Women's Movements and State Feminism: Integrating Diversity into Public Policy

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with the research assistance of Ann-Marie Field

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between women's movements and state feminism in order to explore the opportunities and constraints for integrating diversity questions into public policy making. The research is based on a comparative analysis of women's policy machinery in Canada and Australia and focusses on the capacity of state feminist institutions to facilitate interaction between women's movements and the state in support of successful policy interventions around diversity issues. Case studies in the area of anti-violence struggles are presented from Quebec, New South Wales, Western Australia and South Australia. In an era marked by globalization that has contributed to the dramatic restructuring of state institutions, the report concludes that women's policy machinery can be an important site for integrating diversity questions into policy debates, provided effective linkages between feminists and state feminist institutions are in place.

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PREFACE

Good public policy depends on good policy research. In recognition of this, Status of Women Canada instituted the Policy Research Fund in 1996. It supports independent policy research on issues linked to the public policy agenda and in need of gender-based analysis. Our objective is to enhance public debate on gender equality issues in order to enable individuals, organizations, policy makers and policy analysts to participate more effectively in the development of policy.

The focus of the research may be on long-term, emerging policy issues or short-term, urgent policy issues that require an analysis of their gender implications. Funding is awarded through an open, competitive call for proposals. A non-governmental, external committee plays a key role in identifying policy research priorities, selecting research proposals for funding and evaluating the final reports.

This policy research paper was proposed and developed under a call for proposals in April 1997 on *the integration of diversity into policy research, development and analysis*. While it is recognized that women as a group share some common issues and policy concerns, women living in Canada are not a homogeneous group. Aboriginal women, women with disabilities, visible minority women and women of colour, linguistic minority women, immigrant women, lesbians, young women, poor women, older women, and other groups of women experience specific barriers to equality. Through this call for proposals, researchers were asked to consider these differences in experiences and situations when identifying policy gaps, new questions, trends and emerging issues as well as alternatives to existing policies or new policy options.

Six research projects were funded by Status of Women Canada on this issue. They examine the integration of diversity as it pertains to issues of globalization, immigration, health and employment equity policies, as well as intersections between gender, culture, education and work. A complete list of the research projects funded under this call for proposals is included at the end of this report.

We thank all the researchers for their contribution to the public policy debate.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Opportunities for women to engage effectively in public policy making and to critique public policy are being transformed daily as a result of globalization. This report considers some of the opportunities and constraints women activists confront as they pursue strategies to influence public policy in a neo-liberal era. More specifically, the focus is a comparative analysis of the relationships between women's policy machinery, or state feminism, and women's organizations in Canada and Australia. With case studies from Quebec, New South Wales, Western Australia and South Australia, the report evaluates the capacity and role of state feminist institutions to facilitate linkages between women's movements and the state, and to support successful policy interventions by feminists that will result in gender-sensitive public policy.

The research also interrogates how issues of diversity and difference can be integrated into public policy through collaboration between women's movements and state feminism. Using the arena of violence against women as an analytic lens, the report demonstrates that political opportunities for women to shape policy vary across jurisdictions and over time, and are configured differently for majority and minority women. We argue that comparative analyses of women's efforts to influence the policy process through interaction with women's bureaucratic mechanisms are critical in developing strategies for achieving substantive policy goals. Our research concludes that, particularly in an era marked by globalization and decentralization, "bothering with government" is still pivotal to the achievement of equality and justice for all women. We encourage feminist organizations to engage in an ongoing evaluation of the political opportunity structures they face and call for renewed debate on how feminists can work most effectively with policy makers. Finally, we argue that women's policy machinery can be an important partner with feminists in public policy debates, but new channels of communication between state feminism and women's movements are required.

The report surveys the parameters of women's political activity, distinguishing between women's involvement in official and unofficial politics. The development of state feminism as another route for women's political engagement is traced and the models of state feminism in Canada and Australia are compared. We offer a detailed assessment of the impact of globalization and decentralization on government structures, including women's policy machinery, and identify the opportunities and constraints for state feminism in the contemporary period. Also analyzed is the impact of federalism as a form of political system that shapes women's opportunities to influence the policy process. We consider the challenges of mounting effective strategies to integrate diversity debates into policy making and offer an analysis of the adoption of gender-based analysis as a tool of gender mainstreaming.

Our case studies focus on examples of efforts to integrate diversity into anti-violence campaigns and attempts at collaboration among women's organizations and women's bureaucratic machinery. Based on the evidence from this research, we conclude that women's policy machinery can offer important institutional linkages between women's movements and their governments.

The major findings of the study include the following.

- The realignment both of state feminist institutions, and government structures more broadly, is precipitating a profound recasting of the linkages between women's movements in Canada and their government.

- Women who do not belong to the dominant culture, or who are different because of their race, sexual orientation or disability, continue to confront marginalization in the policy-making process and require different strategies to integrate their agendas into the public policy process. Building alliances with state feminist institutions may facilitate this goal as our case studies indicate.

- New models of state feminism that increasingly rely on feminist "experts" and gender-based analysis undertaken by academics and bureaucrats offer potential for integrating diversity into public policy, but such approaches must not be employed to marginalize women's movements from the consultative process.

- Multi-level governance is the new reality even in non-federal states. For women, the nation-state level will continue to be important and, therefore, regularizing access to governments through both federal and provincial/territorial channels of state feminism can prove critical to achieving meaningful policy results.

- State femocrat projects are successful to the extent that they obtain a favourable institutional position, develop strategies to circumvent the potency of neutrality as a core bureaucratic value and transcend levels of government and ideology to co-ordinate and co-operate strategically across government levels.

- The existence of effective structures (annual policy meetings), the circulation of femocrats within the state and femocrat structures at the Commonwealth level, and the legitimacy of advocacy throughout the bureaucracy all contributed to the substantial success of the femocrat project in Australia.

Recommendations

- A new permanent consultative body should be established that would serve as a council to convey the positions of women's organizations and members to government in areas of mutual concern.

- New policy networks need to be established to link activists, women's groups, service providers, academics, femocrats and interested politicians.

- An annual conference should be mounted to bring together women activists, politicians and femocrats. The core of such a conference could well be an annual meeting of federal and provincial ministers and femocrats in conjunction with a meeting of their movement counterparts.

We must admit that there is a will to see change, but that the government does not know how. We never have talked about this…but we seem to have hit a dead end. We do not have time to do research at our end (front-line workers*) because we are offering services, but we are the ones who know the needs…. I think what we need to do is have more research. We need to find out if there is someone doing something successful in Australia or elsewhere and try to develop new ideas. We don't seem to be moving anywhere* (anti-violence activist).

INTRODUCTION

Framing the Project

Women's equality struggles in Canada today are being waged in an era marked by globalization and a steady trend toward the further decentralization of the Canadian federation. Opportunities for women to engage effectively in public policy making and to critique public policy are being transformed daily as a result of political and economic restructuring. In such a context, translating into practice the accumulated knowledge of women's movements regarding the gender bias inherent in established modes of public policy making and incorporating substantively the heterogeneity of women's experiences demands a thorough understanding of current political realities. This research report is designed to facilitate women's participation in policy making and, more specifically, to interrogate how issues of diversity and difference can be incorporated effectively into public policy development and research. Using the arena of public policy around violence against women as an analytic lens, the report considers the changing nature of the political opportunities within which women activists in Canada, and internationally, confront globalization and assess the impacts of decentralization on the relationships between governments and women's movements.

Drawing on data collected at the federal and provincial levels in Canada, supplemented by a systematic comparison with Australia, this report demonstrates how political opportunities for women to shape policy development vary across jurisdictions and are configured differently for majority and minority women. Comparative analysis of women's efforts to influence policy makers around anti-violence agendas, both sub-nationally and internationally, is advanced and argued to be critical in developing strategies for successful policy interventions. Incorporating findings from focus groups held with women activists from the anti-violence movement in Toronto and Montréal in 1999,[1] the report surveys the nature of existing relationships between women's policy machinery and women's organizations in order to generate practical strategies for feminists to intervene effectively in the policy process.

Although we use the issue of violence against women as a public policy area through which to approach these issues, the report focusses, more specifically, on the capacity and role of state feminism as a site for facilitating effective linkages between women's movements and the state, achieving women's equality agendas and mounting diversity-sensitive, public policy interventions. The report concludes that women's policy machinery *can* offer important institutional linkages between women's movements and their governments in the context of globalizing and decentralizing pressures. The evidence reveals there is no single, right route to achieving public policy goals. Rather, women's groups must expand their knowledge of the policy-making process and choose actions to meet their policy goals and integrate diversity into public policy. The aim of this report, therefore, is not to develop specific policy recommendations. Instead, the goal is to equip women's groups with the information and tools needed to allow them to intervene effectively in public policy making when they choose that strategy. Learning from the experiences of other groups, both domestically and internationally, and assessing the reasons for their successes and failures are key to mounting effective action and devising long-term strategies.

This research report guides women's groups trying to formulate practical strategies for achieving change. It is aimed at understanding what works—and what doesn't. The insights represent the accumulated wisdom of several generations of women activists. As women who are both political scientists and long-term activists, we were also made aware that many of the women we interviewed are puzzled by the complexities of the political system, especially since government structures have been in dramatic flux in recent years. Our goal, therefore, is to combine our knowledge of how governments work with the insights gained through research. In particular, we note that it is especially difficult for women, who do not belong to the dominant culture or who are different because of their race, sexual orientation or disability, to have their concerns and perspectives integrated into the policy-making process. The report, therefore, specifically highlights their concerns and offers ideas for developing strategies to intervene in the public policy process and for integrating diversity concerns into those debates by building and rebuilding alliances with state feminist institutions.

Why Violence?

Our central concern in this research project was to monitor the impact of changes in the political opportunity structure for women who are marginalized and less powerful (including within women's movements), because of their race, sexual orientation, disability, immigrant or refugee status. Specifically, the project details the effects of globalization and decentralization on these constituencies and evaluates the extent to which these trends are reshaping opportunities for feminists working with marginalized constituencies to achieve equality goals. Anti-violence, both as an area of public policy and women's activism, is a particularly useful lens through which to study the current restructuring of the relationships between women and their states. Security from violence is central to women being able to achieve and enjoy other rights. Only recently have nation-state governments and international institutions accepted any responsibility for protecting women from violence. This acknowledgment has occurred just as key elements of globalization have increased the vulnerability to violence of less powerful and powerless people. In Canada, for example, the federal government accepted its obligations to ensure women's security precisely as its relationship with its domestic women's movement was becoming increasingly disengaged and conflictual. Some minority women who participated in our focus groups concluded that, while governments may now want to "do something" about violence, they "don't know what to do." Grass-roots activists and front-line workers believe they know what needs to be done but are often frustrated because they "can't get bureaucrats and politicians to understand" or "can't communicate their knowledge and demands in forms to which policy makers can respond." This situation undercuts the legitimacy of governments, as many women perceive that their citizenship does not bring them even the most basic security protections that underlie the social contract that is basic to liberal-democratic governments.

Until the 1990s, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and its power bloc in Eastern Europe, the Cold War discourse of international human rights was framed mainly in terms of capitalist democracies promoting human rights in communist and developing countries. In such a polarized ideological context, women's rights, especially concerning reproductive and sexual decision making, and security from violence, simply were not seen as human rights. In the 1990s, this changed, as international organizations increasingly became arenas for women's

activism in ways that state-focussed women's movements could use to persuade states to support their agendas for change. Throughout the 1990s, the international arena assumed heightened importance everywhere with an increasingly globalized women's movement asserting that women's rights are human rights with the most basic being security from violence. As Bunch and Carillo (1998: 231) argue:

> The momentum for understanding that women's rights are human rights has grown rapidly in the 1990s, particularly since the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993) where this idea first received world exposure. The global conferences convened by the UN during this decade saw an extraordinary mobilization of women from all parts of the world. Through networking, petitions, campaigns, coalitions, tribunals, and fora of all sorts, women used the spaces provided by these events to define a new global agenda that incorporates their lives and experiences.

As we will discuss, convergence is evident in the UN *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* and other international anti-violence initiatives. It has also become more evident to the international community because of the key role women's organizations and activism have played in the democratization struggles of women in many parts of the world.

In Canada, the federal state's response over the last 15 years to feminists organizing around violence was shaped by domestic pressure, such as the emerging equal rights discourse that accompanied the 1982 adoption of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. More recently, international mobilization on anti-violence and other agendas has had the unanticipated effect in Canada and elsewhere of promoting a renewed focus on state feminist institutions. In particular, cross-national efforts to "mainstream" gender into public policy making have generated new attention for women's bureaucratic machinery and the role of such bureaucratic mechanisms in fulfilling the state's obligation to protect women's rights as citizens. In 1995, the Canadian government's adoption of *Setting the Stage for the Next Century: The Federal Plan for Gender Equality* mandated the introduction of gender-based analysis in federal policy making. This document outlined an ambitious five-year strategy that charted the Liberal Government's broad vision for the advancement of gender equality into the new millennium and promised to mark a new era in the government's approach to assessing policy for its gendered implications. As this report traces, that decision precipitated a flurry of activity throughout federal and provincial/territorial bureaucracies around how best to integrate a "gender lens" into the policy process. Additionally, the move to strategies employing gender-based analysis initiated a renewed debate within women's movements as to the role of status-of-women machinery as sites for social change. Yet security from violence remains the basic test of government's treatment of women, a right that all women are entitled to as citizens. Bunch and Carillo's work demonstrates that "sexism kills" (1998: 231). Assessing how governments have responded to women's advocacy concerning their security, therefore, seems a key way to test if the process of working through governments actually works for women.

1. DEFINING THE PARAMETERS OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Working through Official Politics

A useful starting point for considering the changing relationships between women and the state is to survey the various arenas in which women attempt to achieve their equality demands.[2] Feminist activists know that "politics" exists throughout society in locations other than legislatures and government departments. This insight is captured in the feminist slogan "the personal is political." They also believe that what they do to achieve change for women is as "political" as what members of Parliament do; that is, they believe that women's groups, movements, shelters and other service providers are engaged in "doing politics." What many women are less clear about, however, is the character of *official politics*—activity located in, and aimed at, the various institutions of the state. For example, several activists told us "we don't have anything at all to do with government," although they later described, in detail, their group's efforts to educate local police forces about violence against women. It is important to clarify understandings of what constitutes official politics.

Feminist political scientists use the term "official politics" to refer to all activities occurring within the institutions of the state. These institutions are:

- **Legislatures:** Parliament, the provincial and territorial houses, city councils and the councils of regional municipalities.

- **Bureaucracies:** The civil service departments and agencies at all levels of government.

- **Courts:** Institutions that adjudicate disputes and judge those deemed to have broken laws. These operate at different levels from the local to the Supreme Court, which also adjudicates disputes between or among governments over jurisdictions.

- **Police:** Institutions that enforce the laws by apprehending those suspected of breaking them. They are also charged with protecting persons and property.

Official politics further refers to activities in which people seek to determine which ideas, principles and values will direct the policies and programs adopted by state institutions. The main structures involve elections, in which political parties predominate, and lobbying, which involves systematic and sustained attempts by organizations to influence what those policies and programs should be without contesting elections. Women activists engage in efforts to influence decisions within state institutions through both elections and formal lobbying. Most of their efforts, however, are through informal means or what we call "unofficial politics." This involves various activities designed to influence the actions of state institutions either directly or indirectly, often by influencing public opinion.

Some governments may also provide opportunities for constituencies affected by particular issues to participate through consultations organized by government departments. Many of the activists we interviewed reported their frustration with such consultations and several doubted that government takes them seriously.

> *For small things, they will consult us or for huge changes, they will theoretically consult us, although they will not really listen to us.... [T]he things that really matter to us, our opinions and needs seem to be irrelevant to them.*

Despite the problems so many women identified, these consultations form an integral part of the structure of official politics.

Because of the frustrating barriers in accessing official politics through legislative channels, women's movements in Canada have concentrated on lobbying from outside. A shift in the discourse within which politics occurs now, however, largely defines women's groups as "special interest" in the new, neo-liberal world. In assessing opportunities to achieve their agendas, women's groups increasingly rely on a litigation strategy, using the courts to pursue goals not achievable through either involvement in political parties or with feminists working inside the bureaucracy. Although litigation using the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* has produced mixed outcomes for women, many feminists outside Quebec feel a sense of proprietorship over the Charter, especially over its equality clauses. The Charter created a new political space through which women could pursue equality claims. Legal culture, however, has been profoundly gendered in its norms and assumptions. One key goal of women's legal strategies has been to contextualize the application of the law to take into account women's experiences where they differ from men's. For minority women, the task has been even more onerous, as the gender-blind and the diversity-blind nature of legal culture must be contested.

The courts, therefore, provided a new avenue for women's advocacy and claims for equality. The Legal Education Action Fund (LEAF) developed the strategy of approaching "change incrementally, by using victories in one area as building blocks...and then the next stage of developing law is undertaken" (Leaf Litigation Year One, 1986 as quoted in Chappell, 1998). The Charter gave LEAF and women's groups an instrument to challenge discriminatory laws. But important though this has been in some policy areas, it cannot be used to persuade governments to create the new policies and programs women need. Moreover, as the striking down of the existing rape shield protection by the Supreme Court in the 1989 *Seaboyer* decision showed, relying on a litigation strategy alone puts women at risk, especially in their struggle for security against violence. Had women's groups mobilized quickly to lobby Parliament to legislate a rape shield protection acceptable to the courts, women in Canada would have ended up less not more secure from violence. Since women still constitute a minority voice in the justice system, we must conclude with Bacchi and Marquis. "Placing one's faith in a Charter of Rights means ultimately putting one's faith in the hands of a judiciary described as, in the main, 'a monopoly of elderly, white men from privileged backgrounds'" (as quoted in Chappell 1998: 251). Additionally, the opening up of a new focus of activism through the courts created two different strategic poles—the expert-based groups (i.e., LEAF) that focus on the courts and those advocacy groups that prioritize legislative-focussed lobbying. Governments have exploited this divide, further de-legitimizing state feminism.

Sylvia Bashevkin's (1996) research shows that from 1984 to 1993, most reforms that advanced Canadian women's equality were directly attributable to court decisions under the

Charter. Yet, the impact on women's security, especially minority women's security, is less clear. While the litigation strategy has been effective in some cases in challenging the gendered foundations of the law, it has not revealed the diversity-blindness of justice. As a consequence, to achieve the fundamental right of protection and security from violence for all girls and women, a multi-faceted approach is required with the bureaucracy, the courts *and* Parliament seen as important targets of co-ordinated advocacy.

Distinguishing between official politics and informal, unofficial politics is central to capturing the scope of activity undertaken by anti-violence activists and understanding the anti-violence movement's own analysis of its activities. While many of our respondents saw no value in trying to influence Parliament, they did interact regularly with local government and regularly found their work influenced by judicial decisions. In Canada, the important difference between official politics at the local level, and at the federal and provincial levels, relates to partisanship. Nonetheless, decision making within the various institutions of government at the local and regional levels also constitutes official politics. The Canadian model of three distinct levels of government, moreover, doesn't exist in all countries. Canada is, in fact, a federation among 14 governments. Its system of government, then, is structured by federalism in which different levels of government have responsibility for making final decisions in specific areas. It is very important, when strategizing about influencing the entire realm of "official politics," that we discuss this issue in detail.

What Is State Feminism?

A major innovation in how women activists can access government decision making was the development of what is termed "state feminism." The concept refers to the "activities of government structures that are formally charged with furthering women's status and rights" (Stetson and Mazur 1995: 1-2). The evolution of state feminism is important in determining whether the network of status-of-women machinery that exists within state structures provides opportunities for women to achieve change or if it exists mainly to let governments say they are consulting women and taking their needs into account.

A dominant attitude of one strand of "second wave" women's movements, beginning in the 1960s in many Western countries, was scorn for official politics. In North America, this was informed by radical feminist ideology that theorized the state and, therefore, official politics focussed on state politics, as essentially male-dominated and patriarchal. In many non-Western countries, women were fearful or suspicious of repressive governments and avoided official politics, although for different reasons. In New Zealand and Australia, a strong pattern of interaction emerged between women's movements and governments administered by feminist advisors called "femocrats" (feminist bureaucrats).[3] As this report discusses, the Australian experience with state feminism has yielded significant results in the area of anti-violence strategies including, in one case, effective integration of programs sensitive to the needs of Aboriginal women.

In Canada, women's political activism was state-focussed from its earliest beginnings in the late 19th century. Between 1870 and 1918, numerous women's organizations were founded, many of which concentrated on gaining female suffrage. In 1893, the National Council of Women of Canada was founded with the involvement of Lady Aberdeen, the Governor-

General's wife. The Council was chapter-based, focussed on social reform and interacted regularly with governments through Cabinet Days, thus establishing a tradition of women's lobbying of the elite levels of the state. It is important to note that this organization, and many of its contemporaries, afforded limited attention to diversity issues. Most of these first-wave women's organizations engaged in lobbying for themselves or others to achieve formal recognition of women's political citizenship and civil rights.[4]

In Canada, the existence of a formal, institutionalized relationship between women's organizations and bureaucratic structures began in 1954 with the establishment of the Women's Bureau, within the federal Department of Labour. Like many later developments, this initiative was part of an international effort to focus attention on the position of women in the paid work force. Canadian labour activists and other women involved in the Congress of Canadian Women (formed in 1950) saw the Bureau primarily as a source of research data of the sort that the International Labor Organization was compiling about women in the paid work force. The Bureau was also necessary to inform government on the issues raised by the data. This structure, the first example of status-of-women machinery in Canada, was based on a similar structure within the U.S. Department of Labor that dated back to 1920.

The Women's Bureau developed within a government department that had a culture of advocacy and reflected the government's need to understand the greater participation by Canadian women in the paid labour force.[5] This model was replicated at the sub-national level. The successful campaign for equal pay for equal work legislation achieved in Ontario in 1954 further mobilized support for this kind of mechanism and women's bureaus spread across the country. These agencies began as advocacy-based organizations but advocacy became more difficult as labour laws in Canada developed and established governments as neutral in labour–management relationships.

In the 1960s, women's groups in Francophone and Anglophone Canada joined forces to demand a royal commission on the status of women. The federal Liberal Government, sensitive to national unity issues, was eager to support movements it believed cut across linguistic cleavages and, therefore, fostered its relationship with the women's movement by agreeing to strike a royal commission to investigate women's equality needs.

When the Commission reported in 1970, it recommended the creation of an implementation committee to monitor the adoption of the report's 167 recommendations. Initially located within the Privy Council Office, the Implementation Committee was designated as a separate agency in 1976 and renamed Status of Women Canada (SWC).

Another recommendation was the establishment of an arm's length, non-partisan status of women council that would be pan-Canadian in scope and directly responsible to Parliament for evaluating programs that affected women. At the time, this kind of structure was developing powerfully in New Zealand and Australia but was weak in Britain. Although Canadian women were granted an advisory council, the organizational practices chosen by the Trudeau Government produced long-term representational weaknesses. For example, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW), created in 1973, was established through an order-in-council and not by the passage of legislation. This meant it continued at the "pleasure" of the government of the day. Instead of reporting to Parliament

directly, it reported through the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. If the Council had continued to be led by presidents of major women's organizations, as was the practice in the early years, the representational capacity of this state feminist institution would have been enhanced, and the relationship between women's movements and the bureaucracy might have developed a quite different history. Instead, governments began to use the Council to make patronage appointments, some of whom were very knowledgeable about women's concerns, while others were less so. Vacancies on the Council were not advertised nor were members nominated by women's organizations. Gradually, the structure lost legitimacy except for its research in some periods and was replaced by the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) as the main focus of the movement/federal government interface. In fact, there has never been an effective consultative structure within Canadian state feminism that enjoyed the sustained confidence of women's movement organizations. Instead, from the mid-1970s, NAC served effectively as a peak organization representing many women's groups in English Canada. Arguably, the existence of NAC permitted the neglect of consultative mechanisms within the federal government.

The network of state feminist institutions in place from the 1970s to the 1990s included:

- **Status of Women Canada:** A policy agency, reporting to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. Status of Women Canada also emerged as a focus for government policy development within the state and became the central vehicle for representing Canada's international position on gender issues.

- **Minister Responsible for the Status of Women:** Created in 1971. Throughout the 1970s, the post was often assigned to a very senior (male) minister. Since the 1980s it is generally assigned to junior (female) ministers.

- **Women's Program, Citizenship Branch, Secretary of State:** This agency provided funding for women's organizations and movement activities.

- **Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women:** [6] Reported to Parliament via the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

- **Women's Labour Bureau:** Produced materials on women's labour force participation.

- **Expertise-Based Agencies:** Within Health and Welfare/Health Canada and the Department of Justice, these structures involved government-driven consultations on an irregular basis.

Concurrent to the development of state feminism at the federal level, provinces and territories also created women's machinery that generally included a policy directorate and an advisory council. Some jurisdictions developed more effective models than others. Some adopted the federal model with all its structural confusion. Others developed their own, often more coherent, structural basis for state feminism. In Newfoundland, for example, the Women's Policy Unit was integrated into the decision-making structure through the government's Executive Council. Similarly, the Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Advisory Council was created with a guarantee that women's movements would participate in nominating

Council members from their activist communities. There were assurances that the Advisory Council would have a public role and autonomy as an independent agency (Rankin 1996). As women's movements grew across Canada in the 1970s and 1980s, the orientation of these movements to the state differed. As we illustrate, in some contexts, such as Quebec, the relationship was relatively positive. In others, such as Alberta, the relationship was frequently acrimonious because governments were hostile to feminist demands. In most jurisdictions, the relationship changed over time.

The structures of state feminism at the federal level have been compressed significantly since the election of the Liberals in 1993. To reduce duplication of services and provide a more comprehensive approach to women's equality in Canada, the Liberal Government dismantled the Advisory Council and transferred its research and public inquiries function, along with the Women's Program to Status of Women Canada (Wilcox 1999). As a consequence, SWC now exists as the central mechanism for the advancement of women's equality. This amalgamation was set within an economic rationalist discourse and the argued need to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the bureaucracy as a whole. Under the leadership of Status of Women Canada, however, this restructuring has not strengthened the consultative process between women's movements and the state for a number of reasons.

Our focus groups revealed that, although there was not widespread respect for the now defunct Advisory Council mainly because of the partisan/patronage composition of its membership, women activists believe there is now a vacuum in the federal machinery for gaining women's input. Some women's organizations describe recent efforts at consultations with governments as "disastrous." Others note an increased distancing between bureaucrats and feminists, and express frustration that access, previously enjoyed, has disappeared. Clearly, at least at the level of the federal structures of state feminism, there are serious problems of unmet expectations and a disruption in effective communication for many long-term activists.

Three issues merit exposure. First, the women's bureaucratic machinery, which developed more or less topsy-turvy in Canada at the federal level, differed significantly from the original femocrat model of state feminism. Many argue that this was a negative, not a positive, innovation. Second, the women's state machinery that developed in Canada was based on the idea that women's organizations were best able to convey women's ideas for change, and their needs, to government directly. Particularly in the 1970s, when very few women were members of Parliament, or bureaucrats who understood the issues, this founding principle was accepted. Moreover, the arm's-length research activities of the Advisory Council and the role of NAC brought together the views of many women's groups, resolved some of their conflicts and presented them to government as "women's views." This served the interests of government actions and majority women. Third, models of state feminism have emerged in other countries that form the basis of the paradigm being promoted by international agencies. This model relies on feminist "experts" and gender-based or gender-sensitive analysis undertaken by academics and bureaucrats. They are now increasingly the focus of state feminism replacing the role of women's organizations in conveying their views to femocrats within the state. Although women's movements in Canada were generally willing to engage with state institutions for the two decades after 1970, the negative experiences many report in recent years are leading some to refocus their attention away from official politics. Ironically, this is occurring at just the time

when state feminist agencies are promoting the brave new world of governments ready to subject all policies to gender-based analysis. A sub-national comparison of state feminism reveals that many models of women's policy machinery have emerged. Some provide important opportunities for successful collaboration between women's movements and their provincial governments. Quebec is one such example.

State Feminism in Quebec

Although all ministries within Quebec share responsibility for improving the social conditions and the overall status of women, the Ministère responsable de la Condition de la femme, created in 1979, has the lead role in ensuring the co-ordination, coherence and development of government actions around women's equality. The Secrétariat à la condition féminine answers directly to the minister, providing administrative support for the Ministry and supplying the minister with analysis and recommendations on matters of policy development. The Secrétariat is also responsible for co-ordinating the network of status of women co-ordinators which exist in over 30 ministries. Beyond these functions, the Secrétariat is also the driving force behind the implementation of gender analysis in the province.

The Conseil du statut de la femme (CSF) works at arm's length from the government. It is an agency for consultation and research founded in 1973. It promotes and defends the rights of women in Quebec through a two-pronged mandate of advising the government on all issues that are linked to the status of women as well as communicating information to women's organizations and the general public about the conditions and rights of Quebec women. The Conseil responds to government requests for advice linked to the status of women but also raises issues when it deems that government intervention may be necessary and offers recommendations to the government on a range of policy matters. The Conseil mandate includes monitoring government activities through analysis of bills and policies that affect the status of women. The Conseil also initiates research projects on issues linked to the status of women. Additionally, the Conseil publishes *La Gazette des Femmes* which informs the public on various issues pertinent to women and updates Conseil activities.

As Marie Lavigne (1997) a former president of the Conseil explains, the relationship between the Conseil and the women's movement is complex: the Conseil supports the agenda of the women's movement, but does not act as a direct representative for the movement. The members of the Conseil are appointed by the Quebec government, but the vital links to the women's movement are reflected in the appointment process. For example, another former president, Diane Lemieux, previously held the position of co-ordinator of the Regroupement Québeçois des centres d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel, which suggests that action on violence against women has a strong advocate within the Conseil. The other members of the Conseil are also government appointees, but these appointments are based on the recommendations of various groups. Four members are recommended by feminist organizations, two by universities, two by socio-economic groups and two by unions. This model is not the norm for advisory council appointments elsewhere in Canada and reflects a substantial commitment on the part of the Quebec government to representing its women citizens appropriately through state feminist institutions. The Conseil also has a permanent staff, approximately one third of which is deployed in regional offices.

What is unique about the Conseil is its presence throughout Quebec as a result of its decentralization. Consequently, it is accessible to women's groups and able to initiate studies that correspond to the realities of the different regions. The task of the regional offices includes regional research projects and support to the tables de concertations des groupes de femmes which were set up in 1982. The regionalization of the Conseil was part of the mandate between 1978 and 1984. Currently, the Conseil boasts a complement of 12 regional offices that allows the Conseil to maintain a visible profile among Quebec women.[7]

What is most interesting in a period marked both domestically and internationally by budgetary restraint and retrenchment, is that although the staff has been reduced from 73 to 64 employees, the budget of the Conseil has remained relatively stable. While there has been fluctuation in the budget throughout the 1990s, the current level is slightly higher than at the beginning of the decade.[8]

Lessons from Australia: The Femocrat Model of State Feminism

In the 1970s, a relationship developed between Australian women's movements and the Whitlam Labor Government that has become known as the femocrat strategy. This version of state feminism incorporated, into the policy-making structures at the *centre of government*, feminist bureaucrats who considered themselves spokeswomen for, and responsible to, the women's movement. As Australian scholar Marian Sawer boasts in *Sisters in Suits* (1990), Australian women created a range of women's policy machinery and government-subsidized women's services (delivered by women for women) unrivalled elsewhere.

Structurally, this institutionalization took the form of the Women's Policy Advisor to the Prime Minister and the Women's Policy Unit within the Office of the Prime Minister. The Unit had access to all cabinet documents prior to their disposition and could comment freely on any policy. The Unit also was responsible for the production of the Women's Budget—a public document within which it analyzed and critiqued the government's financial policies for their impact on women. Using a hub-and-spoke strategy, the policy units at the Commonwealth and state levels emerged as change agents promoting new perspectives, programs and services in various departments through a network of feminist bureaucrats. The model of Australian state feminism involves three aspects.

- Full involvement in ordinary citizen activities includes compulsory voting which binds Australian women more to political parties. Proportional representation in the Commonwealth (federal) Senate and some state upper houses produces good electoral outcomes (up to 30 percent) for majority women, especially in the minor parties.

- A focus by feminists on the Commonwealth level encourages use of the spending power at this level and pushes for expanded power to enforce international treaties to promote co-operative state/Commonwealth programs with the Commonwealth government usually taking the lead.

- The network of femocrat structures is growing at both state and Commonwealth levels. Most important, this includes a network of femocrats around the country who remain within the femocrat services (moving from state to state or between state and

> Commonwealth) and who consider themselves "the voice of the women's movement." The absence of representative umbrella organizations, such as NAC, actually facilitates this representational claim by femocrats.

This approach to state feminism differed from that developed in Canada at the federal level. Although the policy unit that evolved into Status of Women Canada began within the Privy Council Office, it was quickly moved. Nor did it develop a particularly effective relationship with the women's movement in the first two decades of its existence. Women's groups representing majority women related primarily to the Women's Program under the Secretary of State which provided funding and organizational support for movement projects and, to a lesser degree, to the CACSW. The CACSW was not the autonomous body women's groups had wanted to represent their views to Parliament as was recommended by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. The original structures of state feminism in Canada, therefore, were not located anywhere near the core policy process. Moreover, responsibility for advising governments on women's needs and claims was assigned to one cabinet minister. Although the "minister responsible" in the first decade was senior and male, the position quickly became female-dominated and much more junior.

This Canadian model of state feminism, therefore, failed to provide groups with a structure through which they believed they could advance women's views. The four main agencies—Status of Women Canada, the Advisory Council, the Women's Program and the long-existing Labour Bureau—did not collectively provide federal governments with the structural capacity to relay the views of organized women into the policy process. Nor did the federal bureaucracy develop the women-centred policy expertise it needed to respond convincingly to most women's demands, except in the area of paid work. Women's Program funding built some capacity within movement organizations but the policy networks that existed in other policy sectors did not emerge.

In Australia (as well as Newfoundland which adopted a similar model), public servants involved in femocrat units were recruited directly from women's organizations or had feminist credentials and so enjoyed considerable legitimacy. In Australia, for example, Elizabeth Reid, the young feminist appointed in 1974 to advise Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, received thousands of letters from Australian women telling her what they wanted, what they thought was important and what they hoped she would accomplish while in government. Such a scenario would not likely occur in the context of federal state feminism in Canada where most women in status-of-women agencies are career public servants who have worked and will work in other agencies. Moreover, the bureaucratic culture in the federal civil service in Canada is dedicated to neutrality and remains hostile to internal advocacy. Although the proportion of women in senior positions in the Canadian federal public service has increased significantly in recent decades, it would be unthinkable for the women's movement to protest if the person appointed to head Status of Women Canada lacked credentials in the women's movement, as happened in Australia under a government that attempted to undermine femocrat structures.

Why Bother with State Feminism?

Our analysis thus far isolates some serious weaknesses in the model of state feminism that unfolded at the federal level in Canada. Nevertheless, we contend there are models of state feminism which work well and demonstrate that women's involvement in official politics in various ways has paid off, especially, but not exclusively, for majority women. Later in this document, we profile some successful relationships between women's movements and state feminism that operate in Quebec and Australia. We also argue that the political opportunity structure women activists face is rapidly changing in Canada, and to realize substantive improvements in women's lives, women's movements must reconsider their strategic choices vis-à-vis the state. Any assessment of the political opportunities now available for feminists must include careful consideration of how the state has been restructured, the characteristics of electoral systems, party systems and bureaucratic systems, as well as analysis of the ideological climate in which activism now occurs.

How women can act politically in the realm of official politics is partly a matter of choice. How they can act *effectively* is shaped by the structure of the political opportunities they face. Through their interaction with governments in the last three decades, women activists have played some role in shaping the "women's machinery" now in place. The large-scale restructuring governments are involved in is radically altering the kind of state women activists will face in the future. Despite the challenges and constraints characterizing state feminism in Canada, feminists still have much to gain by working with femocrats to pursue equality goals. Below we discuss seven reasons to consider.

Pragmatic Reasons
State feminism is working effectively in some countries and provinces with positive results for many women. We analyze a positive case to identify why state feminism has worked. If state feminism can be an effective vehicle in other contexts, we believe it can function similarly in Canada.

Rights-Based Reasons
Having women's concerns and needs taken seriously by governments is a right of citizenship. As members of a national community, women have civil, political and social rights that must be protected by their states. As citizens, the right to participate in decision-making processes is fundamental to a healthy democracy. Special "women's machinery" was developed in recognition of women's historic marginalization in institutions dominated by men, as all state institutions in Canada still are. Therefore, engagement with these decision-making processes can be argued for, from a rights-based perspective.

Responsibility-Based Reasons
To date, women have tended to view themselves largely as consumers of state policies and programs. Women also have an obligation as citizens to contribute ideas about the issues facing women in order to improve society for the population as a whole. Because political parties continue to be male-dominated, women must access alternative institutions in order to integrate women-centred perspectives in decision-making processes.

Representation-Based Reasons
There have been improvements in women's presence in the elected and appointed institutions of official politics, but these women remain a small minority and have found it difficult to achieve change in isolation. Significant structural barriers to women's participation in official politics, on the same basis as men, remain. Special structures to channel women's ideas and views, such as those offered in state feminist institutions, will be needed for some time to afford women substantive representation.

Diversity Reasons
At the nation-state level, it is difficult to move beyond consideration of "women's issues" which treat women as an undifferentiated category. Strong local decision making should enhance women's participation; good consultative structures at all levels of state feminism can also make it easier for differently located women's views to be heard.

Changing Bureaucratic Cultures
The character of the bureaucracy within a jurisdiction profoundly affects the potential success of state feminism. For example, the bureaucratic cultures of the Australian states and the federal government encouraged advocacy, making the femocrat project acceptable. Such a pattern is also evident in Quebec, Newfoundland and British Columbia. In other jurisdictions, however, especially in the Canadian federal case, the norms of bureaucratic neutrality have invalidated the adoption of state feminism by ordinary public sector structures. The development of an expertise-based, gender-based analysis approach provides a focus for examining this problem. The impact of gender-based analysis on advocacy-based analysis obtained via consultation will require women involved with state feminism to monitor these developments.

Multi-Level Governance
Multi-level governance is the new reality even in non-federal states as decision making devolves to more local authorities but is still shaped by transnational levels of governance. For women, the nation-state level will continue to be important and, therefore, regularizing access to governments through both federal and provincial/territorial channels of state feminism may prove critical to achieving meaningful policy results.

The Changing Political Opportunity Structure and State Feminism

Sidney Tarrow developed the concept of a "political opportunity structure in his work on the relationship between social movements and the state" (Phillips 1992). The term refers to the institutional arrangements and ideological climate of political systems at any one time and is useful in identifying the limitations and opportunities that confront movements which attempt change through state-directed action. Throughout the last decade, a number of developments strained the relationships between structures of state feminism and women's movements as feminists experienced radical alterations in the nature of the political opportunity structure. For example, far more women became active in electoral politics as members of Parliament and cabinet ministers, and in senior bureaucratic positions. This resulted in conflicts among femocrats, women politicians and women's organizations about who best represents women.

Undoubtedly, the neo-liberal "turn" in domestic and international politics precipitated a dramatic contraction of the welfare state and the downloading of responsibilities. This shift in the political opportunity structure radicalized some women's organizations and led to more confrontational stances. Not surprisingly, when there are fewer opportunities for women to get what they need and want from governments, women's groups often become more oppositional. This trend also had an impact on solidarity within the women's movement. Many majority women had made significant personal gains in their equality struggles and the most vocal women's groups, such as NAC, were seen, increasingly, as vehicles for less affluent, more marginalized women. Important efforts to deal with critical, complex issues such as racism, ableism and homophobia within feminist institutions, such as NAC, unfortunately, resulted in diminished solidarity.

As we have argued, the restructuring of women's machinery federally reduced its legitimacy with many women's organizations. The trend toward the realignment of state feminist institutions throughout Canada reflects international developments. A recent report of the United Nations Experts Advisory Group on National Machineries stated that one of the most significant obstacles that women's equality machinery faces today, throughout the world, is the frequent restructuring of governments, in both developing and developed countries (as quoted in Wilcox 1999). These frequent changes disrupt the continuity of national machineries, leading to significant constraints in the ability of these mechanisms to advance women's equality. In Canada, a similar realignment both of state feminist institutions, and government structures more broadly, is precipitating a profound recasting of the linkages between women's movements and their government. As one focus group participant lamented:

> *Overall, what we find difficult is that the structures of government are constantly changing. We are constantly having to make new contacts, learn the new policies, the changes in philosophies and requirements, and how these people function. It is difficult to make advances in such contexts.*

Another participant echoed similar sentiments.

> *[B]y the time we've figured out where we fit and how it all works, which almost requires one to have an M.A. or Ph.D., they [the government] change the structure again. We are stuck in a wave of change which leads to a demobilization of the various groups.*

More generally, globalization is reducing women's belief that governments can provide them with what they need and want, even if the political will to do so is present. The increased complexity of federalism in Canada has made it harder and harder for women to relate effectively to state feminism because of confusion over which level of government is responsible for policy areas. That does not mean this route to change should be abandoned. Instead, the women's movement must explore how state feminism can be "retooled" to meet the needs of feminism in the new millennium. A crucial step in shaping those decisions involves a careful evaluation of the overall governmental structures in which state feminism is located in order to understand the realities of the current political opportunity structure.

2. GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES: THE BIG PICTURE

What Is Federalism?

Federalism is a way of organizing the state such that the final authority for making decisions is divided between two levels of government or shared between them. This contrasts with countries, such as France, Italy or New Zealand, that have unitary states organized so only one level of government makes collective decisions. Canada operates under a federal state system in which jurisdictional authority is shared between the provincial/territorial and federal governments. Under federalism, the various levels of government derive their respective powers from a constitution. Although each level of government, in a federal system, is charged with autonomy over specific spheres of activity, in practice, there is no clear division of authority in the areas of policy making that most affect women. Indeed, feminist political scientist Linda Trimble describes Canada as having a marble cake federal system (1992). If you remember marble cakes, there is not a clear divide between the two kinds of cake. Instead, the cake maker uses a knife or spoon to blur the division and to spread swirls of white cake into the chocolate layer. Even though Canada's constitution assigns responsibility for an issue to one level of government, the long history of political "deals" and negotiations usually means the other level of government is also involved. For example, administration of the health care system is a provincial responsibility. The federal government's passage of legislation which established the basic principles of medicare and its involvement in funding health care renders health care, in effect, a shared area of jurisdiction.

Evaluating the effect federalism has on women's political activism is always controversial. Some feminist activists and political scientists stress the complexity of Canada's system of "marble cake" federalism, arguing that women's groups find it difficult to establish which level of government is responsible and to target for lobbying purposes. They believe federalism lets governments avoid responsibility for particularly difficult issues and facilitates an evasion of accountability as they "pass the buck" to other governments, a manoeuvre Jill Vickers calls "the federalism fox trot." Other feminist activists and political scientists, while acknowledging the complexity women face in accessing government decision makers, see value in having more than one level of government that can be accessed. Sawer and Vickers (1998), for example, note that in Australia, when governments opposed to women's advocacy have been in power at the federal or Commonwealth level, women's groups have been able to shift their lobbying to state governments more sympathetic to their causes.

In the current context, one impact of globalization is to spread responsibility for decision making both upward to international agencies and downward to local, especially urban, governments. Canadian women's experience with multi-level governance is preparing us for the new circumstances of multi-level governance created by globalization. The key, therefore, is to determine, with reference to specific policy goals, which level of government is strategically most open to women's advocacy. It is no longer a simple matter of consulting a written constitution to see which government has jurisdictional power according to the letter of the law. Instead, women must assess the political opportunity structures at each level.

How Do Women Determine which Level of Government to Address?

Work by feminist political scientist Cheryl Collier (1995) comparing the outcomes of women's advocacy concerning violence issues in Manitoba and Ontario between 1990 and 1995 reveals two main factors which affect the success or failure of women's, especially minority women's, advocacy. The first is the ideological orientation of the government in power. Collier shows that women, especially minority women, achieved better policy and program outcomes around violence in Ontario under a New Democratic Party (NDP) government than in Manitoba under a Progressive Conservative government. Following Marian Sawer's advice, therefore, women's groups should choose the level of government most open to their advocacy. The ideological orientation of the government is an important part of this determination. Nor is it just a matter of understanding the left–right orientation of governments. For example, Quebec governments have provided a better opportunity for Franco-Quebec women's advocacy, including minority women's advocacy, than federal governments, regardless of left–right orientation. This is because successive Quebec governments have been eager to draw women's movements into the nationalist cause and have often responded positively to women's advocacy as an element of the nationalist struggle.

Local governments in Canada generally are not organized by political parties, at least not those contesting elections federally and provincially. As a consequence, political opportunity structures are differently configured than they are at the international level. Here, ideological groupings can be assessed as potential allies or opponents. Similarly, documents, conventions or other expressions of value can be scrutinized to determine whether the local or international levels are relatively open or closed to women's advocacy. Moreover, women's activity at the international level may help strategically in activism at home. For example, Australian feminists have been active at the United Nations hoping to get Australia's present anti-feminist Commonwealth government condemned for failing to meet its commitments under the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW).

The second factor in determining which level of government is most open to women's advocacy, as identified by Collier and others, is the health and vigour of state feminist structures attached to governments. Women activists need allies within bureaucracies as well as within political parties and governments. Here, women's groups are advised to make their choices based on performance. For example, in Quebec, as we document, the status of women council and other femocrat structures have a solid reputation among women's groups and a much stronger record for delivering access, research and financial support to women's groups seeking relief from violence than their federal counterparts. This is one reason for the close, symbiotic relationship that exists in Quebec, especially between majority-culture, Francophone groups and those active within state-feminist structures.

It is important to realize, however, that the political opportunity structures for women's activism are not fixed for all time. Instead, they change over time and must be reassessed regularly. For example, the 1995 election of the Harris Progressive Conservative Government in Ontario and its dismantling of important programs for women changed the political opportunity structure for women in Ontario quite radically. Increasingly, women in Ontario feel shut out of the process in their home province, yet they also face weak structures federally. This has focussed activism mainly at the local level. The tenure of the Harris

Government has also begun to foster an anti-state orientation to participation in official politics among Ontario activists.

How Is Globalization Affecting Governments?

Throughout the 1990s, major changes emerged in governance as the end of the Cold War removed barriers to the global spread of capitalism and bipolar democratization. While these changes clearly affected women's opportunities to influence public policy, there is still significant debate about the nature of globalization and its consequences for differently located women. Some argue that globalization results in a lessened capacity of nation-state governments to effect change, making women's attempts to influence their policies somewhat futile. Others view the complex changes involved in globalization as creating new opportunities for women to influence decision making, especially at the local/regional and international levels. In this section, we briefly explore the economic and political changes involved in globalization and examine the responses of nation-state governments to altered international economic conditions. We highlight the new opportunities and barriers resulting from these changes as they affect women's struggles against violence.

Globalization describes a set of economic, political, technological and social processes. It is not a new phenomenon; colonization and decolonization were earlier "waves" of globalization. But since the collapse of the Soviet Union, a number of new processes have emerged.

- **Increased population mobility and migration** of people, especially from developing nations to Western countries, strengthens the force of "difference" expressed by minority women and men within these Western countries.

- **The information technology (IT) revolution** permits instantaneous global communications (for those who can afford access) thus allowing corporations to develop global factories with different parts of production in different countries. This tends to locate labour-intensive work in countries with cheap, usually female, labour, and weak labour and environment standards. The IT revolution has also facilitated networking among those women's groups worldwide that have the necessary resources.

- **The swamping of local cultures** by Western culture (mainly American), began under colonialism and is intensified by IT. Conversely, IT also increases the potential power of diasporic populations located in Western countries to influence both their home countries and Western politics.

- **Capitalism has become almost a global economic system** with the collapse of communist regimes. Markets and financial transactions are increasingly international which can disrupt or control nation-state economies.

- **The increased power of international agencies**, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, to dictate economic restructuring often has devastating consequences for women and other poor and marginalized peoples.

- **Movements to democratize** repressive regimes, and the extensive participation of women in these movements, are on the increase.

There is intense ideological conflict about the scope, meaning and likely consequences of globalization for women citizens. For some, it involves the triumphant emergence of capitalist democracies around the world with great potential benefits for women who suffer most from repressive regimes. For others, it signals the destruction of national cultures and economies resulting in decreasing power for nation-state governments. Many feminists in Canada view nation-state action as necessary for achieving equitable treatment for women. For them, the complex processes are a barrier, if they were to proceed as the women's movements did in the past. Alternatively, new opportunities are emerging that women's movements can exploit successfully, especially at the local and international levels. The emergence of strong international women's movements reflects the growing importance of transnational arenas. If feminists in Canada become receptive to ideas and models from beyond our borders or localities, women's movements will be positioned to take advantage of the opportunities presented by globalization.

It is useful to identify both the global and local manifestations of concerns that mobilize women politically. Based on their analysis of 43 countries, Chowdhury and Nelson (1994) identified four transnational forces shaping women's political agendas.

- **International economic forces** include policies promoting macro-economic stabilization and internal structural transformation introduced by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to respond to economic instability.

- **The changing nature of nationalism**, especially the decline of modernizing, state-focussed nationalisms, arguably, tends to promote formal, legal equality for women, and the rise of regional identities (e.g., in the European Union) and anti-modern ethno-nationalisms with negative implications for women.

- **Rising religious fundamentalism** reacts against global economic and cultural forces, in some cases seeing the "modernization" or "Westernization" of women's behaviour as symbols of what is wrong with contemporary societies.

- **The growth of international feminism** increased interaction, especially in the UN system and other international arenas. This results in increased networking and coalitions made possible because of new technologies and increased mobility of people worldwide. It also involves challenges to Western feminists' assumptions around leadership and strategic action.

International Institutions and Globalization

The two different lines of response to women's activism by international institutions have conflicting impacts on women. Institutions established to regulate the world political economy, such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization, tend to promote "restructuring" that involves greater integration of countries

into the global economy through the lowering of trade barriers and increased export-based production. Additionally, pressure to increase competitiveness and reduce state indebtedness and state spending often translates into eliminating or reducing programs on which the poor, women and children depend. UN institutions, however, have acknowledged the negative impacts of globalization (especially "development") on women, including their increased vulnerability to violence. Chowdhury and Nelson (1994) conclude that women's movements worldwide identify security for themselves and their families as their number one concern, although women in different contexts perceive security differently. Protection from physical violence and from the structural violence of poverty, racism and other forms of oppression ranked as most important in a global context. In wealthy countries, women's activism focusses more on women's experiences of violence in intimate ("domestic") relationships, although women marginalized by poverty, internal colonialism, racism, homophobia, age or disability also experience violence in the public realm including from those charged with their care. Many women in poorer countries experience violence both in intimate relations and in the public realm. They may also face violence from agents of the state or from those seeking to gain state power. Everywhere, women experience violence or fear of violence because they are less powerful and have fewer resources than men. International agencies are now more aware of violence and how fear of it endangers women and limits their opportunities in life, just as new ideologies make those in power less willing to use state power for programs which can empower women and make them more equal and, therefore, less at risk from violence.

Canadian Government Responses to Globalization

Nation-state governments face different challenges due to globalizing forces. In this section, we focus on Canadian responses that parallel those in other Western countries.[9] The fact that decision makers behave in similar ways, however, does not render their responses inevitable or correct. Their actions, however, structure opportunities available for women's activism. The main responses by Canadian governments to globalization include the following.

- **Neo-liberalism** includes the contraction of government, the roll back/restructuring of welfare-state programs, deficit fighting and increased influence by the market.

- **Decentralization** is characterized by the downloading of responsibilities to provincial governments. As our focus groups revealed, within Quebec, regionalization spreads very thinly the resources of the minority women's organizations trying to respond. Such changes should result in policy making that is more responsive to diverse women's needs because the decisions are made closer to home. That is now the experience of our Quebec focus group participants.[10]

- **The discourse regarding public policy** is changing. Sawer (1996) argues that the move to economic rationalism and public choice approaches to policy analysis constructs women's needs and demands as special interests. Gender-based analysis emerges as "expert analysis" and is positioned against movement lobbying.

- **Discourses around citizenship** are changing. Citizenship regimes are constructed with the new "good" citizen defined as independent, entrepreneurial and needing nothing from the nation-state government (Jenson and Phillips 1996). Clearly, such a conception of citizenship is gendered and, as Valentine and Vickers (1996) demonstrate, it also undermines the citizenship of people with disabilities and others who have claimed state assistance as an entitlement of their citizenship rather than as charity.

- **The exclusion of citizens and movements from policy development networks** constitutes a shift from the ideals of participatory democracy and the "just society" that characterized Canadian politics in the 1970s, and opens the way for expert approaches to policy making including gender-based analysis. Governments now "consult" with activists, but may exclude them from substantive participation in policy decisions.

- **Transnational decision making** that is not open to citizen input is increasing in importance. International arenas level new pressures on the federal government to act "on behalf of women." In this context, women become the objects of policy, rather than policy shapers. The long assumption of women's groups in Canada that they should address only one government must be challenged as women determine which level of government to address and how to influence transnational institutions.

One argument about the impact of globalization and the neo-liberal "turn" is that states are being "hollowed out" as their social citizenship (welfare state) programs are reduced and as governments enter into more partnerships with the private sector. Many analyses assume globalization results in a loss of capacity for states to act on behalf of their citizens. Consequently, it is argued, politics are now less important and it may not be a productive use of women's time to seek to influence the public policy process. Feminist political scientists have long maintained that men and women have had different relationships with the welfare states of advanced capitalism, because women and their children are more dependent on state services than are men (Andrew 1984). Polls show women (and other marginalized people) are more likely to oppose the reduction of social citizenship programs than men of the majority race and culture. If this process of "hollowing out" and restructuring is inevitable, should women's groups continue to engage with state structures in a co-operative way? Our research suggests that states are being internationalized rather than eliminated or reduced in power. The more serious impact of globalization is on government's policy structures and processes, especially the decline in the power of social welfare structures, the increased power of first ministers, finance ministers, international trade ministers and their departments, and the influence on their decisions on more distant agencies and international structures.

Mass migrations are another consequence of globalization that increases the diversity of our population and globalizes aspects of our politics. For example, Canadian women may be active in diasporic nationalisms and international movements, in ways that affect their politics within Canada. This expands the pool of potential allies in the global arena, especially for women who are part of minorities in Canada, but not in the world. The globalization of production often means women in different countries employed by the same transnational corporation may need to seek allies across borders to achieve their goals. But although globalization has increased the geographic mobility of some citizens, most women are still less physically mobile than most men because of responsibilities for child care. Consequently,

they are more dependent on services provided by the territorial communities within which they live. In some parts of the world, the population in rural areas and smaller communities includes very few younger, able-bodied men. Services are also minimal, as men migrate to the cities and abroad.

Karl Polanyi in *The Great Transformation* (1975) conceptualizes globalization as a "double movement" with an expansion of forces which weaken democracy along with forms of resistance to its effects and demands for greater autonomy. As global trends confirm this insight, women's groups will need to assess how they are organized and the potential of developments, such as information technology, for increasing the strength of their alliances across space. They also need to develop demands to reshape the policy process to identify new points of access and allies to press their demands.

Decentralization: The Growing Importance of Provincial/Territorial and Local Governments

Local governments in Canada are creatures of the provinces constitutionally and have little autonomous power. Nonetheless, the current downloading of responsibilities for many social welfare programs to this level of the state (most notably in Ontario) affects women, and the children and older persons they care for, in terms of both the quality of their environment and the available services. Historically, women's politics in Canada focussed at this level as they built and operated services in their communities. This tradition of women's involvement in local politics has continued partly because women have achieved greater equality of representation with men at this level, and more easily than in the more distant political arenas. Since women already focus so much of their energy at this level, should they be seeking to enhance its power? Or is the expenditure of energy at this level misguided, given the pressures of globalization we have just surveyed? Provincial/territorial governments are also closer to most women's groups that, with some exceptions (e.g., Quebec), have tended to ignore them in favour of the federal government. Here again, women's groups need to ask whether a refocussing of effort to the provincial/territorial level is warranted, given patterns of downloading. Should women support or oppose further decentralization? If women focus on provincial and territorial governments, how can cross-country mobilization be better co-ordinated?

Some analysts argue that, since the 1960s, federal governments made most women's groups "clients of the federal government" through the provision of state funding, thus limiting their capacity to build relationships with provincial/territorial governments. There has been movement in Canada toward a multi-national state form with the emergence of some forms of Aboriginal self-government and the increasing autonomy of Quebec. What have gone more or less unobserved, however, are the different provincial responses to this reinvention of government and the fact that the decentralization (or downloading), occurring in Canada, has not been a universal consequence of the forces of globalization.

Analyzing the Impact of Globalization on Femocrat Strategies: The Australian Example

Australians are less exposed to the impact of globalization than Canadians. The central wage-fixing system, although weakened by recent governments to make the economy more

competitive, nonetheless insulates the basic living standards of most White citizens. While recent governments have cut back programs and services, White Australians still demand, and get, high levels of state support, especially income support. Women-specific services, such as anti-violence shelters and child-care centres, are part of the state system mostly funded by combined state–Commonwealth programs. While middle-class women have experienced a loss of subsidies for child care recently, programs to run shelters have been expanded. Nor has the federal government withdrawn from the Anti-Violence Strategy, although its funding has been reduced. The complex of policy units and advisory councils has been subject to reduction and restructuring. Indeed, it is not clear whether all the 25-year-old Commonwealth structures that made the original femocrat strategy so distinctive will survive. Attacks on the structures are justified, however, as much by ideological attacks on feminism by the current Howard Government as by arguments about deficit reduction. Feminist activists assessing their opportunity structure assume that the return of a Labor government will result in a restoration of the status quo.

The Office of the Status of Women (OSW) in the Prime Minister's Department survived Prime Minister Howard's attempts to merge it with the Affirmative Action Agency. Its new head is a high-profile friend of the prime minister, and it is assumed that that relationship will protect the agency, although her lack of policy experience will reduce its effectiveness. The firing of the deputy secretary in the Prime Minister's Department, who was one of feminism's leading theorists on the interaction of the social security and taxation system, will further weaken the policy advice function as will its funding cut of 38 percent and staff cut from 50 to 21. Under the Howard Government, the Office of the Status of Women has been prevented from attending international meetings, the Register of Women (women appropriate for appointments) abolished, the Women's Budget Papers cancelled and the sex discrimination commissioner position left unfilled for a year. The Women's Statistics Bureau was abolished along with the *Australian Women's Yearbook,* and the Women's Bureau in the Department of Employment, Education Training and Youth Affairs (created in 1963) will probably be closed as this government is determined to "mainstream" the equity function. Complaints under the sex discrimination and race discrimination acts will now have to go to Federal Court with a proposed filing fee of $1,000 and plaintiffs responsible for the costs of the other side if they lose.

In Australia, this greater centralization and more state–Commonwealth co-operation are rationalized as a consequence of the thrust to streamline government by eliminating the duplication of services. While this model continues to work fairly well for middle-class, White, Anglo-Celtic, Australian women (the majority), it has worked much less well for immigrant (non-English speaking) women and has been an abject failure for Aboriginal women. In comparison to Canada, virtually no immigrant or Aboriginal women are elected to any office either within legislatures or within mainstream women's organizations. It was only in 1997 that some state-level governments (for example South Australia) began to insist on the inclusion of non-English speaking women among the ranks of the femocrats. The introduction of advisory councils, for example in Western Australia and South Australia, was partly designed to provide another (non-Labor, non-femocrat) source of advice for these governments. The memberships of the councils (which are advisory not expert as are the

anti-violence councils) are more diverse ethnically, racially and ideologically than are the ranks of either femocrats or politicians.

Some of these changes have parallels in Canada but it is important to note that the context is different. Women-specific services and programs in Australia are provided through co-operative state–Commonwealth programs. Most of the services are delivered by state public servants. Women's policy machinery at the state level largely has survived the defeat of Labor governments, although some restructuring has occurred. The Department of Women in New South Wales, which has the only surviving Labor government, remains intact and is leading a new "whole-of-government" approach which makes all government departments accept responsibility for the implementation of anti-violence strategies. In South Australia and Western Australia, most of the structures created by previous Labor governments remain in place. The status of women advisor, however, is no longer a member of the Executive Council in South Australia and the introduction of "ministers responsible for the status of women" have pushed women's policy advisors further away from the premiers. In both states, new advisory committees were introduced by Liberal (South Australia) and Coalition (Western Australia) governments. Advisory councils specific to the anti-violence sectors are also important new structures in Western Australia and New South Wales. The differences in the federal system, especially the fact that criminal law is a state responsibility, offer a distinct set of opportunities for Australian women to access state-level governments unavailable in Canada.

Decentralization has not been a significant response by Australian governments to globalization. Indeed, because the taxing power of the state governments is so limited despite heavy responsibilities, the Commonwealth government can, and does, use its spending power aggressively to initiate and shape programs and services**.** Majority Australian women see women-specific services as state functions that have remained intact and, in the case of anti-violence services, fully funded. Most majority-culture women are centrists favouring more not less involvement by the Commonwealth. They remain committed to the femocrat strategy, even in periods of anti-feminist governments, on the grounds that there is always somewhere that gains can be made.

Meeting the Challenges of Diversity

The initial goal of women's activism, as conceptualized by majority women at least, was to persuade public policy decision makers that there was (and is) a women-centred perspective on public policy issues. This goal has been difficult to achieve since the public policy disciplines—especially economics, political science and public administration—see almost all issues as gender neutral (Burt 1995). Women's activism initially had some success in establishing that certain public policy concerns are best understood as "women's issues." As Vickers et al. demonstrate (1993), this narrow conception of policies and programs affecting women was constraining. In Canada, contemporary women's movements continue to struggle to demonstrate that public policy issues from taxation to international trade have a women-centred perspective. As we discuss, gender-based analysis is a recognition of the gendered nature of many public policies. The problem with the acknowledgment, through gender-based analysis, that public policy and programs affect most women differently than most men because of the inequalities of power and resources, is that it tends to construct

gender categories—men and women—as homogeneous, even ontological groups. This leaves little room for theorizing diversity or tackling substantively the profound differences among women and among men.

Canada is one of the most diverse countries in the world as a consequence of its settler history and high levels of immigration in recent decades. As a consequence, women's movements have become increasingly diverse as they draw on the backgrounds and experiences of the women active in them. The policy disciplines, however, reflect traditions derived from experiences in metropolitan societies that are much more homogeneous or in which assimilation is the stated mode for integrating newcomers. For example, in the United States, Anglo-conformism is the expectation of the society toward immigrants. Canada, in contrast, at least since the adoption of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* in 1982, has rejected assimilation and Anglo-conformity. There is a constitutional recognition of both multiculturalism and the duty of state institutions to protect citizens who are different because of their ethnic background, race, age and, as a result of more recent court cases, sexual orientation. In practical terms, the diversity encountered by majority culture women activists in women's groups (posed by waves of women experiencing disadvantage from being women *and* being different because of one or some of their race, ethnic background, language, sexual orientation or disability) has shaped their understanding of the public policy process. This is true even if not all women's groups have managed to integrate the concerns of diverse women into their agendas or activism.

In contrast, the traditional policy disciplines not only are *gender neutral*, they are also firmly *diversity neutral*. That is, they assume public policies and programs do, or should, treat all citizens the same. This belief is deeply ingrained in traditional views of the public service and is affected very little by globalization, diversity and, despite the obligations imposed by the Charter of Rights, multiculturalism. As we demonstrate below, this gap between feminists and "experts," who see the world in terms which are both gender neutral and diversity neutral, is a major barrier to women activists being able to achieve changes women need through the public policy system. Perhaps the most important strategy feminists can pursue in the current context is to deconstruct this presumption of "neutrality" (read intellectual support for status quo) as neither inevitable, nor the situation in all liberal democracies.

Bureaucratic Culture and Women's Advocacy: An Impossible Fit?

Based on a comparative study of the relationships between the administrative arms of the Australian and Canadian (federal level) states, and the women's movements in each country, Australian feminist political scientist Louise Chappell (1998: 124) concludes "that feminists in Australia have had more success than those in Canada in pursuing women's claims through the bureaucracy." She observes that Australian femocrats have established a more favourable institutional position than their Canadian counterparts, and they have been able to exert a greater influence over a wider range of policies, partly as a consequence of their institutional positioning. Our analysis of the Australian femocrat strategy confirms these facts at the state level as well. In addition, we identify the effective co-ordination and strategic co-operation among femocrats working at the Commonwealth and state levels as especially important to successes in policies and programs in the violence field. Our Canadian research suggests that

successes at the sub-national level in Canada, most notably in the case of anti-violence strategies in Quebec, can be traced to the same factors.

Chappell argues that Australian femocrats have succeeded to a greater degree than their Canadian counterparts for two main reasons.

- They were able to secure a more favourable institutional position in the central, co-ordinating office of the prime minister.
- The ability of Australian femocrats to influence policy making and program spending on behalf of women was enhanced because the bureaucratic culture in Australia permits and encourages public servants to represent and advocate for social interests within the administrative arm of the state. In Canada, the Whitehall**,** neutral public servants model was adopted which upholds status quo gender assumptions and makes it difficult for feminist advocates to gain a foothold within the public service. Instead, the Canadian state historically preferred to fund the development of pressure groups to operate from outside the bureaucracy instead of developing effective advocacy structures within.

Our analysis at the state/provincial level confirms Chappell's conclusion. Femocrat projects are successful where, and to the extent that, they obtain a favourable institutional position and develop strategies to circumvent the potency of neutrality as a core bureaucratic value. The second factor has been the most difficult, and has been achieved to a limited degree only in Newfoundland, because of the ability to recruit women with strong feminist credentials as new policy structures were being created (Rankin 1996), and in Quebec, mainly because of the nationalist emphasis on the Quebec state satisfying women's demands better than the federal state. Our comparative analysis identified a third condition of success: the ability of femocrats to transcend levels of government and ideology to co-ordinate and co-operate strategically across levels to gain and defend policies and programs central to women. Again, the existence of effective structures, the circulation of femocrats within the state and Commonwealth femocrat structures and the legitimacy of advocacy throughout the bureaucracy all contributed to the greater success of the femocrat project in Australia. This combination of factors allowed the project to sustain itself, despite long periods of governments ideologically resistant to feminism.

The core value of neutrality, Chappell (1998: 173) argues, "has presented a major obstacle to the femocrat project." By upholding the value of neutrality, Canadian federal bureaucrats assert a claim to impartiality buttressed by the gender-neutral and diversity-neutral policy disciplines. Yet traditionally, both have been biased against women and minorities in both a nominal and a substantive sense. As the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW 1998: 26) reported in its overview of Canadian women's experiences in the public service, women historically found it difficult to gain access to the senior ranks of the civil service, because they were seen as a threat to the existing status quo. Given a bureaucracy intolerant of advocates in general, feminist advocates were regarded as especially threatening, and the structures within which they operate have been marginalized in all senses. Many observers have confirmed this. Those who have worked within as aspiring femocrats (Findlay 1987) write of initiatives being stonewalled and trivialized and of being treated with

indifference and impatience or "willful misunderstanding" by senior managers. Linda Geller-Schwartz (1995: 49) attests that:

> Even if the male-dominated bureaucracy had been prepared to recognize that certain politics (other than the obvious issues such as maternity leave) could have a differential impact on women, the idea that civil servants should adopt the role of internal lobbyists for women as a definable group was an anathema.

To summarize, in Canada in contrast to Australia, the project of advocating for women from within the bureaucracy was stillborn. The bureaucratic culture, unlike that in Australia, was strongly hostile to the concept of advocacy. The women who worked in such structures, despite strong feminist values, could not act as femocrats in the sense that they could in Australia. The recruitment and promotion system did not reward advocates. As a result, the more senior women knew their career depended on being generalists, not femocrats.

Ironically, one aim of the reform process vis-à-vis the public service in Canada, from the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism of the late 1960s, was to make the civil service more representative of the public it serves. But in Ottawa, "representation" has been narrowly defined to focus on individual abilities rather than group characteristics with the result that it does little to unsettle neutrality as a core bureaucratic value. Unfortunately, improvements in the numbers of women and minorities in the public service have not been translated into substantive shifts in bureaucratic values. This has produced profound frustration, both on the part of feminist activists hoping to find allies among those supposed "femocrats" in the public service and among the purported femocrats themselves. Almost two decades ago, Canadian femocrat Maureen O'Neil (as cited in Morris 1982) notes the difficulty for women as a group in attracting the attention of government, concluding that the low level of resources given to women's issues in the bureaucracy was because "women's issues" are simply given a low priority.

It is not surprising, given this impasse, that, over time, women's organizations became increasingly frustrated and invested more of their time and energies either in litigation strategies led by NAC or through local efforts. Indeed, if there had not been significant changes in the political opportunity structure as a consequence of globalization and international pressure to introduce gender-based analysis, women's groups would likely have dismissed efforts to achieve change for women through a femocrat strategy as a failure, at least at the federal level. In the last decade, however, a number of government departments have begun the process of "consulting" with their women citizens as a result of obligations under the Charter, international undertakings (CEDAW, for example), the UN's promotion of "women's machinery" and gender-based analysis. It is not clear, however, if a bureaucracy marked by a culture of neutrality, which rejects internal advocacy, will foster effective consultations and, especially, if a version of gender-based analysis, which can be open to minority women's advocacy, will become institutionalized. There is a danger that a depoliticized form of gender-based analysis will be adopted in which "experts" will interpret what "women" need rather than seeing women's groups as conveyors of a complex array of views from women in diverse circumstances.

3. PUBLIC POLICY AND THE INTEGRATION OF GENDER

How Is Public Policy Decided?

According to political scientist Thomas Dye, public policy is "whatever governments choose to do or not to do" (as quoted in Brooks 1998: 2). William Jenkins offers a more concrete definition. He explains public policy as "a set of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selections of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation where these decisions should, in principle, be within the power of these actors to achieve" (as quoted in Doern and Phidd 1992: 34). Regardless of the definition, public policy constitutes the "outputs" of government and reflects much about the vision of society held by governments. Traditional studies of public administration identify five stages in the policy making process.

1. Problem identification
2. Policy formulation
3. Passage of laws and regulations
4. Policy implementation
5. Policy evaluation

As a cycle, the process from the initial identification of a policy need through the adoption, implementation and evaluation of a policy involves many actors including bureaucrats, members of Parliament, cabinet ministers and, often, groups that may have a stake in the policy choices taken. The policy process is long and complex; the implementation of a policy alone usually involves some combination of line departments, regulatory agencies, field offices, provincial authorities, municipal authorities, public service agencies and, in some cases, private actors (Pal 1992). Although in democratic theory, policy decisions should reflect a compromise between competing values and interests in a society, the male-dominated nature of elite decision making in Canada has translated into few opportunities for women to be active in public policy making. In part, women's marginalization from the apex of policy making is a by-product of the myth of gender neutrality and objectivity in policy development and the alleged gender neutrality of policy outcomes. As feminist political scientist Sandra Burt (1995) maintains, this fallacy of gender neutrality has been perpetuated through public administration training in universities that long remained decidedly resistant to gender, race or other "difference" critiques.

In recent years, however, feminists have begun to subject public policy design to gender analyses and argue the benefits of integrating feminist analysis into policy development and analysis. Susan D. Phillips (1996) maintains that feminist contributions to policy studies are threefold. First, by "bringing gender in," feminist policy analysis can expose the myriad of ways in which gender relations have been institutionalized and made normative within traditional approaches to policy making. Second, a feminist approach to public policy can also problematize issues of identity by deconstructing the category of "women" so substantive representation that captures the policy needs of diverse women can also be integrated into

policy debates. Finally, feminist insights can challenge the objective knowledge claims of public policy makers to encourage alternative epistemological approaches that contextualize and validate women's experiences and support new grounded research strategies.

Gender-Based Analysis in the International Context

Since 1975, and the United Nations Declaration of International Women's Year, many states have made formal commitments to addressing gender equality. A myriad of measures have been adopted in areas such as education, health care and reproductive rights; yet, at the end of the millennium, inequalities between women and men in both the private and public spheres persist internationally. In 1995, at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China, the Platform for Action (1996: 117) adopted unanimously by 189 countries recommended renewed action to "integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects…and seek to ensure that before policy decisions are taken, an analysis of their impact on men and women, respectively is carried out." This declaration indicated a consensus on the part of women globally that to realize gender equality would require the "mainstreaming" of gender concerns within public policy.

This perspective was echoed in the mandates of several multilateral institutions. In 1995, the International Labor Organization explicitly incorporated gender-based analysis in all stages of its programming cycle. Gender-based analysis guidelines were implemented at the United Nations and the World Bank, and promoted through the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development. The World Bank's decision to support strategies to achieve gender equality, for example, was promoted with the rationale that persistent gender inequality would slow or lower economic growth rates. The World Bank deemed it essential to design public policies that could compensate for market failures, in the area of gender equality, to equalize opportunities and redirect resources. Today, many countries throughout the North and South have designed gender-based analysis tools as standard elements of research and policy development and assigned women-centred institutions within the bureaucracy to oversee their implementation.

Broadly defined, gender-based analysis is an approach to policy making grounded in a belief that formal equality—the same treatment for men and women under public policy—does not guarantee equality of results for both genders. Standard approaches to policy development assume that public policy is gender neutral and that men and women will experience policies similarly. Gender-based analysis challenges this premise, arguing that women and men's experiences of policies must be documented in order to ascertain if policies do affect men and women differentially, and the implications of this finding. Traditionally, governments tend to adopt a sectoral approach to public policy that ignores women's triple roles within the workplace, family and community. This may result in erroneous assumptions that inhibit both the efficiency and effectiveness of public policy. For example, employment planning that views women as workers identical to their male counterparts may assume a household support system that may, or may not, be in place for women.

At a theoretical level, gender-based analysis reflects a perspective that argues that substantive equality means ensuring that all persons, regardless of differences related to, for example, gender, race, class, disability and sexual orientation, should enjoy the same access to the

benefits and outcomes of policy. More specifically, the goal is to create gender equality, a situation wherein women and men have equal conditions for contributing to society economically, politically, socially and culturally, and benefiting from those contributions. The approach acknowledges that achieving gender equality may necessitate different policy strategies for men and women as well as policies flexible enough to address differences among women. It moves from the premise that equity must sometimes be fostered through measures that compensate for the historical and social realities that have prevented women and men from operating equally. As well, gender-based analysis is sensitive to differences across space and, therefore, advocates that research and policy initiatives take notice of the specificities of the location in which research is conducted and policies implemented.

The key principles of gender-based analysis can be summarized.

- Gender equality can only be achieved through recognition that policies may have differential impacts on women and men, which reflect their diverse life situations. Differences between women and men, as well as differences among women, must also be taken into account including, for example, diversity related to class, race, disability and sexual orientation.

- A gender-sensitive approach to research and policy development must incorporate an investigation and understanding of the historical and current socio-economic factors that may be contributing to women and men's experiences of inequality.

- To be effective, gender must be "mainstreamed" within each stage of the research and policy process. A substantive incorporation of a gendered analysis requires that gender be entrenched within each stage of the research, rather than added on as an optional variable for investigation at the end of the research process.

- Gender-based analysis involves a commitment to action-oriented research, that is, a gender-based analysis strategy is designed to lead to recommendations that will link research and policy in order to generate workable solutions to ending inequality for both women and men.

The Benefits of Gender-Based Analysis

There are many benefits to a strategy informed by gender-based analysis, which pursues an integrated approach to research and policy. At a macro level, a gender-sensitive approach to policy research can yield significant economic, social and political benefits. This type of research can help ensure the maximum participation by women in the economy as barriers to their full integration are properly identified and then minimized through effective policy options. Such initiatives can foster increased international competitiveness for the changing economy. Stemming the marginalization and underutilization of women in relation to labour markets, for example, has a range of potential economic benefits including increased tax revenues, reduced demands for social assistance, higher levels of economic productivity and improved health and welfare for women and their families.

Gender-based analysis also has positive implications for the democratization of political life. Insofar as it encourages the involvement of constituencies in civil society usually excluded from both research and accepted channels of policy making, gender-based analysis can establish principles of consultation and participation crucial in strengthening the links between the state and civil society. At the same time, a commitment to policy research informed by gender-based analysis can bring states in line with emerging international standards in the area of gender equality.

At the level of policy development, gender-based analysis has many advantages. It can help ascertain the gendered impact of research agendas and aid in determining whether specific policy options support gender equity and how women and men are affected by particular policy choices. Gender-based analysis research offers substantive policy direction through the collection of relevant gender-disaggregated data and reliable information from informants with experience and expertise in the area. This type of approach can minimize erroneous findings by combining quantitative and qualitative research and offering a triangulation of results.

In turn, this elevates the quality of advice that can be derived from the research and facilitates informed choices regarding workable policy options. A gender-based analysis approach can assist in improving the predictability of outcomes, exposing the gender bias embedded in allegedly "gender-neutral" policies and anticipating unintended policy consequences. The tools of gender-based analysis research are designed to expose the biases inherent in assumptions that policies achieve a desirable outcome if women and men are always treated exactly alike. In fact, that approach only perpetuates gender inequality because of structural barriers. For example, occupational segregation is perpetuated by the belief that all workers can adapt to male work patterns. While uniform policies usually accomplish their goals, they frequently fail with respect to specific communities or categories of people.

The gender-based analysis approach also encourages scholars and policy makers to situate knowledge within its historical context, the current policy climate and comparative information from other jurisdictions where appropriate. This holistic approach to the generation of evidence grounded in women and men's experiences ultimately ensures a more effective targeting of policies and programs. Additionally, the tools of gender-based analysis can assist in presenting policy recommendations in a credible and practical way, demonstrating how gender considerations can be balanced with other government priorities and considerations, and effectively evaluated. Finally, gender-based analysis is useful in answering appeals echoed cross-nationally for greater government accountability for policy actions.

Canadian Applications of Gender-Based Analysis

In 1995, as one of the signatories to the UN Platform for Action, the Canadian government instituted a five-year strategy known as the Federal Plan for Gender Equality. This initiative included a commitment to developing a systematic process to inform and guide future legislation and policies at the federal level by assessing the differential impacts of public policy on women and men. Canada re-affirmed this commitment in 1997 under the UN

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The Canadian government outlined its objectives for achieving gender equality, including a required vetting of all programs and policies from federal departments and agencies, to assess their gender impact. This decision led to the adoption within the federal state and among provincial/ territorial governments of different approaches to gender-based analysis. Some selected examples illustrate the range of strategies employed and the impact of this approach.

Within the Department of Justice, gender-based analysis is now required in all policy and program development, research and interpretation of judicial decisions. Indeed, any departures from this framework must be accounted for in full. The tools of gender-based analysis have been communicated through professional development seminars with all employees to familiarize them with the steps involved. The Department of Justice has assembled a network of gender-based analysis specialists drawn from academia and women's organizations who act as resource persons to offer advice and guidance on issues related to policy development, research and the drafting of legislation. In keeping with the accepted wisdom that gender-based analysis is most effective when supported by senior levels of the bureaucracy, the Department also appointed a senior advisor on gender equality to spearhead this set of initiatives and monitor upper-level management mandated to implement these guidelines.

Perhaps the most exciting changes are occurring within Health Canada where five Centres of Excellence have been established to conduct gender-sensitive research on women's health, an area where the pressing need to pursue gender-sensitive research is most evident. The Centres of Excellence have been at the forefront in developing gender-based analysis tools in Canada and in initiating debate within the women's community as to its potential. Other government agencies have a much longer history of integrating gender into research and policy. The Canadian International Development Agency, for example, undertook a formal commitment to gender-based analysis in 1996, although its Women and Development unit dates back to 1984, and guidelines to address women and development issues were first issued in 1976. Human Resources Development Canada, led by the long-established Women's Bureau, has focussed on initiatives to end women's inequality in the work force such as employment equity and maternity benefits, and dealing with sexual harassment. Other government departments are engaged in developing gender-based analysis approaches that best mesh with their specific policy concerns. More recently, Citizenship and Immigration Canada has embarked on a project to "mainstream" gender into its policy cycle and is exploring the differential impact of immigration policies on men and women. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada has staffed a senior advisor on women's issues and gender equality.

The move toward the integration of gender-based analysis has altered the role of Status of Women Canada, allowing it to become more strategic in its activities and priorities in order to maximize the effectiveness of its resources. As Wilcox (1999) argues, there is now a new awareness among bureaucrats within SWC that they can no longer champion every issue affecting women in Canada. Rather, they need to become more focussed in their role within the bureaucracy. Gender-based analysis can potentially allow SWC femocrats to work on large key policy files and enable them to respond to emerging issues within the policy

community and within the political agenda while line departments maintain responsibility for the daily implementation of gender-based analysis into policy and program development.

Adoption of gender-based analysis has varied not only across federal departmental lines, but has been implemented in very different ways at the provincial/territorial levels. While provinces, such as Alberta and Ontario, have shown resistance to this type of policy approach, the Quebec government, in 1997, committed itself to the incorporation of gender-based analysis and has undertaken pilot projects in social services, health, finance, labour, immigration and statistics which the Secrétariat à la condition féminine co-ordinates along with the Executive Council and Treasury. British Columbia has shown a substantive commitment to gender-based analysis through its development of a comprehensive gender lens strategy in conjunction with the establishment of the free-standing Ministry of Women's Equality.[11]

The applications of gender-based analysis in policy research are extensive, and the use of this mode of analysis highlights many issues in which differential policy outcomes demand government action. With respect to pensions, recognition that the majority of seniors are women with lower levels of savings and that women are less frequently covered by private or employer-sponsored pensions than their male counterparts justifies the need for pension reforms that take women's realities into account. Reforms to Employment Insurance exempt persons who quit their jobs because of sexual harassment from penalties incurred for quitting. Targeting benefits from Employment Insurance to individuals who have been in receipt of maternity or parental benefits within the previous five years acknowledged women's role in childbearing and the impact of this role on employment cycles. Job training programs geared toward the different educational patterns, skills and child-care responsibilities of young women and young men aid in ensuring that both genders are integrated most effectively into the labour market (HRDC 1997).

Policies, such as these, accept that accommodating women's lives may require strategies that are flexible and reflect the labour force patterns of women. For instance, women head four of every five lone-parent families in Canada. Statistics, such as this, need to be factored into policies (e.g., job retraining policies). Research inspired by gender-based analysis has also revealed the female domination of care work and the connections between reductions in the public service, the expansion of women's unpaid care work and implications for women's performance and participation in the labour market. In sum, the policy implications of gender-based analysis are far reaching and vital to the achievement of gender equality.

How Is Gender-Based Analysis Operationalized?

Integral to the gender-based analysis strategy is the design of a flexible research plan capable of integrating a blend of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. While gender-based analysis expands gendered policy analysis beyond traditionally defined "women's issues" to the gendered implications of a wide range of policy areas, it does not reject quantitative methodologies or systematic inquiry. Instead, gender-based analysis calls for the collection of disaggregated data. This counteracts the problems with aggregated data that assume men's experiences to be the norm and research techniques that generalize findings to both sexes. Disaggregated data facilitate consideration of the differential impacts of

initiatives on women and men, and establish baseline data that can be employed to set measurable targets, define indicators and hypothesize about expected results.

Such a gender-sensitive methodology encourages the blending of research traditions and the contextualizing of the project. Because gender-based analysis moves from the assumption that knowledge is grounded in experience, an essential element of the qualitative component of this type of analysis is the pursuit of substantial consultation and shared learning with those constituencies directly affected by the policies in question. This involves the participation of women as individuals and as members of women's organizations, as well as consultation with gender experts who can aid in identifying barriers to women's equality. Interrogating women's own solutions and validating experiential knowledge opens up the research process and potentially uncovers new policy alternatives. The creation of coalitions and mechanisms involving government and non-government actors that derive from the qualitative research phase may have long-term implications for the success of the policy recommendations.

Beyond this set of techniques, however, gender-based analysis also encourages the uncovering of any potential bias in the research design that may assume that all persons, regardless of ethnicity, ability and gender, experience policy in the same way. Clearly, the success of gender-based analysis hinges on it being developed and implemented by researchers possessing relevant knowledge of the policy field and its internal dynamics. Also required, however, is self-examination by the research team to uncover biases toward those to whom the policy is directed. Such an approach challenges the neutrality of the researcher and encourages self-examination of the values and assumptions brought to the research process. As we have argued, because public perceptions of women's roles and contributions historically have been from a traditional perspective, public policy has responded by either reinforcing women's subordinate status or not valuing women's experience. Consequently, gender-based analysis tools challenge researchers to conduct their own personal "gender audit" to determine if their perceptions of women's roles and, in particular, societal perceptions of marginalized women are influencing the research agenda.

Clearly, there are challenges associated with this type of research and policy strategy. To be operationalized fully, the policy recommendations adopted at the end of the research project must have sanctions for non-compliance which require internal and external accountability, and commitment from elite levels of leadership. Gender-based analysis research may require additional resources to tailor the tools to the target groups. The blend of quantitative and qualitative evidence-based research can extend the time line and cost of research projects. Ultimately, however, benefits to policy research are justified, given the increased efficiency and effectiveness of the policies generated.

4. IT'S ALL VERY WELL FOR THE MAJORITY

As discussed, public policy is still seen by most public servants, many politicians and most policy experts as gender neutral. It has been a considerable struggle, therefore, to establish the fact that public policies and programs often affect women and men differently because of the differences in their lives. While gender-based analysis has the potential to address these long-standing biases, the gender-based analysis framework is limited to a subset of issues, policies and programs. This subset is wider than the old box of "women's issues" which included a few subjects that were clearly female, such as maternity leave. As noted, gender-based analysis is now being applied to issues such as immigration policy, to take into account, for example, women's greater vulnerability to violence and how this affects them in situations in which husbands or employers have power over them because of dependency in their immigration status. But gender-based analysis is rarely used with regard to economic and technology policies. Nor is it used to address the deep structures of racism, poverty and discrimination which result in the vulnerability to violence experienced by many women and some men.

Gender-based analysis is beginning to open up new policy areas to analysis by "experts" with some background in feminist analysis in sociology, social work, law and women's studies. But this type of analysis can be criticized for being *difference neutral,* too often representing what majority women want as what all women want. This is especially problematic concerning issues of security from violence. As we've noted, for most majority women in Canada, the prime security concern is protection from domestic violence. For many minority women, marginalized because of their race, sexual orientation or disability, public violence, including from caregivers and police, is also critical. The pressing issue for feminists today is to ascertain whether the new pattern of feminist "experts" speaking for women (inspired by the growth of gender-based analysis initiatives) actually results in the needs being heard of women who are not part of the majority or who are well-educated and different.

Earlier, we discussed how the bureaucratic culture in the federal civil service in Canada is hostile to advocacy. As a consequence, the garb of "expertise" is far more compatible with conventional civil service values than feminist advocacy. But if the advocacy element is removed, gender-based analysis may evolve into a status quo approach that represents the perceptions of well-educated, majority women as if they were the views of all women. This substitution jeopardizes, even further, the ability of the Canadian femocrat project to hear what minority women have to say. If the debates within women's organizations have taught us anything, it is that majority women should not presume to speak for marginalized women whose lives and needs are different because their race, sexual orientation, disability or other experiences give them less power, fewer resources and fewer opportunities than majority women. Of course, some of the women recruited into the "women's machinery" of government are themselves lesbians, part of minority ethnic or racial groups or have disabilities. Sue Findlay's (1993) "Problematizing Privilege: Another Look at the Representation of 'Women' in Feminist Practice" notes that such "minority" women are often expected to "represent" all other minority women, both within agencies of government and within women's organizations. Findlay's exploration of how such "representation" worked in Toronto in the early 1990s was

most revealing. Her experience reveals that, although women from groups “designated” for special concern now often hold jobs as visible tokens, and that while equity goals are being considered, they are usually expected to “represent,” by their presence, all others in similar groups (race, disability, etc.). She concludes that such constituencies “have not been successful at integrating the issues facing these groups into mainline departments” (p. 213). Lesbians, of course, remain largely invisible within public bureaucracies and, generally, are not encouraged to “represent” others in their group through their presence.

Many minority women speak to this dilemma. Their presence as “visible” minorities is expected to symbolize the agency’s openness to multicultural and Charter-based claims. But their recruitment and visible presence alone is the object, and they are not expected to represent members of their own group, that is, to be advocates. Indeed, their personal symbolic existence as “minority” or as, for example, “disabled” is viewed by many policy makers as equipping them to be “experts” on any minority-related concerns. So, for example, public servants of Palestinian origin find themselves cast in the role of “expert” and charged with explaining to White public servants the needs of Black immigrants from the West Indies. This framing of “difference” as homogeneous allows the state to appear to respond without mounting substantive initiatives to integrate difference into policy outputs. Additionally, our focus group participants spoke of the difficulty of openly pursuing, with the state, policies designed to address minority women’s needs, for fear of backlash. One anti-violence worker whose activism involves working with lesbian communities explains.

> *I find there is a lot of political correctness going on, trying to gloss over the targeted groups. Often, you need to say that you are taking care of victims of violence generally, just in case you stumble upon a homophobe who would like to push aside your grant application. Sometimes, we say exactly what we do and who was dealt with almost as an act of subversion. Yet we are always stressed and left wondering if we should show our true colours, fearing that we may be missing out on grants because of this.*

5. WHAT WORKS AND WHAT DOESN'T: ANTI-VIOLENCE AS A PUBLIC POLICY DEBATE

Women marginalized in Western societies, because of race, sexuality, disability, poverty, age or internal colonialism, experience significantly higher levels of violence than White, mainstream women, and the kinds of violence experienced also differ with both random acts of public violence and structural violence prominently featured. All women are vulnerable to violence as long as systematic male dominance and the ideologies that support it persist. But marginalized women are much more vulnerable. For example, Statistics Canada data show Aboriginal women experience femicides at rates between five and ten times higher than for non-Aboriginal women (Gartner et al. 1998: 159). A 1989 report by the Ontario Native Women's Association revealed Aboriginal women experience violence in intimate settings at eight times the rate of other women (cited in Duffy 1998: 145). Similar reports from, and about, women with disabilities also reveal significantly higher rates. Despite controversy about its composition because of alleged underrepresentation of marginalized women, the 1993 Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women reported lesbians, teenagers and seniors are also especially vulnerable. In fact, just over half (51 percent) of all sexual assaults were on young women between 16 and 27.

What do these much higher levels of vulnerability mean in terms of relationships among women in women's movements, shelters and crisis centres usually dominated by White, mainstream women? Three first-hand experiences reveal the reality behind the often confusing and controversial statistics. First, the experiences of Aboriginal women are so different from those of White, mainstream women that it is important to use the framework of continuing colonialism to explain it. Within this structural approach, "the conditions of colonialism" are seen as creating the circumstances in which violence by Aboriginal men and women occurs, as well as violence against Aboriginal people by White men and women (Bachmann 1993). Patricia Monture-Okanee's 1992 text, "The Violence We Women Do: A First Nation's View," explores this perspective.

Lesbians experiencing violence from female partners reported similar experiences. Adrienne Blenman (1991: 61) broke the silence on this taboo subject, which also didn't "fit" the mainstream pattern and explanation. A Black lesbian, she observed about her experience:

> The question I remember being uppermost in my mind was why was I being beaten by a woman? I didn't connect my abuse to the abuses suffered by women at the hands of their male partners. I believed that as a lesbian, I was safe from violence in my relationships because women didn't hit each other. I think it was this belief that kept me involved [in the abusive relationship] for so long.

bell hooks (1988) has argued that violence in adult intimate relationships re-exposes wounds and vulnerable areas resulting from childhood abuse, so the wounded person feels betrayal as well as pain. The victim feels the loss of trust, but the perpetrator is often wounded also. Blenman (1991: 61) observed about her abusive female partner: "One of the main factors

contributing to the abuse was my partner's homophobia, even though she was involved with a woman. Homosexuality went against every new religious belief she held. In a way, every time she hit me, she was beating up on the lesbian part of herself."

Women with disabilities are also especially vulnerable. Rochelle (1993: 113), in "Bursting the Myth," asserts: "If other women feel like a target for assault, then I feel like the bull's-eye. I use a wheelchair, and I figure if someone's out there looking for an easy hit, it's me." Her analysis stressed the extreme vulnerability of many women with disabilities and their complete exclusion from mainstream women's movements and from the shelters and centres they created. Girls and women with a disability are assaulted much more frequently than able-bodied women, and the more disabled they are, the higher the rate.

> You wouldn't think anybody would pull a woman out of her wheelchair to rape her, or hit a little kid with crutches, but it happens. Boyfriends do it, spouses do it. Strangers, friends, families...teachers, doctors, even the counsellors and caretakers supposedly there to help, do it. It happens in homes, hospitals, schools, in accessible buses and taxis. If a woman with a disability seeks help from services for victims of violence, she'll find most are not built to accommodate her physical needs (Rochelle 1993: 113).

Women in developing and post-communist countries face far different experiences with violence. Amnesty International has assessed 161 countries as repressive to some degree, so state violence, war and civil strife are crucial contexts within which they experience violence. Large numbers of refugee women and children are one result, and they are especially vulnerable to violence in camps (Moussa 1998). But public violence and intimate violence are usually linked. Bunch and Carrillo (1998) report that in Mexico violence is present in at least 70 percent of families. Sixty-seven percent of wives in Papua New Guinea and over two thirds of wives in South Korea were beaten. They also report high levels of intimate femicide, abortion of female fetuses and female infanticide. When both sexes receive similar care and nutrition, there are 105 females for every 100 males but in South and West Asia, North Africa and China there are about 90 million "missing women" as men outnumber women 100 to 94.

Many mainstream Western feminists believe the high levels of violence experienced by marginalized women in the West and women in developing and post-communist countries can be attributed to "barbaric" cultural practices. Such interpretations are now revealed as "orientalist," and third-wave feminists insist we delve more deeply to understand why and how these patterns exist and expand our analysis to incorporate issues related to poverty and the aftermath of colonialism and neo-colonialism.

Differences in How Women Think about Violence

Beyond the agreement that violence against women is unacceptable and must stop, differently situated women disagree about what constitutes violence, what causes violence, women's roles in perpetrating violence and how to deal with those who commit violent acts. These differences are not just important in terms of academic theory, but also within the

activities and structures of women's movements. There have been conflicts in some shelters for battered women in Canada, for example, because mainstream shelter workers believe violence is part of "man's nature," while many Aboriginal women and women of colour believe poverty, racism and colonialism affect men's behaviour. Some of the (still too few) Black, Asian and Aboriginal women working in shelters believe White women won't admit complicity in the structural violence of racism, pointing out that young, poor, non-White men are the most frequent victims of violence, often at the hands of the (still mainly White) police. Conflict within women's institutions is not the only consequence; the ability of women's movements to create and sustain coalitions to achieve shared goals is also weakened if mainstream women think their experiences and analyses of them are universal. In fact, women's experiences with violence vary considerably, as do understandings of violence.

White mainstream women in the West enjoy comparatively high standards of personal security. They face little threat of overt violence from their state. Their mothers' advice to "get help from a policeman when you are in trouble" reflects the fact that they don't need to fear becoming an individual who has "disappeared." Influenced by first-wave feminists, many second-wave, mainstream feminists deplore violence in all forms. Because most women worldwide face repressive regimes in which states use violence against them, many believe their community's use of force is essential to their future security. As Nira Yuval-Davis (1997: 113) notes:

> Feminists from the Third World justifiably argue against...an automatic condemnation of all acts of violence...without taking into account who carries out the violent campaigns and why. They would also argue that they could not afford the luxury of being anti-militarist because the national liberation of oppressed people can only be carried out with the help of an armed struggle.

Women who have fled to Western countries to escape violence often find it hard to convey their experiences. Mainstream Western women find it hard to understand women who themselves have taken up arms. Yet, we must come to understand those experiences if we are to learn to work together.

Thinking about Violence in Canada

In 1983, *Canadian Women's Studies* devoted an issue to the subject of "Violence" (vol. 4, no. 4). Its dramatic cover showed a young, White woman with a black eye and a bruised cheek. The articles reveal what "violence" meant then for the English-Canadian women's movement: men battering their wives and partners, male-inflicted incest, pornography focussed on male sexuality, male-on-female rape and sexual harassment, and homophobic violence suffered by lesbians. Articles about how to run shelters and change laws were also featured. The security concerns of race-minority, Aboriginal and poor women were addressed only in one brief article which described the abuse experienced by Indian women at the hands of Indian men, why they "take it" and how their kids are removed by the Children's Aid Society because they drink. In all but one of the articles, women are the victims of violence and men the perpetrators within

a violence-against-women gender lens. The hot debate was if pornography caused men's violence and whether it should be censored. This violence-against-women agenda reflected the experiences of White, mainstream women who controlled the politics of second-wave women's movements in the early 1980s. Some important voices and experiences of violence were absent: older women about elder abuse, immigrant women about war or torture or about relatives who had "disappeared," and Aboriginal women about violent dispossession, incarceration in residential schools and violence turned inward and manifested in alcoholism, glue sniffing and suicide.

Close to two decades later, many things have changed. In Canada, December 6 became the day commemorating the 14 women killed in Montréal in 1989 because they were studying engineering and, according to their murderer, because they were feminists taking study places away from men. A firestorm of controversy ensued because some women wished to grieve in all-women settings, and others compared the crime to men who batter and rape. In the process, women's movements became more open to new voices around anti-violence agendas. A movement against violence against women led by men began (the White Ribbon Campaign). A concept of the *continuum of violence* emerged which made more links between personal and institutional violence. This idea provided the framework for a 1991 issue of *Canadian Women's Studies* (vol. 11, no. 4) in which both women and men discussed men's violence for the first time as a problem they shared. "Difference" was incorporated in some articles which explored experiences of violence of race-minority women and women with disabilities. Perhaps the most significant breakthrough was an article that examined women's violence against other women, and a poem written by Rita Kohli, "Musings of a South Asian Woman in the Wake of the Montreal Massacre," which challenged White women to add racism to their definition of violence.

At a 1992 conference, Patrica Monture-Okanee, a Mohawk citizen, challenged the mainstream feminist premise that violence is best seen through a gender lens. Insisting her race and her gender "are all in one package" (1992: 193), Monture-Okanee argued that her whole community, including men and boys, suffers from the violence of racism and internal colonialism. Her text focussed on the fact that women do violence to one another through their involvement in oppressive systems, such as racism, even if they don't directly inflict a blow or pull a trigger. She challenged feminists to support her people in their quest for justice: "I do wish you would come stand beside me.… Only then will we stop doing violence to each other" (1992: 194).

Also in the early 1990s, changes occurred which expanded women's experiences of violence, including the end of the Cold War and its aftermath. For women, "liberation" from Communism meant the disintegration of the security communist states had provided. Violent "new nationalisms" tolerated or fostered atrocities, such as mass rape, as part of ethnic cleansing. In Latin America, dictatorships were toppled and women played an active role in challenging repressive regimes and in struggles to establish democracy and restore security. Many who suffered violence, including torture, in these struggles migrated to Western countries bringing with them experiences of a much broader range of violence. Increasingly, violence has been conceptualized more broadly, with the lowering of the artificial barriers among segments of the world and categories of women. The continuum

of violence includes acts of violence from the most intimate settings to the most public. Moreover, it assumes public violence is as important for women worldwide as violence in intimate settings. These new conceptualizations of the spectrum of violence against women provoked a new wave of activism around anti-violence campaigns. In the context of vigorous debates within feminism around issues of difference and diversity, however, the anti-violence movement also had to address the different needs of minority women in their struggles for security from violence.

6. SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIPS WITH STATE FEMINISM

Case Study: Violence Against Women Services in Quebec

In this section, we present our empirical findings regarding the relationship between state feminism and women's movements, using anti-violence organizing structures as the analytic lens. We begin with the case of Quebec where the range of services for victims of violence[12] is broad. There are 76 shelters throughout the province, a telephone service, SOS Violence, that is accessible free of charge across Quebec and financed by the Ministère de la Justice, and a network of women's centres and community organizations, such as the Association des resources intervenant auprès des hommes violents, that offers help at the local level. As well, Centres local de services communautaires (CLSCs) and hospitals house specialized programs to engage in prevention strategies and work on pilot projects with police forces. Of particular importance are the four tables de concertation which act as key sites for the exchange of information and co-ordination of resources. These bodies are consultative and bring together community organizers, health and social service representatives, the police and other individuals intervening at the judicial level. Additionally, there are 22 sexual assault centres throughout the province (Centres d'aide aux femmes aggressées sexuellement). Specialized clinics in four hospitals and one CLSC in Montréal also respond to sexual assault. Direction de l'indemnisation des victimes d'actes criminels is an active partner in ensuring that victims are returned to safe environments following hospital stays.

In terms of the role of state feminism, the Conseil du statut de la femme's approach to violence issues is captured in its commitment to the prevention of violence against women. This objective is framed in its policy of "degré zéro" which it distinguishes from the federal government's position of "zero tolerance" on violence against women. For the Conseil, the prevention of violence, rather than the stopping of violence, is encapsulated in the "degré zéro" slogan. Research reveals that the Conseil du statut de la femme has addressed the area of violence against women consistently throughout its tenure. In 1978, the Conseil, in consultation with women's groups, prepared *Politique d'ensemble de la condition féminine pour les québécoises, égalité et indépendance* that called for the Ministère des affaires sociales (MAS) to encourage the creation of shelters and rape crisis centres. This document urged the establishment of emergency and counselling services for victims of battering and rape. In co-operation with the Ministère de la Justice and MAS, the Conseil held regional colloquiums on violence against women and children in 1980-81 to publicize the issue. As the campaign for the funding of shelter and rape crisis centres unfolded at the end of the 1970s, the role of the Conseil du statut de la femme as an important ally in this struggle was unquestionable (Masson 1998).

Indeed, while Quebec feminists working in the anti-violence movement were always cognizant of the potential problems associated with engagement with the state, the "decision of women's service groups to seek permanent funding from the Ministry [Ministère des affaires sociales/Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux] was not naïve. Rather, it was a calculated gamble that lobbying and political pressure could establish a balance of forces strong enough to withstand attempts to override their commitment to self-determination"

(Masson 1998: 107). Masson concludes (p. 126) that alliances with state feminism were instrumental in gaining political attention for the issue of violence against women and for the funding of women's services by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS), despite a divergence of opinions between women's service groups and the Conseil about how these funding relationships should unfold.

While the Conseil's work on anti-violence issues continued throughout the 1980s, the massacre at the École polytechnique on December 6, 1989 appears to have been a major catalyst for a renewed activism within the CSF around violence issues. The discourse around their policies concerning violence, however, shifted throughout the decade. In the early 1990s, Conseil documents described violence as an issue of personal safety. By 1992, violence against women was situated, by the Conseil, within an understanding of inequality between the sexes. In the Conseil's more recent work, ending violence against women is described as something which women need to do to eliminate the systemic inequality between the social conditions of women and men.

Before 1992, the Quebec government lodged efforts around violence against women in the health and social services department as well as in the departments of communications, justice and public security. In 1992, an interministerial committee was formed to co-ordinate these policies, with the emphasis limited to domestic violence. This meant that sexual assault was marginalized as an issue, which the Conseil argued was problematic. During this period, the Conseil's work on the violence portfolio included participation in the interministerial committee looking into intervention strategies for rape victims. It also produced a document defining types of violence affecting women and providing an inventory of laws and policies of the federal and Quebec governments related to violence against women. During this time, the Conseil advocated a more holistic approach to policies around violence against women, targeted to address the range of violence to which women were subjected, pointing favourably to the example of the Ontario NDP government's approach to ending violence against women.

Structurally, the Conseil lobbied for policy co-ordination that would involve the following government departments: health and social services, justice and public security, education, immigration and cultural communities, and state secretariats for Aboriginal peoples, women, family, and people with disabilities. Additionally, the Conseil supported the inclusion of community organizations and groups providing services to victims of violence as an integral element of any co-ordinated strategy. Clearly, as the documentary evidence attests, diversity concerns were an identifiable sub-theme of the debates on the policy approach that would best address violence against women. It is instructive to note, however, that diversity questions were restricted to considering the needs of immigrant and racialized women, Aboriginal women and women with disabilities. Lesbians were excluded from the agenda at this time.

In the mid-1990s, the Conseil initiated five studies on violence against women in the areas of sexual harassment, incest, domestic violence, sexual assault and pornography. This research was justified as necessary to develop an egalitarian vision of the relationship between the sexes. What is noteworthy about this research is that it incorporated the opinions and comments of shelter workers and representatives from other organizations that work with

victims of violence. In 1993, the profile of violence against women issues gained prominence with the government's announcement of a commitment to the goal of equality of the sexes with the adoption of A Shared Future, a policy concerning the status of women. The policy outlined five objectives, and the government guaranteed that efforts would be made in each area over a 10-year period:

- women's economic independence;
- respect for women (physically and psychologically);
- elimination of violence against women;
- the valuation of women's contribution to society; and
- the enhancement of women's role in regional development.

In 1995, the Quebec government responded to the Conseil's *Pour que cesses l'inacceptable: avis sur la violence faites aux femmes* by unveiling a policy for intervention in cases of domestic violence which led to increased funding for community organizations working to help victims of violence. This decision grew out of a major consultation on domestic violence conducted in 1994 with representatives from government ministries, community organizations, service providers, universities and other specialists working on domestic violence. The government's rationale for such a strategy was the need to better co-ordinate government policy in this area, because of increasing economic constraints.

The Conseil has addressed the impact of state decentralization and funding-related issues, arguing that what resulted was an increased valorization of the social services offered by community organizations because of decentralization and devolution. Various services have been integrated into CLSCs or other government-controlled networks. This move may have consequences for the autonomy of the services. The paradox with such institutionalization, however, is that while funding may stabilize groups as a consequence of reorganization, the closer link to the state may permit less independence as the state is in a position to define mandates and shape objective.[13] The Conseil's analysis of this development, however, is that such institutionalization will, on balance, have positive outcomes for women's equality agendas. Elements of the shelter movement, however, have argued consistently that a lack of co-ordination among various service providers, accompanied by insufficient funding, impedes effective action on the domestic violence front.[14]

There has been much discussion within the Quebec feminist community regarding the effects of decentralization and state funding on organizing efforts by women. Political scientist Diane Lamoureux (1997), reflecting on the emergence of the shelter movement, argues that as state funding grew, radicalism within the movement declined and processes of professionalization and bureaucratization led to overall depoliticization. The more recent treatment of this topic by sociologist Dominique Masson, however, suggests alternative conclusions. Masson's (1998) study of women's service groups in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region and the impact on shelters, women's centres and a rape crisis centre of funding by Quebec's Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux documents how women "played the state" during the restructuring of Quebec's welfare state. This process unfolded quite differently in Quebec than in the rest of Canada and, in fact, provided opportunities for

Quebec women to establish new partnerships with the state in the context of an overall shift to the “localization of social solidarities” (Masson 1998: 78). Masson’s analysis suggests that institutionalized relationships with the state do not necessarily derail feminist goals; rather, opportunities for pursuing equality agendas remain and have been exploited successfully by various elements within the anti-violence sector.

While the Conseil’s work on diversity matters within the arena of violence against women has appeared limited, in its *Orientations triennales du Conseil du statut de la femme 1998-2001*, the Conseil appears to broaden its diversity mandate, with an acknowledgment that heterosexuality is less and less “the norm” in Quebec society. It also identifies increasing pressure on society and the state to recognize diverse relationships by developing appropriate social and legal frameworks. This statement offers an opportunity to incorporate sexual identity into policy development within the Conseil. In this final section, we review the marginalization of lesbians from strategic action concerning violence against women and the opportunities for new alliances with state feminism.

Lesbians and Violence in Quebec

One measure of the capacity of the women’s movement, the state and the women’s policy machinery in Quebec to respond to diversity concerns within anti-violence policies is the extent to which lesbian needs and claims have been integrated successfully. Although Quebec has prohibited discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation since 1977, this has not eliminated discrimination and heterosexism within provincial laws, nor has it eradicated violence against lesbian and gay populations. In response to a series of gay bashings in Montréal in 1993, and following public pressure from gay and lesbian activists, the Commission des droits de la personne held public hearings on the issue of discrimination and violence against sexual minorities. This development made space on the public agenda to raise the visibility of violence against, and among, lesbians and offered a critical opportunity to investigate existing services for lesbians in this area.

In answer to the Commission’s initiatives, the Caucus Lesbien was created in response to the fact that there was no organization to defend the rights of lesbians in Quebec with regards to violence concerns. Furthermore, many lesbians perceived existing gay and lesbian organizations as inadequately prioritizing the specific needs and realities of their lesbian membership. In making its deposition to the Commission, the Caucus goal was to identify the socio-demographic profile and realities of Quebec’s lesbian population and to outline the role and responsibility of the state in preventing further discrimination and violence against its lesbian citizens. In preparation for the submission, Caucus Lesbien conducted an empirical study of violence against lesbians, the first of its kind in Quebec. Measuring violence according to “public violence” (that to which lesbians are subjected in the community and workplace) and “private violence” (that which may occur among family and friends), Caucus Lesbien found widespread evidence of violence directed at the lesbian community. Their findings revealed that 61.8 percent of lesbians had experienced occasional negative attitudes and intimidation within their private relationships. In the public sphere, 53 percent reported they had been victims of discrimination with 36.3 percent having experienced violence of a verbal, psychological or physical nature (Caucus Lesbien 1993).

Perhaps even more revealing was the response of lesbians when queried about how they accessed the state following incidents of violence. Most reported they did not turn to the police or other state institutions for assistance because of the threat of further discrimination. This rejection of state services reveals the deep-seated fear lesbians have of being judged negatively or disbelieved because of their sexual identity, or of being subjected to a homophobic police force. The report also noted a lack of mechanisms to deal with complaints of homophobic violence that is in itself a deterrent to reporting such crimes. Additionally, the research found that lesbians perceived the Commission as unhelpful in the processing of complaints around discrimination and violence, thus reinforcing a profound sense of alienation from the state.

In its final report, the Commission acknowledged that available health and social services poorly answer the needs of lesbians, and even increase the discrimination toward lesbians and gays as a result of prejudice, misinformation and lack of sensitization on the part of individuals employed by these services. The Commission also noted the failure of community clinics (CLSCs) to adapt to the needs of lesbian clientele, especially in cases involving violence. Finally, the Commission noted that similar difficulties exist among women's centres across Quebec which are meant to offer services to all women experiencing violence. In short, the findings of Caucus Lesbien and the Commission des droits de la personne du Québec confirmed that available responses to violence against women do not incorporate the full diversity of all women's experiences.

Since the Commission released its findings in 1994, the Groupe d'Intervention en violence conjugale chez les lesbiennes has emerged to address issues of domestic violence against and among lesbians. The Groupe d'Intervention is the only organization of its kind in Canada dealing specifically with domestic violence against lesbians from within a feminist framework. The organization has three aims:

- understanding violence in lesbian couples;
- intervention through the establishment of groups which deal with abused lesbians as well as lesbians with violent behaviours; and
- training/awareness of social workers, personnel in health and social services, justice, public security and community organizations as to the realities surrounding domestic violence within lesbian relationships.

In addition to these three functions, the group boasts an active research component that is generating literature on this issue for use by state institutions, shelters and the lesbian community. In 1995, group members made a presentation to the Quebec government's interministerial committee on domestic violence and, the following year, received official recognition from the Régie Régionale de la Santé et des services sociaux de Montréal-Centre. The group also received funding from the Centre de recherche interdisciplinarie sur la violence familiale in 1996 to conduct a study on violence against lesbians. One other important development is that this organization engages in outreach to both the Anglo-Quebec and the Franco-Ontarian population. More recently, training sessions around issues of lesbian violence have been conducted with shelter workers in Ottawa, Ontario and Chelsea, Quebec.

The recognition of these groups by elements of the Quebec state, and the movement within the Conseil to address issues of sexual minorities indicate that opportunities are developing to influence the policy process and inject a more holistic diversity agenda. This synopsis of the relationship between feminist activism around violence against women, state feminism and the Quebec bureaucracy makes clear that political opportunities to address diversity questions in this policy area *are* available, and may be facilitated by processes of decentralization and a particular model of state feminism.

Case Study: Australian Experiences—Women's Action in the Area of Anti-Violence Policy

In Australia, the central theme of the government-supported anti-violence programs in all the jurisdictions researched was that violence against women is a serious crime. It must be understood by all to be unacceptable in Australian society; and all perpetrators must be punished by the state with equal severity. The intensity of commitment to this theme was very strong and held by both elected women and femocrats. The New South Wales minister for the status of women was perhaps the most insistent that no variations could be permitted.

No women's movements argue that "violence against women is OK" or that fighting against it is trivial. There may be important differences, however, in understanding the problem in four key areas: what constitutes violence, what causes violence, what roles men and women play in perpetrating violence, and what should be done about men who perpetrate violence against women and children. A key question is whether such differences are recognized and if they can/should be accommodated. Majority feminists in the jurisdictions studied all approached violence issues within a "violence against women" framework. Some minority women, and especially Aboriginal women, in contrast, presented different understandings of the problem, including the "continuum of violence" concept which looked at all forms of violence in the society. In this framework, men could also be recognized as victims of violence, and women could be recognized as perpetrators. They argued that violence against children, woman-on-woman violence and the structural violence associated with poverty, race oppression, forced removals and some immigration experiences must be included if violence is to be understood in ways that can accommodate the needs and claims of Aboriginal women and some non-English speaking women. In some key ways, the Australian model of interaction between organized feminism and government permitted new concepts of politics within which claims of marginalized and oppressed women can be accommodated.

New South Wales

New South Wales has one of two surviving Labor governments. In 1997, NSW's feminist status of women minister advanced a strong majoritarian perspective on all aspects of the violence brief. She argued that "the key is that it [violence against women] is against the law and must be punished" (personal interview with Jill Vickers, Sydney, Nov. 27, 1997). She rejected perpetrator programs being tried in several other states on the grounds: "You can't do it and not have a diminishment of the fact that it is a crime." In rejecting perpetrator programs, she asserted: "Why should part of the limited resources for women go to fund programs for men? I have an unforgiving view. They've clearly broken the law and should be punished." The main accommodation New South Wales provides for Aboriginal women is that two of the 83 refuges funded by the state are Aborigine-only shelters. Non-English

speaking and Aboriginal women who sought alternate ways of dealing with violent men were seen by both politicians and femocrats as needing education (pamphlets in many "community" languages announced "it's a crime"), not accommodation. Ideas, such as alternate justice system structures or healing circles, instead of incarceration, were strongly rejected on grounds that they would weaken the efforts to convince Anglo-Celtic, Australian men that wife bashing is a crime.

The New South Wales government, in early 1997, introduced several new initiatives in the violence against women area. First, they adopted a "whole-of-government" approach to domestic violence in which the Department for Women is the change agent co-ordinating activities throughout government, as other departments assume the Department's responsibilities. In response to questions concerning government action on any special needs of Aboriginal women, the minister noted that, because Aboriginal Legal Services (funded by the Commonwealth) would not deal with Black-on-Black violence, the New South Wales government, led by her department, established the Aboriginal Women's Legal Support Program. It helps Aboriginal women seeking to prosecute Aboriginal partners or to obtain restraining orders against them.

The New South Wales government also established the Violence against Women Specialist Unit in 1996 based in the Crime Prevention Division of the Attorney General's Department. It introduced a new strategy to reduce violence against women, including establishment of the Council on Violence against Women to advise on a co-ordinated whole-of-government response to violence against women. This Council had 10 experts from the community, including a distinguished chair, a senior representative from the Premier's Council on Women and the six senior public servants responsible for the whole-of-government initiative. One Aboriginal woman (a community anti-violence educator) and one woman of non-English speaking background (a multicultural anti-violence educator) were among the community appointees. Regional specialists are now placed in the Police Services, the Department of Community Services or New South Wales Health in the 17 regions of the state. There is little evidence of incorporation of non-majority understandings of violence issues except in the Women's Information Service—a referral unit provided by the Department for Women. (A similar unit is present in most states.)

Western Australia

In Western Australia, in 1997, there was a coalition Liberal/National Party government. There were no feminist women in cabinet, but there was femocrat machinery from previous Labor regimes that had a woman premier. Western Australia is one of Australia's "new frontier" states with pastoral agribusiness and mining the strongest sectors of the economy. Over a third of Western Australia's residents are immigrants, many from Asia but also White immigrants from South Africa and Britain. In March 1998, the legislature effectively decriminalized abortion in response to an intense political crisis in which two Asian doctors were prosecuted for performing abortions. The right-of-centre Court Government, elected in 1993, adopted a "women are customers too" approach. It restructured the advisory committee that had been geographically representative. The restructured council now includes some race-minority women and now has "corresponding members" outside of metropolitan Perth, but remains largely Perth-dominated.

Because of the Commonwealth/State Anti-Violence Initiative, Western Australia also had its special Violence Against Women Project, which the Court Government did not weaken, although the ideological "spin" has changed. The Government passed new legislation, for example, to introduce stiffer penalties (A$6,000/18 months in jail) for men breaching a restraining order. Other legislative changes proceeded slowly showing that this area is not a high priority. Attached to the Women's Policy Development Office is the Special Domestic Violence Task Force. Five of the Unit's 23 staff were committed to this project. Western Australia funded 16 regional refuges out of the Family and Child Service Department. In addition, state–Commonwealth funding supported over a dozen anti-violence services in and around Perth, for a total Western Australia female population in 1996 of 861,600. Seven of these supported non-English speaking (14.4 percent of the female population) and "Indigenous" women (2.8 percent). Elected women constituted an average of about 20 percent on political bodies including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) regional councils.

Western Australia also has a domestic violence council, but unlike New South Wales, it is a peak body, structured to represent the views of organizations and workers in the field to government, not a council including government experts and policy overseers. The Domestic Violence Unit co-ordinates policy and oversees policy delivery in the area. The Women's Advisory Committee, which gains infrastructural support from the policy unit, has briefly appointed women to advise government on women's issues but has no explicit representational base. The Council contains several race-minority women but senior femocrats were all Anglo-Celtic. The Western Australia programs showed some openness to minority women's perspectives but within an interpretive framework of "feminist orientalism"; that is, race-minority and especially Indigenous women (the term used in Western Australia) are viewed as victims needing special assistance, not as agents who can assert their own, sometimes different, interpretations and claims. Moreover, Indigenous women activists relate mainly to the government machinery designed for them, much of it controlled by funding from the commonwealth level. In Western Australia, as in the Northern Territory, this results in little contact between White femocrats and Indigenous women and little sense of responsibility for understanding or accommodating their needs.

South Australia

This state provides the most extensive evidence of efforts to work with Aboriginal women on domestic violence. South Australia was the only non-convict colony and gave women the vote first. Some feminists view the state as a seedbed of innovative projects. It has a Liberal government, recently weakened in an election to a minority government. The premier introduced changes in the organization of the anti-violence services as part of his run-up to the 1997 election. There was no strong woman minister, in 1997, but there was an effective femocrat machinery inherited from a previous Labor government, and effective women members who had been in cabinet on the opposition benches (interviews conducted by Vickers and Rankin, Adelaide, 1997). The large Labor opposition after the 1997 election contained an unprecedented number of women members.

The Liberal Government introduced an advisory committee to deal with anti-violence measures that included both race/ethnic minority women and an Aboriginal woman. The

advisory committee was viewed with suspicion by South Australia femocrats mainly because they saw potential for manipulation and patronage since its members served short terms with high turnover rates. In this advisory committee, “diversity” was promoted through the appointment of one non-English speaking woman (of Greek and business origin) as a senior femocrat. South Australia’s programs included the Domestic Violence Council struck in 1985. A 1987 review, produced by the Council, was done in close co-operation with a number of task forces, including an Aboriginal issues task force. This expert Council adopted a wider conception of diversity, based on a report written by a well-known academic of Black-on-Black violence in the Northern Territory.

The 1997 Review of Services for Women and Children Escaping Domestic Violence resulted in a re-organization of the services funded jointly by the state and Commonwealth under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program. The implementation report, *It’s My Choice*, recommended service provision which recognizes the different needs of women who have previously been marginalized whether by the structure of the service or by assumptions in the conceptual framework within which policy was developed. For example, the Implementation Committee recommended that “women experiencing domestic violence from lesbian relationships have access to domestic violence services” and that staff receive “appropriate training to ensure better support for women experiencing violence from other women.” In its discussion of “culturally responsive services,” the report argued the “communal living arrangement” common to the shelters leaves non-majority women open to “the potential for racism” and that “cultural differences in relation to food preferences, child-rearing practices and customs can lead to...conflict.” The Report also notes: “Feedback indicated Aboriginal women find communal living with Anglo women intimidating, especially when there is an excessive focus on...cleanliness, expensive furnishings, curfews, rules and routines for children.” The implementation report recommended the development of secure cluster housing as an alternative, increases in Aboriginal-specific services and a restructuring of the metropolitan (Adelaide) services (those serving mainly White, majority women) to achieve this noting that 22 percent of all services involve Aboriginal women and 20.3 percent involve migrant women. The rationale for this re-organization was that these are publicly funded services, which have an obligation to provide “culturally inclusive” and “culturally appropriate” services.

The fact that a network of femocrats, in various departments, was able to produce such a report with a largely disinterested government reflects the strength of the Australian model. Although the premier had introduced changes in shelter systems on grounds of improving services to rural citizens during the run-up to the election, the analysis of diversity was not part of this reform. There was resistance on the part of some majority, White feminists who saw the dilution of metro services as unacceptable; however, a new openness to a more inclusive, diversity-sensitive analysis of anti-violence strategies did emerge.

7. WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THESE CASE STUDIES?

The examples in this report illustrate that there is no single approach to ending violence against women. Neither is there one method of interaction with the state than can be used cross-nationally. Instead, women's groups must develop the skills necessary to evaluate the opportunities and constraints available in their own jurisdictions and consider how best to access state feminist machinery as part of their equality-seeking agendas. As this research indicates, the strategies selected must be appropriate for the institutional and political context in which women mobilize. Women's groups may conclude, for example, that the key is to get as many of "their own" as they can into senior political and bureaucratic positions, although there are well-established problems of representation with this strategy. Women's groups may determine that the key is having your position heard in the implementation of policy and so seek a presence in the bureaucracy where policies are converted into programs and regulations. Another approach is to ensure women's positions are considered in the shaping of policy, which may mean a longer-term strategy aimed at changing how the policy disciplines view the world. Some of the possible models for implementing these strategies are seeking access through:

- political parties and electoral politics;
- women's movements and pressure politics;
- a femocrat approach based on influential special machinery that is responsive to women's movements;
- the courts interpreting and litigating vis-à-vis the constitution; and
- education and transformation of the intellectual framework.

As this report has documented, the 1990s were marked by increased pressure from the international community for states to assume responsibilities to act on behalf of their women citizens. Restructuring of status-of-women machinery characterized states cross-nationally. In Canada, this resulted in the contraction of the "women's state" at the federal level, but in some sub-national contexts, for example British Columbia and Quebec, state feminism expanded. Even in states in Australia with right-of-centre governments, advisory councils were retained and specialized ones created in this period, as in New South Wales around the issue of violence. In Canada, the long-established role of NAC as "a parliament of women" was increasingly marginalized.[15] As NAC integrated diversity and difference into its representational practices, it became marginalized by women in the political class, women bureaucrats and the media, all of which contributed to its alienation from the policy process.

Across many states, relationships between movements and governments were transformed as input from women citizens into the public policy process was now channelled through a gender-based analysis, expert-based approach. With virtually no trained gender-based analysis specialists, and very limited, available university training in this area, small, often under-funded, state feminist agencies are not well designed structurally to assume the role of

a policy unit. This posed a challenge for state feminism, as originally conceived, in acting as a conveyor of policy needs/analyses from outside.

As the backdrop to these developments, the globalizing forces transforming economic, political and social relations presented women with new issues around which to organize and new potential allies with whom to work. Many Canadian women, for example, mobilized in the 1980s to resist free trade fearing negative effects on Canadian sovereignty, women's employment and especially a weakening of social services. Although unsuccessful in the sense that Canada entered into a regional trade group that is now expanding, the issue has not gone away. Today, women face the question of what action can be undertaken when domestic governments do not have the (final) authority to decide policy in areas of concern to women. This has caused many women to explore the possibilities for cross-border alliances with, in the Canadian case, American and Mexican women to explore the potential in these regimes for policy gains for women.

Canadian women cannot assume, however, that women in other countries will share perspectives on any or all policy issues. Women who were marginalized when women's politics focussed mainly within Canada's borders, may now be invaluable guides to understanding the positions of women from outside Canada with whom Canadian women wish to work. Women's groups in Canada, therefore, now need to assess when cross-border mobilizations can be mounted and what structures will be needed to facilitate such co-operation. At home, this also necessitates rethinking how to bring women in Canada, who have experience of other countries, into a more central position in groups and movements to build understanding of women's politics in other countries. Given current global realities, accessing information about feminist activism, in contexts similar to Canada's, appears even more useful as women's groups plot strategies to interact with a restructured state.

In Australia, the nature of the federal system (a congruent organization, i.e., no significant ethnic or racial differences among the states) has made possible a tradition of Commonwealth–state co-operation in providing services for women that makes the question of the level of government with which women should engage mostly irrelevant. The strength of majoritarianism in the ideological environment, especially under Labor governments, makes it difficult for minority women's claims to be asserted in formulating policy, or even in administering it. The success of the South Australian anti-violence program and the entrenchment of women's concerns in the political cultures of individual states is important in aiding Canadian women, especially minority women, to assess the political opportunity structures in their jurisdictions in the face of government responses to globalization.

As argued in this report, research in Canada suggests that where women's organizations perceive significant opportunities for them to participate in public decision making, the organizations tend to be the least open to involvement by marginalized women. Majoritarianism in movement approaches to public policy is most evident in Quebec where a vigorous movement enjoys significant access to effective policy machinery and strong femocrat structures. Ironically, women's movements have been most open to, and successful

in, integrating minority women's concerns in jurisdictions such as Alberta and Ontario, where they have the least access to public decision making (Rankin 1996). As in Australia, government ideology affects women's opportunities, especially for race-minority women and lesbians. For example, opportunities for access declined in both Ontario and Manitoba when Conservative parties defeated NDP governments. And, while NDP governments have provided access to majority women, as Labor governments have in New South Wales, they always have to provide a good environment for minority women to make claims that may challenge what the majority of women seek.

Where women's machinery has been weakened (or seems weakened) in Canada, women's organizations tend to lose confidence in state feminism as a model of interaction. This is in contrast to the Australian context where there are more aspects of state feminism. State-provided women's services are co-operative efforts between state and Commonwealth governments, and a strong cadre of femocrats operate co-operatively across the country. It must be acknowledged, however, that the lengthy tenure of the Liberal National Coalition Government under Prime Minister John Howard has weakened the Commonwealth structures and programs of state feminism. In Canada, disillusionment with state feminism has led some groups to choose either a more confrontational model of interaction in alliance with other counter-hegemonic groups or pursuit of their goals through the courts. Since the confidence of women in political parties is significantly lower than in Australia (although Canadian women's success rate in gaining elected office is about the same, indeed, better for minority women), majority women are not turning to political parties as a way of achieving their public policy goals. The first-past-the-post electoral system and an unelected Senate limit opportunities within political parties, and women report being "turned off" by partisan politics.

We have also noted the growing importance of action on the international stage. Although in response to globalizing forces, women seek to influence their government indirectly through activism in international arenas, this may only be effective when the "national" government has the power to impose the terms of international treaties on lower levels of government, as in Australia, or in unitary states. Before women's groups initiate this type of action, however, the opportunities available to increase their leverage with domestic governments through this level of activism at the international level must be carefully weighed.

Marian Sawer (1996: 9) notes that historically, Australian feminists have put considerable effort into international work. "Work towards strengthening international instruments has been seen as an important lever for gains at home and the other side of work to strengthen the organizational capacity of the women's movement." In contrast, although British-Canadian women were somewhat involved in international activism before the 1960s, this was not a deliberate strategy between 1960 and 1990 (probably because this was a period of extraordinarily high immigration, and feminist movements grappled with difference issues, French–English interaction and defences against U.S. incursions). In Canada more recently, feminists have refocussed on the international arena, particularly following the UN 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China. As noted, the Canadian government's pledge of support for the recommendations contained within the Platform for

Action has given women a new document around which to design approaches to press states to comply with their international commitments to women's equality.

In particular, feminists have used CEDAW (*Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979. Only the United States, among industrialized countries, has not ratified it. In theory, these countries are obligated to pursue policies in accordance with the Convention and to report their compliance to the United Nations. The convention addresses many issues of sex discrimination and promotes both gender-based analysis and national machinery in its processes. But it failed to address explicitly the issue of violence against women. Aware of this gap, the CEDAW Committee produced general recommendation 19 in 1992, in which it elaborated on the meaning of discrimination to include violence against women. This led to an amendment of its reporting guidelines instructing states to include, in their periodic reports to the committee, information about statistics, legislation and support services in this area (Bunch and Carillo 1998: 243).

Transforming human rights concepts from a feminist perspective to take a greater account of women's lives has been the project of international feminist networks since the late 1980s when the Gabriela women's coalition in the Philippines launched its Women's Rights Are Human Rights campaign. In the Decade for Women conferences (Mexico City, 1975; Copenhagen, 1980; and Nairobi, 1985) advocates raised the issue of gender-based violence demanding attention to the constraints it places on women's full participation in society. At the fourth conference (Beijing, 1995), violence against women in the family, in public and in armed conflict, was recognized as a major obstacle to women's enjoyment of their human rights.

This progress reflected an organized effort by women's networks internationally to transform human rights discourse. When it became apparent that the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights was likely to proceed with no mention of women's rights and violence, these networks and the UN femocrats (e.g., UNIFEM) acted. The result was the United Nations *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*, adopted in 1993 by the General Assembly. As Bunch and Carillo (1998: 237) note, this document was a landmark in three ways.

- It situated violence against women squarely within the discourse on human rights. The Declaration affirmed that women are entitled to equal enjoyment and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including liberty and security of person, and freedom from torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

- It enlarged the concept of violence against women to reflect the real conditions of women's lives. The declaration recognized not only physical, sexual and psychological violence, but also *threats* of such harm; it addressed violence against women within the family as well as within the general community, and confronted the issue of violence perpetrated by the state.

- It pointed to the gender-based roots of violence. The declaration reflected the fact that gender-based violence is not random violence in which the victims happen to be women: the risk factor is being female.

In 1994, the UN Commission on Human Rights appointed a rapporteur on violence against women with the mandate of reporting to the UN on issues of violence and making recommendations for action to the UN and to governments.

The human development report, published annually by the UN Development Program since 1990, is another avenue for looking at violence against women. Canada's high rating is reduced when women's lives are considered (from number one to number seven). This is less of an avenue because Canada's rankings are high. But the federal government's sloughing off of its responsibility regarding violence against women is a possible lever for feminist movements. The UN documents squarely assign, to states, accountability/ responsibility for actively seeking to eradicate violence against women. Canadian women's movements need to re-evaluate how best to maximize usage of these documents to address violence issues experienced by the most vulnerable women.

It is our view that the political opportunity assessments of majority and minority women may well be different in some jurisdictions, especially where representational structures associated with state feminism are weak. Majority and minority women may respond differently to the effects of globalization on the political opportunity structures they face. As we have argued, historically, the organized women's movements in Canada have been funded by governments and have sought services from governments. The English-speaking movement has been wary of partisan involvement and of a full-blown femocrat strategy. In Quebec, in contrast, feminists have made clear choices about strategy as did women in Australia. Feminist groups must rethink their relationship with the state because governments for a decade have been rethinking their relationships with the women's movement. Perhaps, it is now time to reconsider strategies previously discarded.

Don't Wait to Be Asked!

To date, the relationship between feminist activists and the state at all levels, has tended to function such that states decide when to request the participation of women activists in the policy process and women activists wait to be called. Women's groups may need to disrupt that pattern and begin to take more initiative in building relationships with public servants willing to play the femocrat role on specific issues. That is, women's organizations must accept more responsibility for building policy networks—networks of potential femocrats in various departments whose jobs give them an interest in the specific policy or program. In particular, women's groups can help potential femocrats educate themselves, especially about diversity and minority women's views and needs by providing them with information, including them in e-mail and list-servers, and inviting them to group meetings and conferences. Undoubtedly, this is a difficult task. Our focus groups revealed a significant amount of frustration in relation to government structures, most pointedly around the matter of funding. As one Montréal anti-violence activist explained:

> *We all spend a lot of time filling out grant applications…I don't have anyone that can handle a new application and spend hours figuring out what they [the government] want that specific year. This problem is true with all levels of government, and it is the biggest obstacle for all community organizations.… While we are filling out those applications, we are not offering services, and this is the biggest waste of resources. All governments fail to see that.*

Femocrats need to respond more sensitively to the pressures under which activists toil in the current economic and political climate. Nevertheless, women activists must assume more responsibility for building and sustaining relationships with femocrats. Conversely, it is also important that they better understand the structural constraints under which femocrats labour. Femocrat Lynn Sproule (1998) has argued that women activists and femocrats must stop focussing exclusively on the negative aspects of state feminist relationships. Too often, women activists have used consultations, for example, to express their extreme frustrations with their shrinking access to government generally. Too often, femocrats have expressed their frustrations with women activists who inadequately understand the way government works by excluding them from opportunities to gain more knowledge about policy making and how it can be accessed. Sproule's observations about consultations in the Department of Justice are revealing. She stresses the marginalized existence of femocrats and their "silencing" when they seek to raise questions about the implications of policies for women's equality. She notes that many grass-roots women activists perceive them only as comfortable, middle-class and mostly White women who are part of the problem rather than part of the solution. Femocrats, then, are seen as far too radical by their public service colleagues but shunned as potential allies by women activists, who often believe they have the power to achieve change but don't use it.

> [T]he fall 1997 consultation was particularly disappointing in that members of the coalition on violence against women seemed to totally dismiss the work and expertise of femocrats in positions to facilitate the development of policies and laws advocated by the coalition. If the coalition was seeking to undermine the credibility of Justice femocrats with their Justice colleagues—and the minister herself—their strategy was excellent (Sproule 1998: 9).

Sproule stresses the importance of feminists in pursuit of women's equality on both sides of "the great state divide" listening to one another and learning from one another. This means that both activists and femocrats must take responsibility for building and sustaining effective linkages on an ongoing basis. Moreover, each must accept responsibility for educating the other. Activists must inform and educate femocrats regularly and communicate "the authority of experience" which femocrats need to make their case internally. Conversely, femocrats must communicate regularly with their network of activists, advising on how government works, especially as constant restructuring makes it increasingly difficult to know even which department or level of government is responsible for specific policies or programs.

Beating the "Federalism Fox Trot"

As noted above, Canada's complex marble cake federalism makes it especially difficult for activists to determine which level of government is responsible for policies and programs. The anti-violence area is a very good example of the problem. Women's campaigns to achieve security from violence as a basic right of citizenship involve aspects that are the responsibility of all levels of government from the local to the international. Here is an instance in which femocrats must take responsibility for developing ongoing structures to help activists and women's groups channel their energies rather than having to fathom the arcane complexities of a constantly changing and often dysfunctional system.

As yet, there is in Canada limited co-ordination among governments, and minimal co-ordination among femocrats working at the various levels on anti-violence strategies. Moreover, women activists are too often told "not our responsibility" and expected to figure out a division of power so complex that even political scientists find determining lines of responsibility difficult. Our experiences with the Australian model impressed us with the structures femocrats at both the state (provincial) and Commonwealth (federal) levels had developed to co-ordinate their own work and to enhance co-operation with women's groups. The annual meetings that include ministers responsible for anti-violence initiatives provide a regular forum for planning collaborative actions in a chosen subject area. This co-ordinated campaign on violence is a very good example. Instead of women citizens being expected to figure out who is responsible for what aspects of the anti-violence agenda, femocrats and politicians work within regular structures to tackle the problem.

Such a systematic structure of co-operation also results in a more focussed approach by women's groups. Instead of the demand overload that has characterized the relationships between women's groups and femocrats so often in Canada, systematic priorities are established in Australia. This is facilitated, moreover, by the existence of advisory councils composed of the presidents of the major women's organizations both at the Commonwealth level and in most states and territories. Unlike the defunct Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, these councils are composed of women who are presidents of their organizations rather than patronage appointments. The councils convey the concerns of the groups represented to femocrats and the ministers in particular policy areas. But there are other important structural models to note. For example, in New South Wales, cross-department committees focussing on protecting women from violence exist and incorporate as members both front-line service providers and presidents or executive directors of advocacy organizations in the field; that is, femocrats, police, service workers and advocates work together as allies, serve on committees designed to co-ordinate programs and devise policies. This co-operative approach to working strategically in a limited number of key areas has also been the pattern increasingly in Quebec. For example, the highly visible World March 2000 focussed on only two areas—violence and poverty, although a range of demands was conveyed to governments through this historic project.

Working Across Borders

In this text, we have argued that globalization is making "borders" of all kinds more and more permeable. Information technology makes it as easy for groups to work across

provincial and national borders as to work with groups in the same city. The emergence of multi-level governance and the blurring of responsibilities between jurisdictions all create new opportunities as well as greater complexity. Our focus groups and interviews revealed two different reactions to these changes. The first was an increased focus on local struggles. The second was distraction from local struggles and an increased focus on international causes. Neither has produced very good results in terms of developing co-ordinated approaches to women's security from violence where they live.

The changes involved in globalization can have the effect of pulling women out of their preoccupation with local struggles by opening their eyes to what is working and not working elsewhere. New information technology provides new approaches to organizing. The success of the Policy Action Research List (PAR-L) as an on-line resource for activists and femocrats alike illustrates how new horizons and concrete information can be shared across borders. Femocrats may also have an important role to play in this, however, especially since cross-border alliances will be crucial in developing Canadian women's capacity to promote equality within the large regional blocks being created by globalization and free trade. Each women's group active in a specific area, such as the campaign for security from violence, should be able to gain electronic access to information that identifies access points and opportunities for advocacy and alliance building, as well as providing basic information about how governments work and share responsibilities.

Rankin's (1996) comparative study of feminist organizing at the provincial and territorial levels has demonstrated that our most serious impediment to effective feminist mobilization on a pan-Canadian basis is limited communication among feminists and femocrats across internal borders. Our focus groups, which often turned into information sharing among groups working within anti-violence movements in a single city, confirmed the chronic communication gaps that exist within feminist circles. This fragmentation can and must be changed. Of course, this commitment to new technologies requires a resource and training commitment. Several activists pointed to the critical role of new technologies in future feminist mobilizing, but noted:

> *[These] are new ways of communication for which we have not been trained and for which we do not have the equipment.*

We believe femocrats need to work co-operatively with women's groups to pursue opportunities to equip women's movements with the technologies and skills necessary to bring organizing into the 21st century.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Our vision for state feminism in Canada is of a system in which co-operation, co-ordination and regular exchanges of information on strategies, alliances, what works and what does not, occur regularly using new technology. To realize this vision, however, also requires the rebuilding of trust among increasingly fragmented women's movements. Rebuilding trust between femocrats and activists is crucial; but so too is rebuilding trust between majority and minority women on a new basis of mutual respect and equality. We believe that some new structures and practices are needed for this rebuilding to occur. As one activist argued:

> *The institutional changes important to us are at the level of consultation. What is difficult about this is that there are several actors who all have differing interests…. However, the government needs to be increasingly aware of the way citizens empower themselves to have a voice and ask for change. They need to listen to us…. This is a recognition that we are a democratic society and the work that we are doing contributes to upholding democratic principles.*

In keeping with these comments and based on our analysis of the changing nature of feminist activism and women's relationship to the state in a globalizing and decentralizing era, we recommend the following.

A new permanent consultative body should be established. Given the restructuring of state feminist institutions, we call for the creation of a new council that could include the presidents of 50 women's organizations, 10 of which would change each year. A steering committee would be selected from among the council members. The council would serve as a body to convey the positions of their organizations and members to government in areas of mutual concern. The council would meet annually with femocrats and ministers. The steering committee could be convened more frequently. It is crucial that such a council not be subject to patronage appointments as was the CACSW. Its function should be to represent to government the views of women's organizations in areas of pressing policy concerns. *It will be especially important that minority and marginalized women's groups are well represented in such a forum.* The model of Quebec's Conseil du statut de la femme should be explored for insights in how to achieve ongoing legitimacy. The Australian councils can also provide insights.

Formal policy networks need to be established working primarily through information technology in areas such as the anti-violence portfolio. These networks should include activists, women's groups, service providers, academics, femocrats and interested politicians. As a minimum, such on-line policy networks can keep the major actors in policy and program development informed of one another's thinking. Ideally, the sort of synergy and creativity we see emerging in the area of women's health policy will develop.

An annual conference should be developed at which women from different contexts and localities can meet, exchange ideas and experiences and come to understand one another better. These should not take the form of a lobby. Rather, women activists, front-line workers, politicians and femocrats should meet as women with different roles to play and learn about one another's situation and constraints. The core of such a conference could well be an annual meeting of federal and provincial ministers and femocrats *in conjunction with* a meeting of their movement counterparts. It would be especially useful if such a conference could move to different parts of the country so participants can learn about the diversity of women's lives and experiences as activists. This sort of initiative should be supported by a full range of communication technologies, including Web sites, a list-server and teleconferencing.

Given the opportunities and constraints at play between women's movements and the state, these suggestions represent a tentative step toward retooling state feminism for the new millennium. In an era marked by the pressures of globalization and decentralization, we argue these and other similar initiatives are vital to reposition women's groups in relation to their governments and ensure that gender and diversity are integrated substantively into public policy. The new realities challenging feminist activists also require researching models used elsewhere to probe how best to restructure our relationships with the state. We believe that "bothering with government" can still provide women with opportunities to achieve feminist goals. Indeed, our collective ability to rethink interactions with governments in creative and innovative ways may well be the critical test for the achievement of equality and justice for all women.

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ENDNOTES

[1] All quotes appearing in this document attributed to activists are taken from confidential focus groups conducted with anti-violence organizations in Toronto and Montréal. The Australian component of this research was conducted in 1997 and included interviews with feminist bureaucrats and anti-violence activists in Sydney, Perth and Adelaide.

[2] For a more detailed discussion of the arenas in which women are politically engaged, see Rankin and Vickers (1998).

[3] For a discussion of the origins of the term "femocrat," consult Sawer (1990).

[4] While White women received the federal franchise by 1918, for example, Asian women, women with a disability and Aboriginal women were excluded with some waiting 70 years for full political rights as citizens.

[5] The early history of women's policy machinery is documented in Linda Geller-Schwartz, "An Array of Agencies" in Stetson and Mazur (1995).

[6] For a more complete treatment of the CACSW, consult Burt (1998).

[7] These regional offices are located in Bas-Saint-Laurent, Gaspésie, Îles-de-la-Madeleine; Saguenay, Lac-St-Jean; Québec, Chaudière, Apalaches; Mauricie, Centre du Québec; Lanaudière, Laurentides; Abitibi-Témiscamingue; Estrie; Montréal; Laval; Montérégie; Outaouais and Côte-Nord.

[8] The Conseil's budget in 1990-91 was $3,898,468 compared to $3,947,069 in 1997-98. The Conseil's budget peaked in 1992-93 at $4,231,500 (CSF annual reports).

[9] We need to remain aware that other states face quite different challenges, especially impoverished states and those emerging from authoritarianism.

[10] Feminist analyses, to date, have held that the further away from home, the harder it is for women to participate. This is now being challenged, especially as women seem to be gaining from the transnational aspects of the European Union system. Similarly, debates about positive/negative aspects of federalism are ongoing. Some women reported that the impact of downloading makes activism more difficult because of multiple decision-making centres, while others argued the advantages of more points of access.

[11] See, for example, B.C. Ministry of Women's Equality (1997).

[12] Conseil documents consistently refer to "victims" of violence rather than "survivors" of violence, which is used more commonly in English Canada. In *Pour que cesses l'inacceptable: avis sur la violence faite aux femmes* (1993), the Conseil acknowledges this distinction, explaining that the term "survivor" does not clearly correspond to the experience of most

women. We use the terminology employed in Quebec in our discussion of violence against women policies in Quebec.

[13] Here Masson's (1998) work on the impact of state funding may offer an important corrective to traditional thinking on this subject.

[14] See, for example, Fédération de ressources d'hébergement (1994).

[15] For an analysis of NAC's role from its founding until the late 1980s, consult Vickers et al. (1993).

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