Engendrer la cohésion sociale
Fostering Social Cohesion

Working Paper # 2

Marginalization in a post-welfare regime. New forms of representation and a new political process design

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Contemporary occidental societies are characterized by a combination of welfare regime re-organisation (Esping 1999; Liebfried and Pierson 1998; Ferrera and Rhodes 2000) and fundamental changes in the policy-making process (Jobert 1998; Tully 1999).[1]

Recent social policy reforms, organized around the "social cohesion" theme, are considered to simultaneously address rising poverty, rising inequalities and changing risks parent-producer-adults meet, including multiple forms of unemployment (Jenson 1999; Dufour 2000). At the same time, people who are deemed to be the "most in need" seem to challenge social reforms and express their dissatisfaction by protesting and building coalitions at the national and sub-national level. This re-emergence of collective action, especially among marginalized people, confronts the way public debate is driven and how the policy process is implemented.

In order to analyse this double process of change (change in the form of state intervention and change in the form of protest), I propose to outline the transformation of the "citizenship regime" in Canada[2]. After explaining the implications of this point in the second part, we will study how federal and provincial governments are, slowly but surely, changing their use and understanding of social policy. More precisely, we will see how family and children policies are progressively becoming the real area of policy innovation, sometimes replacing employment policies. In the final part, we will further discuss the noticeable shift in the expression of social protest. We will see that social groups who have access to the political process deal increasingly with family poverty or the development of children rather than with employment issues. At the same time, new kinds of collective action appear in the form of coalitions. These coalitions vigorously criticize government action at the provincial, national and global level.

To comprehend the complex dynamics of all these new trends, social forces presently at work in Canada will be "mapped," taking into account the way these forces interact on social issues with the State, to form what we called "the citizenship regime."

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Part I - Social representation and the concept of citizenship regime

The State as a full player

In the tradition of social movement research, until recently, political systems and State action have been quite neglected (Jenkins and Klandermans 1993). As Neveu stated,

> L'analyse des mouvements sociaux a durablement souffert d'un déficit d'attention à la diversité des systèmes politiques. (...) Il n'est donc pas excessif de dater des années 1980 la prise en compte par l'analyse des systèmes politiques et institutionnels (Neveu 2000: 103) .

However, even the concept of "political opportunity structure" (Tarrow 1998), does not really consider social representation building as a process and a fight between social groups and the State. Indeed, the very nature of the political system explains the degree of social groups' access to the system. Thus, if we want to study changes affecting the way social groups and the State interact inside a specific political system, we have to consider the State as a full actor in the game and not just as the target of demands.

In Tilly and Tarrow's most recent writing, they note:

> "The contentious politics that concerns us is episodic rather than continuous, involves interaction between makers of claims and others, is recognized by those others as bearing on their interests, and brings in government as mediator, target or claimant" (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2000: 25).

A number of changes are proposed in this text to pursue research in the collective action field. Political struggle is replaced in its whole context (national but also sub-national), and government is seen as a crucial "partner" in the collective actor constitution process (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2000: conclusion). Nevertheless, the focus of the analysis remains on the social group side. Consequently, we proposed to re-direct the focus on the very interaction occurring between political actors and the State at the level of social representation analyses.

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[2] This concept is taken from (Jenson and Phillips 1996).

For the last five years in Canada, the State (federal) re-designed the way social problems were addressed. Even if this shift could be understood partially as a consequence of social group's initial claims, it now has a direct impact on the "mapping" of protest in the country (McKeen 2000). In other words, the federal State is directly involved in the way collective action and social claims occur.

The central role of social representation

However, it can be clearly shown that direct access to the State and to the political process for social groups does not imply that a direct impact will be made on decisions taken. For example, in Canada, in the field of employment policies, we have been able to show that, even if the formal structure of public consultation has been opened to a wide range of groups and individuals in the 1990s, the reforms taken were generally not influenced at all (or very little), by the claims of social groups (Dufour 2000). Apart from the "political opportunity structure," the most important variable seems to be the degree of "porosity" of the dominant discourse towards counter-discourses. Here the research question is not only who has access to the political process but also who is considered in the political process. In other words, to influence public policy, social groups not only need to have the opportunity to express themselves in a public arena, but their discourses must also echo or be similar to the dominant discourse of government. To engage in dialogue, those involved must share some elements of discussion (at least minimally) and both must interact in a shared universe of political discourse (Jobert 1995).

Citizenship regime

In a "normal" political situation (one where there is no major institutional crisis in the country), relationships between State and society could be described as taking the form of a regime[3], stable and coherent enough to allow for the reproduction of these relations in time. It is possible to identify an accumulation regime, a social protection regime, as well as a citizenship regime. The concept of citizenship regime focuses our attention on the relationships existing between the State and society, and, more specifically, the forms of representation that are

[3] For an overview of the concept of regulation as developed by the Regulation School, see (Jenson 1995a).

considered legitimate (Jenson and Phillips 1996). Here, representation refers to two crucial ideas: the representation of citizens considered legitimate by the State (through their interests) and the representation of citizens by themselves. For Jenson and Philips, for a citizenship regime to be stable, these two dimensions of representation need to be congruent. The concept of citizenship regime is thus an attempt to elucidate the degree of congruence between the representation of interests by the State and the self-representation of citizens.

Using this concept we can consider the way social problems are conceived at both the level of dominant political actors as well as at the level of social actors, inside or outside the main game. We are also able to notice variations in the representation process occurring over given period based on a specific political material: discourses produced by relevant actors. Finally, the citizenship regime approach places social conflicts at the heart of the process of dominant social representation building.

Over the last five years, drastic welfare reforms were implemented everywhere in Canada in quite similar ways. The rising participation of collective actors and individuals in the formal consultation structure did not result in increased negotiated solutions between the State and other political actors, nor in the "democratization" of the policy decision process. Instead, we have seen a radicalization of conflicts in Canada. If some groups tended to be systematically excluded from the federal political scene (McKeen 2000), new ones have gained visibility in the media and public opinion. Sometimes, they are recognised as interlocutors by governments and are invited to roundtable conferences, on other occasions, they choose a more direct method of protest[4]. In either case, groups do not benefit from their actions in terms of impact on the policy formulation process, which seems to be blocked by consensus. Although this is the common trend in most Canadian provinces, some differences can be noticed. In particular, we will see that Quebec appears more and more as a "special" case inside Canada. Recently, it has become clear that there are two distinct citizenship regimes in the country (Jenson 1995b, Noël 1996).

[4] For example, the movement around the "World March of Women" in Quebec, during fall 2000.

Between 1993, when the liberals returned to power, and today, the appearance of the Canadian welfare state has greatly changed. After presenting the federal situation, we will focus on the Quebec case.

Part II - The State of citizenship regime in Canada from the State's perspective: Re-design of state social intervention

From 1993 to 1997, Canadian governments (federal and provincial) were driven by one obsession: the absolute necessity to reduce public deficit. Each reform undertaken during this period was designed to save public money in a way or another. Since 1997, the situation has radically changed, at least in the dominant discourse. The Federal State has recovered a relative financial prosperity and the crucial political question is now how to share the surplus. Three options are predominantly discussed: lower the level of taxes, reimburse the public debt or spend more on social issues. For the moment, the federal government chooses to do a little of each, with a clear priority given to taxes.[5]

If in the first period social policies linked with the unemployment problem were severally cut, in the second period, policies towards children and (poor) families regained some popularity and expansion. The final result was a shift in federal social intervention. A targeted fight against poverty has, by and large, replaced the fight against the employment problem.

First period: an attack on unemployment protection

In 1993, a new liberal federal government was formed. Even if the main theme of the election campaign was employment creation (Liberal Party 1993), the first month of the Liberal Party's mandate was characterized by a new leitmotiv: the necessity to initiate a complete reform of social programs (Battle and Torjman 1995). At the same time, the federal government decided to drastically reduce the deficit in three years (Drache and Ranachan 1995:1).

[5] During the last campaign (fall 2000), this issue was dominant in the liberal discourse, tempered only by the national healthcare system needs.

In January 1994, the new Permanent Committee on Human Resources Development led the organization of public consultations to ensure citizens participated in the governmental policy development process. Then in October 1994, Lloyd Axworthy, the Minister of Human Resources Development, presented the government's proposal. Reforms of the unemployment insurance program and post-secondary education program were planned, as well, the possibility of changing the Canadian Assistance Plan–was considered. In November 1994, the Committee proceeded to conduct a vast public consultation all across the country based on that proposal. In the end, around 100 000 people had participated. In February 1995, the Committee presented its final report. To briefly summarise, we can say that the report was severely critical of the government's initial proposal, which was an indication of the discords existing within the Liberal Party.

At the very moment that public consultations on social programs were taking place, the way the programs were financed was seriously challenged (Gagnon 1996) by the adoption of the Canadian Health and Social Transfer (CHST) on June 6th, 1995. This new financing program introduced major changes in the Canadian federation, specifically in the relationships between the two governments (federal and provincial) and also in the way social programs were administered (Brown and Rose 1995). Not only did the CHST refuse the "re-building of social programs" announced by Axworthy by not putting fresh money into the budget, but it also introduced a drastic reduction of federal budgets over three years (7 billion less would go to the provinces at the end of the period). It was clear, at this point, that the Minister of Finance was controlling the reform process.

The first proposal for unemployment insurance reform was announced in December 1995, after the Quebec referendum. This proposal, compared to the first plans announced one year earlier, was less ambitious on the depth of the changes and on the "active measures" side. A new system of calculation was proposed for access to the program, based on the number of hours worked (instead of weeks) and an intensity rule was adopted which penalized the frequently unemployed, compared to the occasionally unemployed. The final new law, C-12, which created the new "employment-insurance" program, was effective the July 1st, 1996 (Pulkingham 1998).

The active part of the project was totally implemented only in 1998, because a trade-off negotiation between the provinces was needed.

In brief, the new law contains four principal aspects: more severe rules of entry and management of the program[6], the introduction of ~~a~~ different treatment depending on the nature of the unemployment problem, more targeted aspects towards the "most in need," and a clear political discourse on "active measures" to fight "dependence" on social programs. As for the last point, changes are mostly transformations in rhetoric, as little has been done to effectively transform the "active discourse" in act (Stoyko 1997). The new re-employment measures, as they are called, are directed towards a quick integration to paid work, which does not cost a great deal of money. Professional training has been entirely suppressed from the integration tools offered and financed by the government and the other training possibilities offered are not available for all unemployed people. Provinces in charge of the implementation of the measures deal with this "active" side of the reform; thus the responsibility for the program is shared with the federal government.

The other side of unemployment social protection, social assistance programs, was simultaneously attacked. In 1966, the Canadian Assistance Plan (CAP) was created. Under the CAP, the federal government was responsible for giving a general framework for provincial social assistance programs as well as for contributing to half of the expenses of these programs[7]. Each provincial and territorial system was distinct, but minimal standards were assured in the country. Provinces were obliged to help anybody in need, they could not ask for a residential pre-requisite before delivering assistance, a legal procedure was required in order to contest the system, balanced accounts were to be maintained, and finally, the provinces were obliged to make all program legislation accessible.

In April 1st, 1997, the CAP was replaced by the CHST. Due to this new institutional framework, provinces no longer have legal obligations to respect, except the restriction

[6] The duration of benefits was reduced from 10% (from 50 weeks to 45) and the maximum of insurable wages was considerably reduced.
[7] Since 1990 the federal government "break" is the commitment to share expenses between three provinces (Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia) and put a limit to the transfer payments.

concerning residency (Canada. National Council on Welfare 1995). Besides the drastic reduction of federal transfers to the provinces that came with the CHST (Boychuk 1998), provinces are allowed to ask for obligations from recipients in exchange for benefits, such as sobriety (from alcohol or drugs), or requirements to look for work or to participate in *work-for-welfare* (Boismenu et Bernier 2000).

Every change in the unemployment insurance system has a direct impact on provincial social assistance programs. In the short or long run, if unemployment insurance is more severe and the length of benefits is limited, the number of people requesting social assistance will increase (Cousineau 1997). Apart from this new population, provinces were confronted with a high rate of unemployment in 1997 (in Quebec it was 12.2%) (Canada. Human Resources Development Website 2000). These two elements provoked a growth of social assistance recipients who were actually able to work. In Quebec, in 1997, 79.5% of ~~the~~ total assistance recipients were in this situation (Gorlick and Brethour 1998). Social assistance programs were originally designed as a last resort to avoid poverty. The vast increase of people whose principal problem was unemployment called for a complete reform of most provincial systems.

In Quebec, the social assistance reform occurred during a period of "austerity." From 1995, the Party Quebecois was committed to attaining a "zero deficit" in four years. To reach this goal, a severe reduction of the amount spent on social assistance was planned (Quebec. Ministère de la sécurité du revenu 1996), which would be followed by an important reform.

Law 186, "Le soutien du revenu et favorisant l'emploi et la solidarité sociale" created three new programs: one for people able to work, one for those unable to work and one program specifically for parents working at low-wages (Quebec. Assemblée nationale 1997). These changes were not in the actual structure of program (these three aspects were in place until 1988) but rather in the idea underlying them. Not only are all recipients (even those unable to work) encouraged to participate in active employment or social measures, but also some of the recipients who are able to work are progressively obliged to do so. In the beginning, young people under 25 were obligated to work, then the obligation was extended to lone mothers with children whose children were placed in a kindergarten, then, in 2000, everyone was required to

work. This process resulted in the people on social assistance receiving less money, while having to work harder to obtain it.

In this first period of reform marked by "permanent austerity" (Pierson 1998), cuts in social programs particularly damaged protection of the unemployed. Even if the dominant federal discourse publicized "active policy" in the name of anti-dependence, no real investment occurred in this field (Haddow 1998). In 1997 and the years after, things began to change. The financial prosperity of the federal government allowed for new spending on social programs. However, money previously taken from the system in the form of cuts was still not restored. Only part of the population who suffered due to the cuts could say that they have recovered what has been lost. In sum, a fight against a new, specific kind of poverty now replaces the fight against unemployment.

Second period: increasing intervention on targeted poverty

Canadian policy towards families can be summarized in three periods. The first one, beginning at the end of the 40s, was directed to mothers. The first Canadian Family allowances, were at least a symbolic recognition of mothers' labour in the home (Baillargeon 1996). Subsequently, policy on family allowances became more important in financial terms but remained residual comparing to some European family policies. At the end of the 80s, policy measures towards families clearly became a way to fight poverty, especially for working-poor families. It is important to keep in mind that Canada is one of the only occidental countries in which family poverty is severe, in particular families led by lone mothers (Baker 2000). From 1994, the fight against poverty has become more and more of a fight against children's poverty, coupled with measures that incite parents to work or to stay on the labour market.

The federal discourse on the new social program, the Canadian Child Tax Benefit, (implemented since July 1998) is mainly organized around the children's poverty argument. From today's dominant point of view, social investments in children are easily compensated by the cost federal inaction could incur in the long run. In this view, federal policy is the way to prevent expensive services at the adult age: it is well known that children living in low-income families are more "at risk" (Canada. Social Union 1999).

To invest in citizens at an early age, it is necessary to help children to "exit" from social assistance and to help parents keep their low-wage jobs. For this reason, one part of the Canadian Child Tax Benefit is offered to all low-income families, including those receiving social assistance income, attributed per child. The second part works as a family allowance with the amount varying based on level of income.

For Wendy E. McKeen (2000), mobilization around child poverty, at the federal level, began during the middle of 1980s with the *Child Poverty Action Group*. In 1991, the organisation *Campaign 2000* proposed to build a national coalition in order to put pressure on government to reach the eradication of children's poverty by the year 2000. Popular and political forces largely sustained this movement. In 1999 and 2000, federal budgets were built around the central figure of the child, thus child poverty became the focus of debate between provincial and federal governments. This shift in discourse has concrete effects on the way social problems are considered.

For example, in the universe of federal political discourses, women's issues were at the heart of the discussion for a considerable period of time. This question has now been eliminated from the poverty debate. One of the principal demands of the feminist movement from the 1980s was the provision of social benefits on the basis of individual income rather than on the basis of family, in order to allow women to gain "real autonomy" inside the family unit. This claim was completely absent from the debate around the Canadian Child Tax Benefit (McKeen 2000). Nevertheless, a recent report from the Canadian Status on Women shows that benefits for children neither end the question of women's economic vulnerability, nor close the inequality gap between men and women. A great divide still exists based on gender regarding access to work and to good jobs (full-time, well-paid) (Canada. Status on Women 1998, 79). In other words, the success of the child figure in political discourse has hidden some other important questions, particularly why children live in poor families.

In the federal dominant discourse, the Canadian Child Tax Benefit is an effective answer to child poverty in Canada. Though there was a great deal of positive publicity for the policy in the media, except for the Caledon Institute (which views the policy as a door to more progressive

social measures in the future), most community groups have denounced the benefit (Durst 1999, 14). These groups recognized that the new policy erased disparities between social assistance recipients and working poor or unemployed people, as well as that the measure was a way to give a minimal income to all poor families, independent of sources of income, everywhere in Canada (Durst 1999, 41). Children protection would thus be stabilized with this shift from an income security policy to a family policy. On the other hand, groups opposing this federal action saw it merely as a compensation for wages that were too low on the market and for the insecurity linked with low-wage jobs. Further, this income compensation was still deemed to be at an unacceptable level[8].

For several observers, the Canadian Child Tax Benefit demonstrates the limits of Federal State action, as the policy is predominantly fiscal, with no concrete commitments towards public services for children. Thus, liberal reforms individualise State aid to Canadian citizens (Bach and Phillips 1997) and accelerate the privatisation process of provincial childcare (Jenson et Thompson 1999). More and more, parents –and mothers in particular- are facing their increasing responsibilities as producers and care givers alone (Freiler 1998).

The province of Quebec has, by and large, followed the federal response to increasing poverty. Nevertheless, one part of the new provincial policy towards children has a slightly different meaning.

Since 1995, family policy in Quebec has become increasingly important. In the federal framework of the Canadian Child Tax Benefit, we are seeing a shift towards help for poor families coupled with advantages to keep them working. Here, there is a clear link between family policy and reform of the social assistance programs previously discussed (Dandurand 1996). Further, recently Quebec became the only province in Canada to have developed a comprehensive program of public day-care[9]. In the public discourse:

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[8] Thus, governement of Canada investments for Families with Children is supposed to increase from $6.7 Billions in 1997-1998 to $10.9Billions in 2002-2003 .

[9] The program is called "5$ per day", per child, from birth to five years. A 3$ supplement is offered to poor working families and free day-care is offered to social assistance recipients for 20 hours per week. The reform implemented in 1998 also includes the cost of full-time school for children up to five years of age.

> " Les nouvelles dispositions de la politique familiale traduisent la volonté du gouvernement d'adapter ses politiques aux besoins de la famille et aux nouvelles réalités du marché du travail" (Quebec, Ministère de la Famille et de l'enfance 1999).

In brief, the Quebec evolution in the field of children and family is similar to the federal one because of the targeting of the "most in need" (which led to the disappearance of high birth-rate view, previously at work). But, on the other hand, a universal element has been introduced with the creation of an inexpensive day-care.

In Canada and in Quebec we can notice a clear shift in State intervention. After dramatic/ cuts in the realm of unemployment protection, both governments developed innovative policies to fight a certain kind of poverty. Consequently, new categories of the population became the new "laisser-pour-compte": people living alone or without children, those who are not the most in need, and women. At the same time, numerous potential methods of fighting poverty have disappeared from the political agenda, such as through the availability of good work, reducing the inequality between men and women for the access to work, and eliminating the growing poverty gap.

> "Less people rely on welfare, but does not mean that there are less poor people in Canada. (...) Sustained economic growth is, arguably, more important, and more effective, than even well funded, targeted anti-poverty initiatives in swelling the ranks of the employed. This said, the American and Canadian experiences also illustrate that economic growth alone does not necessarily mean that fewer individuals and families will be living in poverty" (Lochhead and Scott 2000: 46).

These new shapes of political discourse have effects on the political process itself. Some social groups are excluded while others are invited. Meanwhile, new forms of mobilization appear.

Part III - New challenges to the State: "new mainstream protest" and new marginalized social groups

Though groups engaged in the child poverty debate may have had some of their demands fulfilled, the radical protest around free-trade agreements and the neo-liberal agenda occupies a marginalized position on the political scene in Canada. Nevertheless, effective actions are taking place at the global level and the consequences of these actions for national and provincial political life are not yet clear.

The story

At the federal level, poverty became a prominent public issue in the late 1960s and early 1970s. At this time, labour unions and feminist movements, too busy in their fight for full-employment and good conditions of work, were not involved in the poverty debate. During the 70s and 80s, the National Anti-Poverty Organization (NAPO), founded in 1971, the National Council of Welfare and the Canadian Council on Social Development gradually became the three main players involved in the fight against poverty (McKeen 1998). They established their legitimacy as the progressive voice on the social policy terrain: they became the voice of re-distributive justice.

At the beginning of the 1980s, as social programs became more targeted, the women‘s movement was very active in the income security debate. Feminists became increasingly drawn into coalition politics with the dominant progressive social policy anti-poverty organizations. It was a great moment of collaboration between groups and government, even if the scope of claims and co-operation was limited to the “most in need.” At the end of the 80s to the mid-90s, politics of retrenchment came into effect in Canada. The initial consequence of the cuts to social programs was a radicalization of the broader political sphere with popular sector groups mobilizing under the Pro-Canada Network (better known as the Action Canada Network). The second effect was a promotion of the child poverty theme in political discourse, which served to put a human face on the government agenda of reducing social spending. At the same time, this shift marked the recognition of several “new” social groups who had actually been supporting the child poverty cause for many years.

As a result, since 1990, the progressive community has tended to be divided into two camps. In one camp were groups engaged in a broad strategy of opposing the economic and constitutional proposals of the federal government, proposals which implied eliminating federal responsibility for social policy, the dismantling of national standards for social programs, and a deregulation of labour market. This coalition of groups was composed of the Action Canada Network, labour unions (through the Canadian Labour of Congress) and women's groups (based on participation by the Canadian Action Committee on the Status of Women). These groups were progressively marginalized from the mainstream income security debate. In response, they tended to build coalitions around the free-trade issue. In 1988, "while the parties spent much of the campaign trying to avoid free trade discussion, social interests were engaged from the outset. Umbrella associations emerged to co-ordinate messages. (...) The Pro-Canada Network offered an un-compromised critique of free-trade" (Bradford 1998).

In the other camp were organizations willing to engage in the narrower debate on income security reform, national social policy and anti-poverty organizations. However, this community also struggled due to funding cuts as well as the threat of complete elimination in the early 1990s. For example, the Canadian Council of Social Development lost its sustaining grant at the end of the 1992-1993 fiscal year and was forced to re-make itself as a provider of research services on a contractual basis to government and non-government clients. The NAPO was one of the few social policy organizations in the mid-1990s that managed to retain its federal funding. The incorporation of the concern about child poverty into the federal agenda in the early and mid-1990s placed the Child Poverty Action Group at the forefront of the social policy community. According to McKeen, it was among the few social policy organizations in the mid-1990s that had credibility within federal circles (McKeen 1998: 163). In 1991, Campaign 2000 was established for the specific purpose of building a national coalition to keep child poverty in the public eye. NAPO then joined Campaign 2000, even if members first believed that the focus on children would place categories of poor in competition with each other. The federal government took Campaign 2000 demands into account, notably with the implementation of the Canadian National Child Tax Benefit, but in a very narrow sense as only the poorest families were targeted by the new policy. At the end, the coalition around Campaign 2000 abandoned its call for universality.

If the radical opposition of the first camp had gained some strength at the beginning of the 90s (for example, with the failure of the Charlottetown Accord (McKeen 1998)), today their marginalization on the national scene is clear. While the Action Canada Network and other opposition coalitions continue to fight the neo-liberal proposals of the Liberal government, the economic recession and repeated funding reductions and attacks on the credibility of many groups have severely weakened their influence. For example, women's movements have become a more radicalized left and have no real link with the child poverty movement. Consequently, in the federal discourse we can note the disappearance of the gender problematic.

This reconfiguration of protest must be directly linked with the drastic cuts of government funds to advocacy groups (especially to the feminist movement). Besides this, the federal government organized the systematic elimination of organisations representing society inside the State. For example, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women was eliminated in 1995, which removed women's presence in, and direct access to, the State.

In Canada today, child poverty oriented groups and "think-tank research institutes," such as the Caledon Institute for Social Policy, are the main social partners in social reform[10]. Even if the Canadian Child Tax Benefit is a far cry from initial claims of universality, horizontal equity and the principle of social responsibility for children, the attention the federal government now pays to the child figure could be counted as a gain by social groups. On the other hand, at the margins of the political process we find coalitions of groups fighting against broader aspects of social justice. These new actors seem to have a clear understanding of the economical situation and they show a real sensibility for the political logic underlying social reforms at the federal level. They are also very aware that it is no longer possible to propose only national or local perspectives. This strong analytical and reflexive capacity makes radical social movements potentially very effective (for example, in Seattle)[11], and, on a national basis, these groups form viable alternative discourses (Ricciutelli 1997). However, it is still difficult to ascertain what consequences such groups' actions will have on the Canadian political process. The last part of this paper is a first

[10] In 1992, Ken Battle received funding through a private foundation to head-up a small non-partisan social policy think-tank, the Caledon Institute of Social Policy. It has played a crucial role in the design of liberal child policy.

[11] Even if they are placed at the margin of the "globalization issue" by governments and NGO's, who are the only represent of "civil society" allowed to organize "parallel" summit.

attempt to give-meaning to the action and existence of these groups on the national and provincial level.

The meanings: new actor constitution?

Tarrow and Tilly defined actor constitution as "the process by which new actors come to be publicly constituted through contentious interaction" (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2000:167). For them, the process of actor constitution is characterized by three mechanisms: innovative collective action, de-certification of actors (recognition by authorities) and category formation (group identity naming and building). As a first hypothesis, we propose that though new forms of innovative protest effectively emerge–in Canada, coalition building is still a work in progress (even if some evidence of "identity formation" could be noticed around "social justice and solidarity fights"), and recognition by federal authorities is still not gained. In other words, although marginalized[12] people are very aware of "who they are," the way they represent themselves is not yet accepted and shared by the way governments permit the mediation and the representation of their interests and claims. If this statement is true, the Canadian citizenship regime could be considered as still in crisis.

The re-design of social protest in Canada is directly linked with the global phenomenon (the globalization process), and the fight against free trade. Further,–coalition building against neo-liberal order also means a re-discovery of values that have disappeared from the dominant universe of national political discourses, namely, universality, equality and social justice. The Action Canada Network is generally regarded as the most important manifestation to date of coalition formation among the progressive social movements and has come to be collectively known as the popular sector (Bleyer 1992). First formed in 1987 as the Pro-Canada Network by groups opposed to the proposed Canada – U.S Free Trade Agreement, the network today (whose name changed again in 1999 to Solidarity Network) includes more than forty-five national groups and provincial coalitions, including a number of trade unions. In the beginning, the role of Action Canada Network was essentially informative. When the free-trade agreement became effective in

1987, the network's role began to shift into a more proactive gear. This organization illustrates here how potentially new actor constitutes itself on the federal political arena.

First of all, the network is an innovative form of collective action. Coalitions per se are not new and do not necessarily herald a move to a more radical, transformative politics. Indeed, they have typically been formed at the final stage in a defensive political project. Nevertheless, in the context of the appearance of the network, the Action Canada Network was a creative response to the political parties defection on that subject. We have to remember that free-trade was avoided as a major issue during election campaigns by most Canadian parties since the end of the 80s. In response, groups belonging to the network were engaged, from the beginning, in an education mandate. Many of the activists gave priority to knowledge, knowledge production and grassroots capacity building. Even if, from time to time in the 1990s, this orientation has been seriously challenged by more direct action activists, today education and information-sharing are the dominant strong characteristics of movements fighting on the national and global level against the neo-liberal agenda[13].

Simultaneously, coalitions of this sort were initially aware that it was necessary to search for social, political, economic and cultural alternatives to the reigning order. "With the free-trade and the re-emergence of the economy as a terrain for social movement politics, the politics of identity which so defined popular politics in the late 1970s and 1980s seemed to be changed. Equality re-gained the top of the agenda" (Conway 2000: 46). Defence of universal and publicly financed social programs and public services at all levels of government were part of the claim, as were new ways of taxation and control of multinational business. Action Canada Network seems to have reached comprehensive proposals around social justice and solidarity issues[14]

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[12] The groups I am speaking about are doubly marginalized: due to their position within the political system, but also because they are economically and socially marginalized in society.

[13]At the national level, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and CHO!CES: A Coalition for Social Justice publishes an alternative budget before each official federal budget and has a complete research staff working on social issues. Anti-free-trade organizations also focus a major part of their activities on education, such as developing an understanding of globalization and possible alternative solutions, and why civil disobedience is a necessary form of action. In preparation for the FTAA summit in Quebec in April 2001, one of the first actions taken by groups was to create an alternate source of information through independent media. For more information, see: http://www.wtoaction.org/ftaphtml, March 2001.

[14] See their webpage: http://www.web.net/~actcan, March 2001.

escaping, at the same time, the "low common denominator" process of coalition building (Bleyer 1992).

The 1993 federal election represented a turning point in Canadian politics. The Tory Party had almost disappeared from the map; the liberals were elected with a large majority based on their social promises (though these promises were not kept); the Bloc Quebecois entered the federal scene for the first time (as a promoter of the independence of Quebec) and became the opposition party; and finally, the Reform Party, created in Western Canada, gained a voice on the federal scene with their right-wing program. The New Democratic Party (NDP) almost vanished from Parliament. The following elections of 1997 and 2000 demonstrated that the party system in Canada had effectively broken down (Tanguay 1999). At the same time, it seemed that the right wing (represented by the Alliance Party which replaced the Reform Party) found an audience. As a consequence, the left is no longer on the party map but is relegated to the margin of social protest. There is thus a great need for, at least, extra-party representation in Canada for progressive forces. In this way, the Canada Action Network has served as something of a laboratory where "old" and "new" organisational traditions and decision-making styles were absorbed (Bleyer 1992). Material demands (better conditions of work) and identity claims (full citizenship for all people) co-existed in the Network. It was the beginning of collective public profile building for the Canadian popular sector.

Hegemony can be defined as the organisation of consent that rests on a practical material base. Alberto Melucci suggests a critical attribute of a social movement is the extent to which its action challenges or breaks the limits of a system of social relations. Such challenges necessarily entail a dis-organization of consent, a disruption of hegemonic discourses and practices. In this sense, coalitions of movements and trans-national movements who are linked them with may be viewed as agencies of counter-hegemony (Carroll 1992). For the moment, their actions have essentially challenged notions of democracy and representation (Dobrowolsky 1998), but the Canadian government has not fully recognised these actors as legitimate. On the contrary, they

are marginalized as extremist activists by the dominant political discourse which labels their activities as the radical expression of illegal actions[15].

However, in Quebec, where the situation is quite similar to the federal one, the new Premier, Bernard Landry, who has recently formed a new government, seems to have integrated some of the traditional claims of anti-free trade coalitions, especially with the creation of the Minister "de la lutte contre la pauvrete et l'exclusion"[16]. From 1995 to 2000, coalitions of women's movements (with the Fédération des Femmes du Québec as the leader), unions and the Coalition for the Eradication of Poverty have been very active on the provincial scene. In 1995, women organized the "Du pain et des roses" March, which was a great success in terms of mobilization but only a partial one in terms of their claims being recognized by the government. Only certain gains were made with the recognition of "économie sociale" as a full sector of the economy (Gay 1997). After this popular mobilization, a new coalition proposed to adopt a law based on a "zero poverty" principle, to parallel the "zero deficit" government rhetoric. It is this action, built on the long-term with mass grassroots support, which is more visible today. Finally, in 2000, the World March of Women took place, which was mostly organized and co-ordinated by the FFQ. Although this last example seems to demonstrate effective trans-national social movement building (Giraud 2000), the provincial and national effects were minor.

At the moment, little concrete or material effects could be linked directly with the popular activism. But, from a symbolic point of view, all these socially innovative actions made a counter-hegemonic discourse come alive. The popular sector in Quebec is dynamic, well informed, and capable of spreading throughout society. Today, for the first time in five years, some crucial elements of these counter-hegemonic discourses seem to have found a place in the dominant universe of political discourses. The perspective of a new referendum in Quebec could be an opportunity for marginalized social actors to enter the political process and to finally gain partial recognition for who they are and for their concerns.

[15] For example, see the presentation of social groups and coalitions for the Quebec Summit which legitimates the security measures in Quebec City.
[16] See *Le Devoir*, "Cabinet Landry: L'efficacité avant la souveraineté," 9 March 2001. Htpp://www.ledevoir.com/que/quebec.html.

Differences between what appears to be a completely blocked situation at the federal government and a more open one in Quebec must be related to government action towards social issues. In Quebec, recent policies towards family and children include strong elements of public services (day-care) which concerned all parents, on a universal basis. When this program was adopted in 1998, the provincial government managed to build a large consensus in society. Almost all social groups, including women, who had demanded the program for a long time, supported the reform. This was the first step towards a deeper dialogue between civil society at large (not only with the groups supporting action towards children) and the State[17]. In comparison, the federal situation is quite different. Groups and movements outside the "child issue" have not been recognized by the government and their demands have not been answered. Here, a lot of work has to be done for a stable citizenship regime to exist.

Concluding remarks

For a long time during the years of recession and the downsizing of Welfare State, social protest was astonishingly rare in Canada. Analysts were speculating on electoral and social apathy, and the return of citizens to the private sphere. More precisely, the main problem for collective action was the absence of a clear enemy to fight against and marginalized people's feelings of powerlessness (Dufour 2000). Today, it seems that a form of conflict has emerged around the globalization issue, an issue that can provide clear enemies to fight (multinationals), specific aims to pursue and alternative projects to propose. In this new framework, social justice and solidarity have become the new consensual claims of various social groups, including labour unions. As Dubet has clearly shown for the suburbs in France, these elements are crucial for the mobilization process to occur (Dubet 1994, 194).

Historically, social movements in Canada have always been independent from the party system and closer to the State, which officially recognised and sustained them as groups since the end of the 40s. From the mid-1980s, this reserved political space has considerably diminished. As previously noted, the representation of some groups within the government has been eliminated,

[17]Even if in 1995 actors from the social economy sector were officially recognized by government as full actors in the Quebec economy, today, the real gains for the community sector are known to be thin and unconvincing.

women being the clearest example, and funding for these movements has been dramatically reduced or simply eliminated. The justification for these reductions is not only economical, but also ideological. As Philipps notes, a movement against the mediation of social groups did actually develop in Canada. Social movements are denounced as special interest groups by government who favour a more direct link to citizens, taken individually (Phillips 1999). Conversely, the federal government simultaneously publicized the community sector as being the new pillar of Canadian society, one that would be able to help people in need.

The meanings of these changes are not yet clear, but some partial conclusions could be posed. First, it is quite clear that the way Canadian government represents social problems have changed. The child figure is now the main symbol used in dominant discourse to justify social policy reforms (Saint-Martin 2000). This change has also been noticed in one of the most non-Canadian provinces: Quebec. Otherwise, the form of social protest has changed as well. More and more, coalition groups build opposition at the global level and continue to address national problems with the same anti-liberal counter-hegemonic discourse. Here, claims are a mix of identity issues and issues regarding access to resources. In either case, citizenship (understood as civic and political rights), is claimed as a universal right, independent of its economic status. It is often in the name of citizenship that the global process of governance is denounced. If the system of representation has changed in Canada to include a new recognition of groups fighting for children and targeted poverty, new forms of collective action have emerged which appear to be increasingly capable of proposing alternatives, but who lack the political recognition to be fully effective as newly constituted actors.

All in all, the new citizenship regime in Canada is still a work in progress: the liberal project, centred on the child figure, is increasingly challenged by a broader global project built on solidarity, social justice and the recognition of political rights for all citizens. To go one step further, it could be useful to establish a similar “map” for other countries. Thus, through comparison it would be possible to clarify the links existing between “national social issues” defined by national government, “mainstream” social forces at work and the more radical form of social protest around globalization issues.

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