was decreasing and short-lived. Workshops and conferences represented a higher order of activity in they were proactive and more complex to execute because they involved a series of interrelated events. Similarly Aet noted Mills interview, tape recording, October 7, 2003, A17) :

> We needed to step back and see what was lacking. We don't seem to be meeting the needs or making it, or if we were addressing the right issues, we don't really seem to know where to take those issues. We don't seem to know how to involve the community in those issues- that was something we needed to do.

For some time these matters – leadership, recruitment, information- were important to the CBWC. However, the organization was at one of its weakest points. It was unable to stimulate participation to ensure that jobs got done - a task particularly important for organizations that depended entirely on the active participation of members.

Organizational activities had decreased steadily. This lack of success contained all of the seeds of the CBWC's abeyance, for it brought a decline in membership, public interest and put a strain on the CBWC's structure that the organization could not bear.

Organizational structures shape and are shaped by the structure of each distinct chapter in the CBWC. Activists confirmed that a formal structure kept the organization going. Situated within different structural bases, these chapters drew on separate groups of activists and embraced different beliefs about accomplishing organizational goals. The organization had undergone internal assessments and structural adaptations throughout its history. Activists wanted to maintain a hierarchical and formalized organizational structure. The organization's centralized and formal structure with set authority systems and differentiated tasks and responsibilities were supported by a belief that equated structural development with goal accomplishment. Members believed that a developed organizational structure was a source of activism, membership retention and leadership development promoting organizational continuity.

By 2003, the CBWC had been without a national gathering for two years. With participation already in decline, the lack of national conference activity between 2001 and 2003 reduced the CBWC's resource base - a number of organizations were in abeyance. Members suggested reviving the newsletter; improving communication between the national, provincial and municipal levels by rotating the national council meeting. The goal was to increase the CBWC's visibility in cities where there were chapters, and where chapters were in abeyance provide information about the national council. Members wanted the CBWC to be a voice on national issues for example

youth, unemployment, poverty, Quebec reparations and other issues that affected black women. They wanted the CBWC to have a body of paid staff; better record keeping, passing on records and material from one administration to another when there was a change of chapter executives and provincial secretariats. Ignoring members' requests that the leadership organize a national conference to get back on track only exacerbated the issues. The lack of conference activity and communication between the chapters secured the decline of the organization.

Declining Membership

The CBWC's membership started to decline because to some extent they were a tightly knit group of old friends and movement veterans. The CBWC had a core group of women who were active in the organization since its inception. Membership benefited from having experienced and tenacious activists who were sufficiently skilled and effective in recruiting. Members were able to steer the organization through decades of conferences, workshops, meetings, and lobbying because of their prior experience in activism. Sustaining their members' commitment to the CBWC was therefore due to leadership, ideology and friendship networks.

Efforts were made to recruit new members, but with limited success. As A.T. (Mills interview, tape recording, September 10, 2003, A010) noted when discussing membership, "I think that the challenge was to stay involved." By staying involved, new members provided continuity for the organization and helped to counter the persistent problem of population turnover in the ranks. Although this was a problem that was common to all social movement communities, it was particularly pressing with the CBWC, whose adherents were often to be tenuously committed because of

the uncertainty of addressing new issues. Therefore, there were many turnovers in the chapters. They had five to twenty-five members, with perhaps a total of a couple of hundred people involved at anytime. Each chapter had the goal of recruiting participants and in Aet's (Mills interview, tape recording, October 7, 2003, A17) account the: " issue was getting women out, getting them to come out and participate. Getting them to voice what they saw happening in the community."

The most obvious factor was the lack of youthfulness of the membership. The data reveal that most CBWC members were in the organization from its inception. There were very few women who were sixteen to thirty years of age in the organization. While each chapter did attract some members, there was a high attrition rate in the organization. The CBWC's inability to address new issues also greatly widened the gap between leaders and rank and file members, and potential new recruits that attended social events. This rigidity was symptomatic of a major problem in the CBWC. It made little provision for organizational growth. The CBWC did not deny the need for new members and chapters always directed most of their efforts towards recruiting members

Absence of Funding

Finding the material resources to sustain the organization has been one of the CBWC's challenges since its inception. According to Aetn (Mills interview, tape recording, October 7, 2003, A17): "the biggest challenge facing the organization was the lack of dollars and funding for women's groups." In the assessment of some CBWC members, fundraising should be among the organization's top priorities to address participants' limited means of travel, with local organizing chapters assuming primary

responsibility. But these chapters had struggled for financial support themselves. In the past, at least, the small number of participants in many chapters tried organizing fundraising events or funding activities themselves. The failure to secure financial means to sustain the organization meant that by 2003, this problem grew. Afiev (Mills interview, tape recording, July 29, 2003, A005) told me that "lack of funding helped to destroy the organization." This meant that the chapters were a local manifestation of a much larger problem of managing an organization within a social movement community. Atwel (Mills interview, tape recording, September 14, 2003, A012) explained the situation:

> We needed to look at ways to be self-sufficient and not having to always depend on the government or other agencies for funding. While it was great to get some funding, it was most important to stand on your own two feet. We had to look at ways to generate the dollars to run the programmes and to look to our community a lot more.

Likewise, Anin (Mills interview, tape recording, September 12, 2003) notes:

> There was a meeting held in 2000 and there were three issues raised: health, violence against women, and poverty. Those were the three priorities that we were planning, focusing on, and going back to the membership in 2002. We needed to get approval to move on these things, [find out] who was responsible for the projects, and [assess] how we were going to get funding.

During this period, ideas for fundraising included (1997 Report) raising membership dues; tapping into resources such as the National Foundation CBWC, corporations,

individuals, and industries in Canada. Other fundraising suggestions included working at bingo halls, identifying the Congress as an organization to be given contributions from payroll deductions- and use some of the payroll contributions to maintain an office. However, by 2003, and without a financial base to secure the organization nationally, the CBWC's financial base was slowly disappearing.

Transformation as Reconnecting Ideology

Every organization develops a system of ideas explaining and justifying its goals. Ideology is geared toward both the organization's members or constituents and potential outside allies. It draws upon the values and principles in Canada's liberal democratic society. Members were given hope and a sense of purpose. During this decade, the CBWC's ideology was similar to that of the last two decades. The CBWC still criticized a liberal democratic framework and used state-directed legislative strategies as a means to empower women and advocate for change. The organization's ideologies were in response to the discrimination they experienced in Canadian society and proved suitable to this decade. It was clear, even today, that this was an attractive ideology because it appealed to a broad constituency. In other words, the organization still reflected the feelings and claims of some groups in the broader population. Both their goals of a Canadian society that addressed the underlying causes of structural inequalities, their commitment to activism and this collective identity overlapped with other issues linking the CBWC to women, racialized groups, poor and other indigenous groups. To this end, instead of engaging in risky strategies and tactics for social change, the women had more trust in using the channels of communication to influence policy makers and forged alliances with coalition groups. Presumably these solutions were

attractive to the CBWC in its state of diminished resources and as an organization that was in abeyance.

In reference to the World Views of CBWC leaders, data from my interviews indicate that CBWC leaders frequently mentioned that black Canadian women's perspectives provided a form of resistance to discriminatory practices, since their overall objective is to work for social justice in Canadian society. They indicated that by addressing concerns about racism and oppression, they are challenging those aspects of black women's lives that are perceived as the status quo. They questioned, challenged and transformed the dominant discourse in order to help their communities make positive change, and used their knowledge to establish an alternative world view concerning black families, children, and men, as well as Canadian society and the women's movement.

In their efforts to analyze women's organizations and understand their implications for organizational change, black Canadian feminist scholars have linked personal relationships, communities and employment. Wane (2002) reminds us that a black Canadian feminist synthetic and interpretive organizational model of movements is rooted in the reality of black women's lives and the relationships that matter most to them. Calliste (1996) has documented the importance of a black woman's perspective regarding activism. Carty (1991) argues that organizations and communities are both gendered and racialized. Black Canadian feminists have found that theories of women's oppression are incorrectly universalized according to the experiences of white women, therefore it is important to recognize that feminist concepts regarding

black families, men and the position of blacks in Canadian society have also been inaccurately universalized.

According to data from the interviews, a black Canadian feminist synthetic and interpretive model of movements serves as a particularly significant vehicle for expressing leadership views about racism and oppression in organizational discussions. As stated in the preceding chapter, the consciousness-raising techniques of self-disclosure are translated into discussions of racism. CBWC leaders used the personal is political model in their meetings, conferences and workshops to challenge racism and to push for organizational change. In review, the most common responses made by CBWC leaders can be categorized as:

- criticizing white feminist universal notions of family;
- acknowledging that racism exists in Canadian society;
- mobilizing support for well-defined groups such as black nurses; and
- creating coalitions with other racially focused organizations.

Leadership, Membership and Networks

The data indicate that a configuration of leaders (Morris 2004) continued to initiate activities during this decade. Although the organization was in decline, the CBWC had leaders who were critical to the survival of the organization. Women such as Esmerada Thornhill, Jestina Blake Hill, and Judy Kosbar were highly effective leaders because of their intellectual and organizing skills. Moreover, their moral courage provided considerable hope for personal and social achievement. For example, the CBWC's organizational structure facilitated women's leadership and political ideas in which they called for a commitment to action. Chapter presidents and members have

gone on to hold legal (Juanita Westmoreland-Traoré, Esmerald Thornhill), elected office and positions in government (Jean Augustine, Glenda Simms, Zanana Akande), well respected academic positions (Akua Benjamin). Jestina Blake-Hill received the 1995 Canadian Citizenship award. Mavis Palmer received the 1996 YWCA Women of Distinction award; Judy Kosbar was appointed to the City of Regina's Police Race Relations Advisory Board.

According to the data, the experiences of CBWC leaders were similar, but not identical. Their cultural heritages are Canadian, Caribbean and African. In terms of their availability, despite the demands of family and full-time employment, the leaders went well out of their way to express political views and to organize their communities. While their community ties are similar to those described by Agnew (1996), Dua (1999), Robnett (2002) and Srivastava (2002) for other black women's organizations, the social profile that emerged from my data suggest a different profile in several important ways, especially in terms of lack of isolation and strong educational backgrounds. CBWC leaders perceived their lives as productive and shaped by their experiences with racism in Canadian society. They viewed their lives in terms of the challenges that motivated them to join the CBWC and worked toward improving the lives of black women and their families.

CBWC members also perceived formalized organizational structure as an important element in leadership development (Reger, 2002). In the CBWC, the organization's structure provided a "training ground" for women to become leaders. This view was based on a belief that society constructs barriers that kept women from

leadership positions and therefore equality. Consequently a hierarchical structure offered women a place to acquire important leadership skills.

The CBWC had always maintained that oppositional spaces were insufficient to examine the issues affecting black women and their families. They always acknowledged the importance of their conferences. By organizing conferences, the CBWC showed that gender politics and race politics were insufficient in and of themselves because everyone was more than the race and gender that they represented. They had other kinds of alliances and ties that had nothing to do with whether they were black and female. The CBWC was always been clear that their political analysis was one which was able to unite women in a broad based alliance against all forms of oppression and exploitation, and not only to the particular experiences of black women.

Similar to the CBWC's struggles in the past two decades, in this decade the organization was characterized by overlapping but *autonomous movements* of white, Asian, black Canadian women, Caribbean women, African women and British women. The alliances between African, Caribbean and Asian women suggested that the CBWC's organizing in Canada has been less a case of organizing on the basis of a shared racial identification than on the basis of shared political and personal agendas. As Atwel (Mills interview, tape recording, September 14, 2003, A012) reminded us, building a coalition was always part of the CBWC's mandate: "We teamed up with the Chinese community, Committee for Racial Justice and the status of women."

The CBWC was part of many struggles and this meant that the organization had many different potential allies. Simultaneously, it also meant that the organization had many potential oppressors. Black men, white working class men and white women all

had the potential to become sources of solidarity, but also sources of conflict. The CBWC was placed at the intersection of racism, sexism, and class exploitation as leaders and between a range of political actors. Deciding when it was safe to extend support, identifying which actors would enhance particular struggles and which despite their stated commitment to social justice was destructive or parasitical was an essential skill if the CBWC was to build effective coalitions while protecting their security and integrity.

While relationships with white women have been difficult, the CBWC has always involved black men (see chapters 3 and 4). From their inception, black men as partners, brothers, husbands and elders were present, purchasing tickets to the luncheons, social activities and caring for the children while the women held meetings. While the CBWC did have a woman's only policy (CBWC Constitution), they did not exclude black men from their meetings. Black women were not organizing away from the men because the fight against oppression united black men and women - this sense of solidarity was emphasized by most of the interviewees who stated that the object of the Congress was the concerns of black women and their families.

A second area in which we have also seen the support and encouragement that the CBWC experienced was at the hands of other black women's organizations. The CBWC participated in many cultural activities. The CBWC was supportive of black women organizing at the transnational level. The organization felt that an essential part of their work was to raise awareness with black women in order to promote a community agenda (1999 Report).

A third area was the emergence of a number of progressive initiatives focusing

on AIDS/HIV in the black community. The Edmonton chapter established the black Health Committee and they worked with the AIDS Network of Edmonton Society. While the CBWC's Foundation worked with the issue of HIV/AIDS in the organization it aimed to critically discuss issues of sexuality and health - this indicated two significant changes in the approach to AIDS/HIV activism in the CBWC by black women. First, the women acknowledged for the first time that the black woman's experience was not the black experience and those autonomous organization's that focus on black men and women were valid. Rather than viewing black women's autonomy as splitting the communities, the CBWC Foundation embraced the notion of organizing on the basis of gendered experiences of racism, HIV/AIDS and community. Second, the CBWC differed dramatically from the insistence of many black leaders on not airing dirty linen – this had meant keeping a veil of silence over sexism and abuse within the black communities. For the first time, it was both black women and men who were exploring problems within black communities and the impact of sexism and racism in reinforcing these problems. In overturning two stalwarts of opposition to black women's autonomy, the organization appeared to pave the way for an effective partnership with black women's organizations.

Finally, the CBWC's fourth area of potential solidarity was with the black feminists. While the nascent black feminist movement was developing a rigorous critique of oppression, these writers have long been engaged in critical thinking on gender roles. Their struggles have been characterized by strong alliances between single and mixed gender organizations. As such, these organizations were a model for black women working in partnership around a progressive agenda and building on their

commonalties in the face of different gendered experiences. For example, Osborne wrote in the Report of the twelfth Biennial Conference and general meeting that "the CBWC participated in the International Women's Day celebrations, while other chapters attended meetings with the National Organization for Immigrant and Visible Minority Women (NOIVMW). They attended a Post-Beijing workshop on Women's Rights as Human Rights hosted by the provincial Immigrant Women of Saskatchewan and the Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba (IWAM). The Thompson chapter supported Red Roots/ Keepers of Fire that was an Aboriginal initiative" - this close political relationship has not been without its challenges. White women have been challenged for making black, Asian, Indian and Aboriginal women invisible and/or marginal. Atwensi (Mills interview, tape recording, November 10, 2003, A026) experienced the difficulty of negotiating racialized identities when she was invited to a white woman's group to discuss coalition work.

> We went to conferences such as the Montreal Women's Council, NAC and the Quebec council. So we tried to liaison with the women's groups. We defined our policies, and we presented our issues concerning women and education, work and immigration, but they only wanted to hear our views on black Canadian women.

In exploring the issues, white women were forced to confront their own fears about racism. Atwensi's statements revealed the entrenched nature of gender expectations by some white women's organizations and the fragility of common bonds between women in the face of real difference. Nevertheless, the effective political alliances which black and women of colour have forged indicate there is also an opportunity for women's

organizations to work together.

In this chapter, I argue that it is no longer possible to talk about a homogenous black community. The CBWC expresses as many diverse perspectives as white led political organizations. I argued that it is therefore not useful to talk about sexism in black communities as if this were a monolithic force. Black men in alliance with black women are engaged in building black Canadian feminist organizations. They are embracing the notion of the personal is political, and they are beginning to look at their issues and address themselves to the task of solving their problems. I believe that there is a need for black men to challenge the political forces which seek to re-inscribe oppressive gender roles and to work in partnership with the CBWC to understand the interrelationship of the many struggles over a period of three decades and have many lessons to offer. The CBWC has much to gain in seeking coalitions with black men's organizations.

Conclusion

Between 1993 and 2003, the CBWC was strongly shaped by the interaction between its external environment and internal organizational dynamics. Having emerged from a very active period and facing declining funds, membership and the lack of a strategic vision, the CBWC was adjusting to its new setting. In particular, its internal organizational structures were attempting to cope with the environment. Keeping a low organization profile was a necessary form of survival. Consequently, the organization was small, informal and only loosely connected with the chapters. The chapters had learned to survive in a marginal setting, yet while in abeyance, their activities kept the organization alive. Without access to a once thriving communication

network, the organization lacked the resources to develop a large organization and appeal to the larger black Canadian population. The CBWC was limited to meeting on a largely informal basis or acting within the boundaries of the provincial organizations. Yet these acts often contained a direct political message which could be understood by black Canadians, but was difficult for the government to suppress. In this sense, the organization's weakness was instrumental to both their survival as well as their ability to gain marginal visibility.

The CBWC's organizational structure also no longer served its purpose. At this point the leaders were unable to recruit new participants, maintain members' commitment to the organization and develop a convincing strategy for political change within a constantly changing environment. Although some chapters remained active, these usually lacked three essential ingredients: a solid core of participants, a financial base to sustain organizational activities and concerted action between the municipal, provincial and national levels of the organization. Consequently, a large number of highly motivated activists sat through many long meetings and discussed what could be done, rather than taking action. For the most part, the activists while they did have a clear vision of what concrete tasks to begin with, they did not begin the process of rebuilding the organization. Leaving aside external influences, the disorganized internal situation frustrated and discouraged many new recruits. The group's membership declined, resulting again in a tightly knit group of old friends and movement veterans. Therefore, the CBWC was unable to provide a clear direction and motivation for meaningful political action.

This chapter examined the CBWC's national conferences and analyzed the

relationship between the CBWC and coalitions. My interview data indicate reasons why the CBWC should use the autonomous spaces as a stepping stone to create some more meaningful partnerships and why coalitions were less problematic. The coalitions offered the CBWC the possibility of increased resources, more lobbying power and access to information and networks. This chapter explored three potential sites of support and commonality - black women, black men and black feminists. In revealing the links between the CBWC and these sectors, the chapter cautions against naiveté in expecting close working relationships or immediate unity among disparate interests. Nevertheless, black men, black women and black feminists have proved supportive at specific moments in the development of black women's autonomy. These moments of collaboration lead to coalition building in the 1993-2003 period. Returning to an earlier point, the appropriateness of coalition building will depend on the political, ideological and structural context of the organization and the decision of when to build alliances and to whom must ultimately is determined by black Canadian women themselves.

Lastly, this chapter discussed three significant findings. First, the CBWC membership was remarkably heterogeneous, with some university-educated leaders of Caribbean, African and Canadian descent, and with prior experience in community organizing. The majority came from families who were active in ethnic and community organizations. Some of the CBWC leaders were employed in managerial and professional occupations. They had families and stable marriages, or were single parents. They match other descriptions in the literature on black female activists. With minor variations, the author found strong connections among CBWC participation,

growing up in urban communities with black populations, and having friends who belong to organizations who expressed support for CBWC activities.

Second, the CBWC leaders' world views defined the issues that were considered important to the organization. They constructed an ideology from shared, not identical histories and common experiences. The CBWC was thus able to construct perspectives built on the experiences of black Canadian women, which tapped into issues tied to family, children, men, black nurses, racism and the woman's movement. CBWC leaders believed that black women had a common goal in ending systemic discrimination, and that collective action was a vital component in ameliorating or ending injustices. This emphasis gave their world views credibility, which made it particularly resonant among black Canadian women.

The third finding concerns prior activism experience, heterogeneity in motivations, and overlapping memberships in community, women and political organizations. The strong sense of commitment that the leaders felt toward the CBWC and their diverse views of the primary concerns that they should focus on, supported their high level of activism. Moreover, the authors found that all of the leaders were essentially committed to working full-time for the organization, regardless of the remuneration involved. This time commitment was an important factor in determining CBWC success. Aothre (Mills interview, tape recording, July 23, 2003, A003) captures astutely the direction of CBWC:

I don't know what is happening nationally. My focus is for us to regroup and re-establish the Congress because there really is a need. Some people have questioned the relevance of the organization now, specific to black women. I think it is relevant even more so now.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSIONS AND BEYOND

Analyses of social movement organizations at the national level contribute to an understanding of activism within national contexts, but they do not necessarily capture the politics spearheaded by black Canadian women. Although many of these women are middle class, they are numerically small and enjoy few resources. This case study of the CBWC between 1973 and 2003 highlights the complexity of external and internal factors as discrete influences on social movement organizations. Based on the questions that guide this inquiry, the arguments herein clearly demonstrate how the CBWC is successful in seeking changes especially in reference to the sociopolitical and economic needs of its constituency. A fundamental aim of this dissertation is to move beyond an analysis of the origins and development of the Congress of Black Women of Canada (CBWC) in order to give voice to the decades of scholarly silence and the dearth of empirical research that have characterized the activism of black Canadian women.

As documented, there is an abundance of evidence in this study attesting to the identities of CBWC women especially in relationship concerning issues related to black families, black men, Canadian society, racism and the women's movement. This identity (re)production is facilitated by the work of CBWC leaders who addressed relentlessly issues that concerned a plethora of challenges to black Canadian women

and their families. This shared consciousness facilitated the development of similar, not identical political interests that they believe the CBWC represented.

What, then, did the views of CBWC members tell us about the construction of black women's world views in general? The interview data provide insights into the dynamics of how the intersection of gender and race affects black women. The CBWC leaders believe in social justice and feel that their children's futures depend on the support they give to their families while addressing discrimination in Canadian society. In a similar vein, CBWC members oppose policies that do not address the underlying causes of discrimination in Canadian society. They maintain that their power and status are grounded in their roles as mothers and professional women and that ending discrimination will increase their power.

Empirically, the findings indicate that identity is shaped by institutions. That is, black Canadian women's consciousness is influenced by the family, community organizations and their own respective women's movement. Essentially, this mix of factors has contributed to the development of an oppositional consciousness. Perhaps the most important lesson that the women's movement can draw from CBWC resistance is the manner in which the CBWC women broadened the women's movement. Moreover, their status and experiences (derived from their social location in Canadian society, as well as their positions as women and mothers) need to be closely examined in the sociology of movements. Although the interviewees were all too aware of the lack of studies on black Canadian women in general and black Canadian women's organizations in particular, they understood the significance of the contributions of the CBWC in securing a space for the history of black women in the

development of Canada. Likewise, the detailed and rich information from interviews and documents further confirms the relevance of qualitative research in eliciting data on hitherto neglected subjects.

Although black feminist and social movement perspectives remain useful as theoretic tools for explaining and interpreting CBWC experiences, there are a number of limitations. During the course of this research I discovered the dangers inherent in the failure of gender- and class - based women's organizations to incorporate the lived experiences and interpretations of black Canadian women. Likewise, Robnett (1997) cautions that discussions and theories about race have often started from black male perspectives. Similarly, my research serves as a reminder to social movement scholars that the contexts of black Canadian women are also extremely relevant. Informed by the insightful contributions of black Canadian feminist literature, notably, Bristow (1994), Calliste (1989), Flynn (2003) and Silvera (1989), this study identifies a meaningful perspective that best fits the social history of the CBWC especially in addressing the themes of identity, institution and ideology.

Rather than a conclusion, this final chapter urges a renewed beginning, that is, a reconnection for further exploring black Canadian women's dynamic efforts for social change. Admittedly, this dissertation, as an exploratory sociological study of a black woman's organization in Canada, draws a much needed attention to themes concerning the fundamental nexus of ideology, institutions and identity

Moreover, this dissertation seeks to conscientize the respective experiences of black Canadian women, to enlist further collaborative work at the community level and to encourage further documentation and analyses of black women's organizations in

Canada. To this end, this study proffers the integrative black Canadian feminist synthetic and interpretive organizational model of movements for such studies as a woefully much needed alternative to the hegemony of mainstream sociological thought which continues to ignore its complicity in the erasure of the experiences and contributions of black Canadian activists and organizations.

Themes In Review: Towards An Innovative Model Of Organizational Movements

Obviously no one study can hope to do justice to the enormous breadth and depth generated from the rich set of findings. Even to catalogue salient directions are an ambitious enterprise that suffers from the dangers of trying to do too much while accomplishing relatively little. Nonetheless, the fibers that weave the theoretic fabric of this dissertation consist of three interrelated themes that provide coherence, clarity and logic to the considerable data collected. They are as follows (see Figure 2):

a) CBWC is best explained according to a black feminist, synthetic, contingency model of organizational movements.

b) Institutions mediate the impact of ideologies on identity.

c) The concept of a conference constitutes more than an empirical *space* for gathering the interests of similarly circumstanced individual and groups. The conference serves as a *time* of affirmation, discovery and recovery of identity, that is, a time for connecting consciousness.

First, a black feminist synthetic and interpretive organizational model of movements frames this analysis of CBWC in a manner that demonstrates the synthesis of various strains of thought in the social movement literature in terms of the experiences of black feminist epistemologies. Second, this model highlights the

tentative, fluid and dynamic changes of organizational movements by incorporating an interpretive design that recognizes the transformative stages of engagement (getting connected, staying connected and disconnecting/re-connecting). These stages are influenced, in turn, by the following three contingencies: identity (self concept); institution (organizational resources / skills like leadership, communications) and ideology (individual and collective, dominant ideologies, counter hegemonic, external and internal sets of values). Second, corresponding to the three substantively empirical chapters are different emphases on being (identity), behaving (institutions) and beliefs (ideologies). This study demonstrated that the relationship between identity and ideology is filtered through organizational structures. As the organization became more institutionalized with formal rules, divisions of hierarchy, specialization of tasks, the movement was perceived as more embedded. Although the original mission and vision were still in place, the focus on that which brought black feminists into the organization was gradually attenuated. In time, this situation presented itself as an opportunity to reposition and return the movement to its base. The black Canadian feminist organizational movement did not fade in subsequent decades, both as an identity and as an ideology. Rather, it transformed itself by reconnecting itself to active personal and community concerns in dealing with many issues of exclusion.

The issue of identity remains crucial and is located ideologically. Their referential characters, an index of ideological identification, the lens through which identities are interpreted and validated remain unchanged. But, identity has acquired different meanings through the mediations not of a formal organizational structure of CBWC but of a more local, neighbourhood, community based that has become a more

formative force. Continuity is contingent upon the relevant interplay of different experiences and problematics especially in reference to the lived experience of the everyday at work, school, neighbourhood, etc. Briefly, black Canadian feminist movements are collective accomplishments based on the mobilization of support. But as this dissertation argues, mobilization to bring about change is determined by several contingencies. The activation of collective participation and the cohesiveness of the group are shaped by ideology, leadership and channels of communication or networks of cooperative relationships. Ideology sustains participation by providing a litany of invaluable rationalizations. This set of inter-related values socializes activists to become receptive to new and emerging consciousness about the culture of the community, collaborative acts of coalition building with local movements. With reference to building upon past accomplishments, black Canadian feminists have focused on the local level as an expression of agency, autonomy and accountability. Community consciousness raising efforts were contextually determined and discursively constructed to satisfy immediate and long term interests.

Third, the conferences of CBWC were mechanisms or vehicles for establishing the priorities for empowerment and authentic community engagement. In actual and symbolic terms the conferences sought to establish the priorities of identities, institutions and ideologies. The idea of the conference, according to the respondents and to the archived documents, involves the converging processes of "reaching in" and "reaching out". "Reaching in", the intrapsychic dimension of the knowledge -identity nexus, focuses on self-consciousness as an active meaning creation activity that connects the past selves in the present to transcendent possibilities. On the other hand,

"reaching out", the intersubjective self-other interactions is a recognition of the ongoing social constructions that as participants learn to know themselves and to understand others through sympathetic introspection. These collaborative exchanges are based on mutual recognition that exists in all forms of interactions. An emphasis on inclusion, membership and active participation communicates connectiveness, as evident in the various themes of the conference workshops. The conference topics were used as self-referential tools to interpret experiences in order to understand racialized positioning within the Canadian culture. Conferences and their workshops provided degrees of ideological rootedness or consciousness that were perceived as emancipatory. They served to facilitate self actualization in terms of identities by transcending the rigidity of an essentialist and mono-linguistic colour based hegemonies of the dominant culture. Conferences were much needed venues or sites that provoked reflection that led to forms of political activism. Representation of gender and race at the conferences meant recognition of the advances made towards resistance. The effect of getting together is profound, revealing the presence of that which has been concealed in the mainstream -- the voices of active black Canadian feminists. Emerging from these conferences was a collective self-analysis as an action based on the concept of identity. Conferences highlighted the importance of recognizing not only how black women are represented but also how "others" recognize them. Likewise, Conferences empowered participants to think through institutional and ideological that hitherto influenced their respective internalize identities.

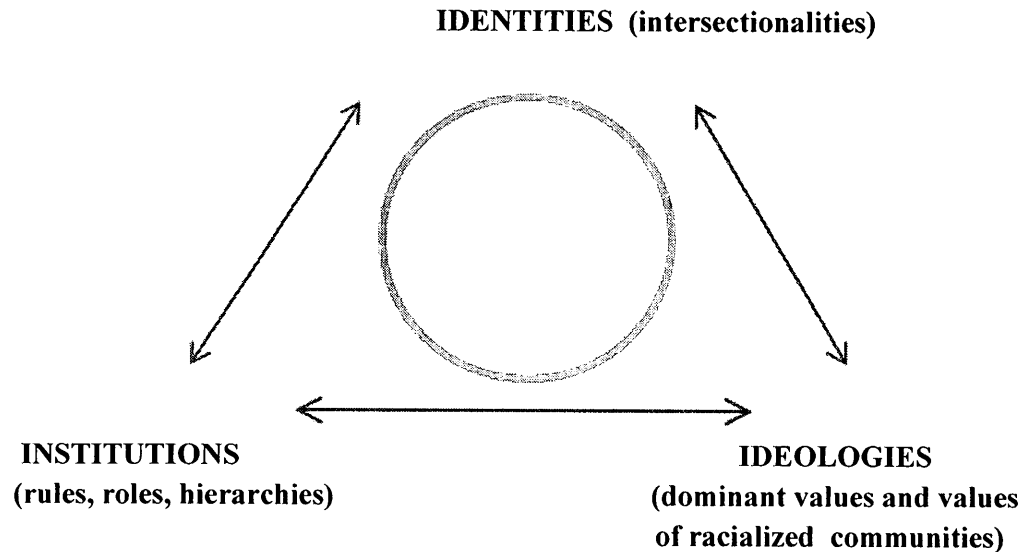
Specifically, this study demonstrated how context and content constitute an analytic framework for understanding how conferences shape identity and social

interactions. Moreover, context refers to those forms, structural and experiential, that condition the content of engagement. Both social contexts (affiliations, resources and skills) and personal contexts (ideology, motivations and self-concept) mediate the message -- the subject matter of conferences. In this regard context and content are not only integral to conferences but also characterize current theoretical developments on the sociology of movements.

Conceptually, conferences stimulated the capacity to change oneself and one's own society or milieu. As the respondents and the various workshops indicated, black Canadian feminists are neither "here' nor "there'. They are located "in" the white dominant culture but not "of" it . Accordingly, as Spivak (1985) notes, identity is always a multiplicity, forever emerging new as a subject position. But for far too long, the celebration of identity and difference has become an accommodationist strategy rather than a reflection of identity struggles. Further, as Bannerji (2000) argues eloquently, the "fictive" nature of multicultural identity is supported by the dominant culture and its prevailing ideologies of liberalism, capitalism and modernity masquerade themselves as just while concealing a violent unjust history.

Unmistakably, this analysis of a black Canadian feminist movement begins and ends by underscoring the implications of identities, institutions and ideologies. This study of the CBWC conferences profited conceptually from an analysis of the inter-relationships among identities, institutions and ideologies. Identities, institutions and ideologies constituted the contexts by which this social movement was organized.

FIGURE 2 Cycle of Connected Elements of a Social Movement



Black Canadian feminists in this movement form and inform identities in relation to conflicting social narratives of ideologies supported by institutions. Social movements mediate culture and character by challenging and reworking their respective stories of identity, individually and collectively. What is the social construction of their subjectivities within processes of identity production, discursive displays of experience and social histories of selfhood? This question demonstrates the relationality of a black Canadian feminist movement as a serious substantive and generic site for investigating often overlooked and yet fundamental issues of inequality, for unraveling the connectedness of concepts and applied practices and for questioning dominant modes of discourse. An awareness of this interpretive framework as part of a counter hegemonic force will lead to forms of consciousness that expose various mediations which interconnect subjectivity (displaced, erased, silenced) and culture (dominant culture, multiculturalism, popular culture) within a dialectics of empowerment.

Thus, this dissertation seeks to address the efficacy of the need for critical analysis and representation of black Canadian feminists by black Canadian feminists moving beyond the white liberal reductivist, victimizing and fetishizing portrayals of the oppressed. Instead, questions of how the experiences of resistance, the reclamation of multiple identities and representation better informs an understanding of social integration and human survival/reproduction in contested spaces (Calliste and Dei, 2000, p.14). The layering of colour, class and gender cannot be ignored (Moghissi, 1994, p.16). Black Canadian feminist approaches clear the way for a more comprehensive analyses that engage theory and praxis in inquiring into the interlocking relations of ideologies, institutions and identities in shaping recognition, representation and racialization. Although the women's movement motivated hundreds of women to write on the women question, it has failed to generate in-depth critical analyses of black women's experiences (hooks, 1981, p.12) much of which is shaped by racism and not just sexism. More specifically, for hooks, we cannot form an accurate picture of the status of black women by simply focusing on racial hierarchies (ibid).But as hooks (ibid, p.14) admonishes:

> Privileged feminists have largely been unable to speak to, with, and for the diverse groups of women because they either do not understand fully the inter-relatedness of sex, race, and class oppression, or refuse to take this inter-relatedness seriously. Feminist analyses of woman's lot tend to focus exclusively on gender and do not provide a solid foundation on which to construct feminist theory.

Black Canadian women have distinctive subjective experiences of racism and sexism

because of their race and gender characteristics are taken for granted (ibid, p.28-30).

Theorizing about how the quality of a movement shapes and is shaped by the nature of identities, institutions and ideologies may be a fruitful analytic exercise that invites empowerment, direct action and social change. In this study the themes of distance and engagement are also implicated in the social organization of a movement. This movement, as a social enterprise, is influenced by how identities, institutions and ideologies become central concepts that frame the following social relations that warrant attention (see Figure 2).

A. i) The differential impact of ideology on identity (ideology > identity) as well as the differential impact of ideology on identity as mediated by institutions.

ii) The differential impact of ideology on institution (ideology > institution) as well as the differential impact of ideology on institution as mediated by identity.

B. i) The differential impact of Institutions on identity (Institution > identity) as well as the differential impact of institutions on identity as mediated by ideologies.

ii) The differential impact of institutions on ideology (Institution > ideology) as well as the differential impact of Institutions on ideology as mediated by identity

C. i) The differential impact of identity on institution (Identity > institution) as well as the differential impact of identity on institution as mediated by ideologies.

ii) The differential impact of identity on ideology (Identity > ideology) as well as the differential impact of identity on ideology as mediated by institution.

Accordingly, ideologies were operationalized by empirical manifestations of:

1) dominant ideology of neoliberalism, misogyny, racism , multiculturalism

2) institutional values

3) collective ideologies

4) personal values/ frames

Each chapter pulled together themes that were incrementally developed according to processes or stages. The above noted contingencies, factors or turning points that influence the stage of movement. These stages included: seekership/ recruitment (getting connected); achievement, maintaining an identity, specialization, organization, (staying connected); and, transformations, adjustments or conversions (disconnecting and reconnecting).

This study further highlighted the significance of conferences as empirical referents of the consequences of racialization: recognition, representation and rights. The contexts and content of conferences shape the dynamics of this movement. Again, context herein refers to those forms, structural and experiential, that condition the content of engagement. Both social contexts (affiliations, resources and skills) and personal contexts (ideology, motivations and self-concept) mediate levels of participation -- the subject matter of getting connected and staying connected. These conferences were processes of "reaching in" and "reaching out" wherein the personal and social converge rather than diverge as opposing interests. Conferences addressed the question of agency or, alternatively, the role of the black Canadian feminist activist in constituting social relations and forms consciousness, built from the bottom up, rather than imposed by foreign ideologies of identity making.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Facing the Challenges of the Twenty-First Century

Clearly, as documented in the findings, CBWC is an organization grounded in black women's historical experiences with oppression. The shared experiences provided black women with an unique perspective for knowledge articulation and dissemination (Collins, 2000). However, the CBWC's shared interests do not necessarily signify equal identical experiences or the attribution of homogeneity of meanings to common experiences. Shared group location is best characterized in terms of "heterogeneous commonality embedded in social relations of intersectionality" (ibid., p. 224). Black women, who mostly arrived in Canada from the Americas, the Caribbean, Africa and Great Britain, remain a heterogeneous group with experiences separated by age, religion, ethnicity and sexual orientation (among other factors) that can theoretically be accommodated from a shared standpoint. Thus, I argued that group-based experiences create conditions for a shared perspective that in turn leads to collective action. In short, black Canadian women draw on their shared experiences when developing multiple organizational forms.

This study addressed numerous factors that challenged the effectiveness of the CBWC. Key to this assessment was that the general knowledge that the CBWC has been constrained in its ability to promote lasting solutions to the problems affecting black Canadians. Despite the major successes of the CBWC in forming a national organization, in helping to establish the first accredited Black Women's Studies course at Concordia University, Black Women: The Missing Pages From Canadian Women's Studies and the James Robinson Chair in Black Studies at Dalhousie University- the

organization faced serious difficulties. This section provides seven suggestions on how the CBWC may revive and renew their commitment to eliminating racial and socioeconomic inequality by authentic community engagement and the engagement of communities.

Recommendations

The following set of recommendations emerged from the findings especially from discussions with the CBWC members about the organization. While I do not speak for the CBWC, I am submitting respectfully the following recommendations which build upon and provide a sense of coherence to the numerous suggestions proffered at various conferences.

Goals, Strategies and Tactics

As their statement of purpose declared, one of the primary goals of the CBWC is political action. Connected with this goal is the idea of mobilizing the black Canadian constituency, articulating their collective identity and engaging in community campaigns. In order to accomplish these goals, CBWC members utilized a variety of tactics such as lobbying the government, sending telegrams to immediately register their opposition to issues, and engage in educational work, grassroots organizing and coalition work. It is important that the organization continues acknowledging that political action is vital to the sustainability of the organization.

Organizational Structure

The CBWC has a formalized structure, bureaucratic procedures for decision making, a developed division of labour with the positions for various functions, explicit criteria for membership, rules (bylaws and constitution) governing chapters and committees,

executive council to make organizational policy and provincial leaders. The CBWC needs to become a professional social movement organization. That is, it is important for the CBWC to hire professional managers and staff who dedicate their work to building organizational structures and develop a stable source of financial resources.

Recruitment/Membership

It is critical to the maintenance of the CBWC that serious consideration is given to increasing the organization's membership and recruiting young women. One way for the CBWC to increase the size of their organization is to recruit relatives, friends and acquaintances, which might in turn bring in their own acquaintances. This is the process described by social movement scholars (Jasper, 1999; Staggenborg, 1996), who found that most new members already knew someone in the organization. Appeals are possible through public displays (libraries, lectures open to the public and advertising), setting up tables in busy places, and door-to-door canvassing.

The technologies of the Internet and direct mail (mailing directly to people's homes) appeals can be utilized (Jasper 1999). Purveyors of mailing lists buy and trade information of those who subscribe to certain magazines, so that they can target audiences carefully on the basis of political sympathies. The CBWC should draw upon the membership of black Canadian organizations who have already demonstrated their concern for similar issues.

However, once members are recruited, the CBWC's appeal must resonate with the broader cultural and sociopolitical meanings in order to attract and keep new recruits. As previously demonstrated, the catalyst for support can be based on a broad recognition of key problems and issues. Continued alliances with organizations that

have a history of related causes are warranted. In many instances, these alliances are based on common problems related to racism, gender, employment, education, health, youth and so on. They key is to promote a space to discuss these issues whenever they occur. Alliances with other organizations and groups that are affected by the same problems can also begin to address some of the resource limitations facing the CBWC.

Funding

The ability to obtain organizational funding is part of the CBWC's broader capacity for organizational maintenance. One strategy to raise funds for the organization is to hire paid staff and leaders. Paid staff and leaders are critical to the maintenance of the CBWC because they can be relied on to carry on ongoing contact and fundraise in a routine manner. A second strategy could be to combine direct mail appeals with fundraising. It is hoped that local chapters with regular meetings and activities would build an activist, participatory image that would help it to raise funds (Jasper 1999). Finally, strangers on mailing lists could be persuaded to contribute money to a cause, but rarely their time. Strangers may find it easier to give a donation to an organization, than attend meetings that may not fit into their busy schedules.

Accountability

The CBWC's leaders and members must continue to hold various offices accountable. Challenging and withdrawing support are the only effective ways to discipline leaders. The black Canadian community can never afford to condone unconscionable and undisciplined behavior especially in light of the efforts of so many who have articulated and acted upon a commitment to social justice and personal ethics for so many years.

Establish the CBWC as an Ethnic-On-Line Community (EOC)

The salience of issues affecting the CBWC begins with the black Canadian community. One of the chief impediments to a dialogue with one another is the erroneous information that is available. Once the organization itself can establish a website and become informed about its socioeconomic and political conditions, it can begin to counters and attack incorrect information. In many cases, black Canadian leaders do not have access to accurate information. This is where the skills of the scholars in the CBWC can be most effective.

Black Canadian History as a Legislative Issue

One initiative that the CBWC can undertake is a lobbying campaign to have black Canadian history taught throughout the educational system across the nation and not solely restricted to urban centres with sizeable black demographics

Epilogue

The CBWC is currently organizing and celebrating forty years of activism in 2013 and to this end this study, as an archival resource, identifies the activities and actors who have contributed immeasurably to the development of black feminist identities, institutions and ideologies.

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Appendix A
Interview Protocol Questions

Leaders

Organization – History

1.Why did black women in Canada need to develop their own organizations?
1a. Probe-How was the CBWC affected by the formation of NAC? 1b. What is the status of black women in Canada?

2.Can you tell me about the founding of the CBWC?
2a. Probe- What is the purpose of the CBWC?

Membership

3. In building your membership base, how do you recruit and retain members?
3a. How many members are there in the CBWC?

Current Activities

4. Can you tell me about the kinds of work that the CBWC does? 4a. Probe- Are there any activities that the CBWC does not address that you prefer?

Participant's Involvement

5. What is your position in the CBWC?
5a. Probe-Can you tell me about your duties?

6. What are some of the activities of the CBWC that you have participated in?

7.Prior to becoming a member of the CBWC, what kinds of organizations did you join?
7a. Probe for involvement in other organizations, please specify. 7b. Have you ever been a member or held an organizing position in any organization?

8.Since your initial involvement in the CBWC, have you been involved with black women's issues on an ongoing basis?
8a. Probe, what issues have you been involved with? Active in women's groups, politically active?

9. Can you describe some of the challenges facing the black women in the CBWC now?

10. Can you describe some of the political strategies used by the CBWC?

11. Can you talk a bit about the role of the CBWC in Canadian society?

12. What kinds of media publicity has the CBWC received?

Goals and Objectives

13. What are some of the priorities of the CBWC over the next two years?

14. Are there issues that the CBWC needs to address?

Appendix B
Interview Protocol Questions - Members

Members

Membership

1. Can you talk about what attracted you to the CBWC?
   Probe 1a. What events, person, or situation motivated you to participate in the CBWC?
   1b. What are some of their common interests or reasons for affiliation?

Activities

2. Can you tell me about some of the activities of the CBWC that you have participated in?

Collective Identity

3. How does the CBWC give you an opportunity to voice your concerns about black women? Black Canadian community?

4. Can you talk about how the CBWC gives you an opportunity to identify issues to be addressed by black women?

5. Do you have friends or relatives that are involved in the CBWC?

6. Why do you choose to stay involved in the CBWC?

Appendix C
Consent Form- Interview

I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Sociology, York University. The focus of my dissertation research on the Congress of Black Women of Canada (CBWC) is to examine some of the main events and activities of the CBWC. This study seeks to answer two questions: What conditions led to the formation of the CBWC? What were the activities of the CBWC over the years?

The analysis presented in the study rests on original data regarding the CBWC. The data covers the period from 1973 to 2003 and will be gathered using a case study approach. Participant observation of the CBWC's meetings, document analysis of the records and minutes, and semi-structured interviews with twenty respondents will be conducted.

The interview will be kept strictly confidential. All information will be used for the purposes of this study and as a record to refer back to. The data will be stored until the study is completed, and then destroyed one year later. Your identity will not be made known, unless you wish to have your identity disclosed. I will send you a summary of the transcript for your records.

The research has been reviewed and approved by the HPRC within the context of York's Senate policy on research ethics.

If you have any concerns, please feel free to contact my supervisor, Professor Carl James, Graduate Programme in Sociology, 416-736-2100, xXXXX, Alison M. Collins-Mrakas, HPRC, Manager, Research Ethics at 416-736-5914 or via email at: acollins@yorku.ca, or Jennifer Mills, Ph.D. Candidate, XXX-XXX-XXXX.

I, ____ am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this project as stated above and the possible risks from it. I hereby agree to participate in this project. I give permission to Jennifer Mills to tape record the interview. I understand that the interview will be tape recorded to assist the researcher and only listened to by my committee members. I understand that I can terminate the interview at any time and refuse to answer any question at my discretion. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this consent form.

______________________________ ______________________________
Signature of Participant Signature of Investigator

______________________________ ______________________________
Date Date

Appendix D -Letter

Mrs. Beryl Jones
Co-Chair
Congress of Black Women of Canada (CBWC)
XXX, XXXXXXXX
XXX XXX

Dear Mrs. Jones,

I am writing to ask you to participate in a telephone interview about the Congress of Black Women of Canada (CBWC). I am a black Canadian woman, and as part of my doctoral research, I am conducting a study on the origins and development of the CBWC. The focus is on the goals, strategies, activities, leadership, recruitment, resources, political opportunities and constraints impacting the CBWC between 1973 and 2003. It is therefore important to my work to interview you and members of the CBWC.

The CBWC is an important organization to sociological research because of its national scope, and its efforts to make governmental institutions more responsive to black interests. As one of Canada's first national black women's organizations, the CBWC represents the diverse interests of black women. In terms of public policy, the organization is a critic of police brutality, racial profiling, and the widespread practice of racism by mainstream institutions in such areas as housing, employment, immigration, health care, and education. From the CBWC's perspective, the government can and must play a positive role in bringing about social change.

My strategy will include some of the following questions: why did black Canadian women need to develop their own organization? What are some of the activities of the CBWC? Did the black Canadian women sustain challenges or obstacles to form the CBWC? How does the CBWC recruit members and so forth.

Your participation and the involvement of CBWC members are tremendously important to this project. I will contact you by telephone on Tuesday July 15, 2003 to discuss setting up an interview. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my thesis supervisor Professor Carl James, Graduate Programme in Sociology at 416-736-2100 xXXXXX, or Jennifer Mills, Ph.D Candidate at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Mills, Ph.D Candidate

cc: Mrs. Heather Whittaker

Appendix E

Coding Scheme

The purpose of content coding the data is to pick out information given by the members of the CBWC that is relevant to this study. The data will be coded in terms of the external context and internal organizational dynamics that have shaped the emergence and development of the CBWC.[1] The preliminary codes are listed below.

Primary Codes	Secondary Codes	Transitional Cues	Themes
1.Self			
2.Time	a 1973-1983 b 1983-1993 c 1993-2003	Setting Codes	External Context
3.Levels of Analysis	a municipal b provincial c national d transnational		
4. Organization	a chapter b structure of the CBWC c ideology d funding e leadership		Internal Organizational Dynamics
5. Location of Events	a no specific location b members' homes c other		
6. Outside Speakers	a individuals b groups c government officials	Relationship/ Networking Codes	
7.Chapter Members	a president b vice-president c member	Process Codes	Membership
8. Relationships	a family b friends		Friendships
9. Issues At Stake	a social b service c advocacy d cultural e racism		

[1] Adapted from Whittier (2002).

Primary Codes	Secondary Codes	Transitional Cues	Themes
10. Issue Areas	a housing b education c family d policing e health f employment g social justice h politics i media	Activities/Events/ Strategies Code	Activities
11. Nature of the Event	a government b coalitions		
12. Resources	a legislation b money c programmes d community base e other		
13.Networks/ Related Movement Connections	a black b women's c other	External Context Codes	Social Change
14. Identities Institutions Ideologies	a race b gender c class	Identities Institutions Ideologies	Structural Inequalities
15.Congress documents	a date		
16. Interviews	a date of interview b person interviewed		

Appendix F
Organizational Newsletters and Documents

Newsletters were used as the primary source of the historical data for the CBWC that I studied between 1973 and 2003. There were no newsletters available for Congress News Volume 1 number 1, Volume 3 number 2, and most local chapters. I recorded information from these newsletters using a simple coding sheet with sixteen categories (see appendix e). When they were available I used other documents to supplement the newsletters to obtain this and other information. The following were annotated lists of the newsletters that I used. Any documents cited in the text without reference to one of the following collections were materials provided by organizations and individuals.

Newsletters of the National Organization

National Secretariat of the National Congress of Black Women Newsletter

The National Secretariat published two newsletters. I was able to obtain a copy of volume one, number two published in April 1980. I could not find any issues published after that and I could not be certain how many, if any, were missing. But I had no newsletter from 1981-1985. The newsletter consisted mostly of graphics, updates, issues, and formation that reinforced communication between chapters, and provided an overview of the organization's activities at the local, provincial, and national levels.

Congress News

Congress News was the regular newsletter of the CBWC. I was able to obtain newsletters published in January 1986, July 1986, May 1987, January 1989, and the Fall 1990. I was unable to obtain a complete collection of the newsletters. Congress News tended to provide articles and reports on issues of interest to its members, on organizational activities at the local, provincial, and national levels, letters from the president, scholarship fund, reports on conferences and workshops, newspaper articles featuring members (e.g. Glenda Simms) photographs, graphics, membership invitations, poems, reports on policy developments (e.g.Meech Lake Accord, Free Trade agreement, affirmative action in Canada) national happenings, editorials, public issues. The newsletter was an incredible source of data because it detailed reports on CBWC strategies and tactics, evaluation of activities, and numerous discussion about organizational structure, ideology, activities, and so forth. The newsletters were exceptionally informative because the CBWC was trying to use it to bring as many member as possible into the organization and its decision making process.

Newsletters of Provincial Organizations

Update

Update was the newsletter of the Ontario Region CBWC. The newsletter began publication in September 1990 and continued regularly reporting on provincial activities (e.g. mandate, upcoming events, new organizations, regional reports, chapter reports, and objectives)

Newsletters of Provincial Organizations

Update

as well as developments in the Congress. It contained photographs and graphics. I was able to obtain volume one, number one. The newsletter provided a good history of the Ontario Region's activities.

Newsletters of Local Chapters

NewsFlash

This was the newsletter of the Edmonton chapter CBWC was first published in May 1985. The newsletter provided a good record of the organizational activities of the chapter and the national organization. It provided a description of chapter activities. I was only able to obtain volume 1, number 1.

Private Papers

In addition to the proceeding newsletter, several individuals and organizations gave me literature, newsletters and other documents. Four persons gave me access to a large number of private papers, documents from these papers were cited with the written permission of their owners. Another CBWC member active in the Edmonton chapter allowed me to use her documents from the organization.

Manuscript Collections

The Ontario archives contained a good collection of many conference reports (1973-1997), documents, minutes from national board and executive meetings from the years when CBWC leaders like Jean Augustine, Glenda Simms, Esmeralda Thornhill served as presidents of the organization.