REPRESENTING WOMEN:

THE IMPACT OF WOMEN CABINET MINISTERS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA AND ONTARIO AND THE RISE OF FISCAL FEMINISM

by

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ABSTRACT

Advisor: Professor Joyce Gelb

As the proportion of women in legislatures slowly rises around the world, this thesis asks: what difference does it make when women are elected? Are women simply descriptive (numerical) representatives of their gender, or are they substantive representatives who bring to their roles a responsibility for advancing the status of women? To help answer this question, this thesis looks to two Canadian provinces, British Columbia and Ontario. This study considers the impact both of critical mass of women and political party on three specific policy areas (domestic violence, social welfare reform and education) during the time period 1996-2003. This study employs interviews with former cabinet ministers as well as extensive policy analysis through process tracing. The results demonstrate that women are indeed substantive representatives, but that there is a more subtle definition of substantive representation. The study indicates that critical mass alone is not a determinant of women's policy activism, but that political party remains an important influence. This study also finds that in light of the recent retrenchment of the welfare state, women politicians of all parties and women's movements generally have re-framed feminist issues and public policy. The thesis characterizes this re-framing as a new approach entirely, which it identifies as "fiscal feminism".

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The candidacy of Hilary Clinton for the leadership of the Democratic party in the United States has become a touchstone for a public discussion about the importance of women's symbolic representation. Women in political office are no longer rare commodities, but almost 100 years after women became voters, their impact remains unclear. As the proportion of women slowly rises in legislatures around the world, there is considerable academic focus on how women represent. What difference does it make when women are elected? Are women simply descriptive (numerical or symbolic) representatives of their gender or are they substantive representatives who bring a responsibility for advancing the status of women to their roles?

To help answer this question, this thesis looks to two Canadian provinces, British Columbia and Ontario – both with women in the cabinet[1] – to help determine whether women are substantive representatives. In order to do so, this study considers the impact of political party and critical mass of women on three specific policies (domestic violence, social welfare reform and education) during the time period of 1996-2003. These three policy areas were chosen due to their high-profile during that time. Gender differences are more obvious on women's issues (Lovenduski and Norris, 2003 and 1993; Reingold, 1992) which is why domestic violence and social welfare were chosen. Education was added to profile an issue that is not traditionally considered a women's issue – even though it is considered a "women's ministry" (Studlar and Moncrief, 1999).

The correlation between critical mass and public policy is explored here by comparing policy in provinces where there was a critical mass of women, and in those where there was none. (British Columbia had 46 percent women in the cabinet and therefore, critical mass and Ontario had just 20 percent.) *Critical mass* (Dahlerup, 1988) refers to the idea that once a certain proportion of women are in a group (30-60 percent), changes in political discourse, social climate, and policy are expected. The effect of *political party* (organizations subscribing to a certain ideology, that recruit candidates and mobilize voters, Van Loon, Whittington, 1996) is demonstrated by focusing on regimes of two different political parties (one left wing, the New Democratic Party, and one right wing, the Progressive Conservatives). *Public policy* is the ultimate result (regulation, legislation, or decisions made by government). It is what governments chose to do or not to do (Dye, 1984).

The purpose of this study is to test four key hypotheses:

1. Women representatives, regardless of political orientation, are substantive representatives.
2. The greater the number of women in key-decision making roles (Cabinet), the more responsive the government will be to women's issues.
3. The more left wing the party in power, the more likely it is to implement women-centered or women-sensitive policies.
4. Other factors, such as broad national economic policy (Leslie, 1987) or economic change (Collier, 1997) can significantly shift the policy agenda away from women's issues.

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[1] In Canada, by constitutional convention, cabinet is a body of advisors, which, in practice carries out the executive government. (Forsey, 2005)

The results of this thesis will contribute to our understanding of Canadian women in cabinet, women in politics, the policy process, women's impact on public policy and ultimately, have implications for representation theory. It will contribute to the literature on representation, the study of women in politics and the understanding of the public policy process.

> One of the next steps for those interested in the impact of women public officials should be to analyze their contribution to and impact on policy issues.
> Thomas, Sue. 2003

In the context of Canadian provinces there is much to be learned about the meaning of representation, particularly from the perspective of representatives themselves juxtaposed against their public policy accomplishments. What does substantive representation look like? With the divergent interests of over half the population at issue, is descriptive representation the best possible contribution elected women can make?

One of the challenges related to determining whether or not women are substantive representatives is defining the meaning of women's issues. As Phillips (1991) points out, women can not claim a universal or shared common interest, for example, in issues as wide apart as either abortion or disarmament – they are too diverse a group to have a single articulated approach. Burt (1995) defines women's issues as those articulated by Canadian women's groups: equal rights (improving the economic status of women, the status of women in the armed forces and in unionized jobs, promoting the equality of women in law, affordable child care), research (improving women's education and training), and autonomy (improving access to abortion, ending violence against women). This definition is fairly specific and highlights federal as well

as provincial responsibilities, so, for the purposes of this thesis, I turn to a broader articulation as defined by Swers: women's issues are, "issues salient to women as they seek to achieve equality…they address women's special needs such as health or child care or confront issues with which women have traditionally been concerned like education and the protection of children," (Swers, 2002 10). These issues will help demonstrate substantive representation as Arnold (1990 14) states: women command more authority on these issues, so it is more likely that their male colleagues will turn to them for leadership.

However, Dodson notes, logically that the more women that are elected the more ideologically diverse elected women become (Dodson, 2006), which leads to the idea of critical mass. A discussion of critical mass is important. Since the United Nations declaration (U.N. Social and Economic Council, 2004) there has been renewed focus by activist women on attaining critical mass. But the research trend goes the other way. Bratton, 2005, Grey, 2006, as well as Childs and Krook, 2006 and others seriously question the relevance of critical mass as a means to ensure that women's issues are represented in legislatures.

Political party, particularly in a Westminster system, can have an enormous impact on public policy. One advantage of the system for women is that if a party includes a women-positive platform, representatives are bound to support it (Arscott and Trimble, 1997; Sawer, Tremblay and Trimble, 2006). Finally, I look for other explanations beyond party and critical mass that shape policy outcomes for women. By this I refer to what Leslie (1987) calls "national policy" which is broader than an individual policy approach – it refers to a major trend in policy orientation. It is an

attribute of what some call the "external environment" (Van Loon and Whittington, 1996 10). Government is located in the external environment which includes society, culture and the economy (Van Loon and Whittington, 1996). Dodson also notes that the external political environment "mediates the relationship between descriptive and substantive representation" (Dodson, 2006 41). Swers too, suggests that the external political climate can; "facilitate or constrain members' ability to pursue policy change based on gender" (Swers, 2002 10). In Canada, at the time, (as will be discussed further) the broad national policy focused on fiscal constraint—it dominated the political landscape.

The following chapter will outline my methodology, the contribution to the literature, and finally, provide a brief overview of the remainder of the thesis.

Methodology

The study incorporated a two-pronged methodology: policy analysis/policy tracing and interviews. The first involved an analysis of the policy process and legislation that was initiated and passed during the chosen time period. In the three policy areas, I looked at problem definition, agenda setting, formal government action, legislation or regulation and the actors involved (women's movement, the media, the opposition parties, the government agencies). I also examined the legislative record and legislative publications including: Hansard (the official, complete report of proceedings in a parliament or legislature, published daily), Provincial Legislative Record, Annual State of the Federation, Provincial Pulse, Canadian Parliamentary Review, Canadian Legislatures), as well as media reports.

The three policies analyzed here (domestic violence, social welfare and education) were, as Downs would put it, in the "issue attention cycle" (Downs 1973). The expansion of services for victims of domestic violence was a key issue during the late 1990s – and a prominent focus for several women's groups. All parties across the spectrum and across provinces agreed that the social welfare system needed reform and so it was a significant component of the legislative agenda. Social welfare reform – in some cases meaning work for welfare – was a cornerstone of several election platforms. Education, particularly issues of private and religious education funding as well as the granting of degrees by colleges, was high on the political agendas of both governments.

To answer questions about the policy process, I also examined the committee records (the public input stage in the legislative process). Committee records are public and stored in the Legislative Library. (Cabinet minutes are secret.)

The second major prong of the research involved detailed interviews with the women cabinet ministers. Cabinet ministers are chosen by the Premier from among his/her party's elected representatives to act as executive council and to supervise ministries (departments). I asked the ministers specifics about their background, their policy interests, aims and accomplishments in office. I also explored their perceptions of themselves as legislators – whether they think that men and women legislate differently. (See interview questions in Appendix I.) Six former ministers were interviewed at length as well as former staff members and several public servants. (See list of interviews in Appendix II.)

Interview questions were designed to produce comparable answers – an issue underlined by Foddy (1993). They were also constructed to define the terms of

discussion clearly, so that both parties were clear on the subject matter (Foddy, 1993). Questions moved, as recommended by Mason, from one level of detail to another, deeper one (Mason, 2002). Finally the questionnaire was rehearsed with non-cabinet ministers and was given to participants in advance of the actual interview. In accordance with City University of New York Institutional Review Board policy, participants were provided with consent forms and were assured of the confidential nature of their responses.

In order to test the four hypotheses, I focused on the examination of three public policy areas to determine women ministers' roles in eight distinct areas (federal policy, history of the issue, getting to the public agenda, policy action, expenditures, women's movement role, role of other groups, and women cabinet minister's role). The structure of the examination was largely based on the model developed for an eleven-nation study edited by Joni Lovenduski et. al, *State Feminism and Political Representation* (2005). I have adjusted the model in order to better reflect the Canadian state – primarily by including federal policy and other group involvement.

The first area, federal policy and funding, was included because it can have a significant effect on provincial policy – even if the policy area is outside federal jurisdiction. Many others have written on the subject of federal intervention in provincial policy matters (Tuhoy, 2003; Cameron and Simeon 2002; and Palley, 2006). Most provincial governments get a substantial portion of their revenue from the federal government. Fiscal federalism, which refers to the interlocking web of constitutional power, taxation policy and financial transfers, is a crucial part of the discussion about how the federal government can shape what the provincial governments do (Brown, 2002). For example, in scaling back social welfare funding in the early-mid 1990s, the

federal government had a profound impact on the development of social welfare reform.

The second (history of the issue) and third (how the debate came to the public agenda) sections, help to provide a context for the action taken by the governments at study here. When examining previous government action in a policy file, it helps to determine what impact women really have on a particular policy – and what longer-term forces may be at play. The fourth area of exploration, policy action, outlines the activity of the two governments on the file and the process of policy change. This helps to elucidate when, how and where elected women have an impact. Policy tracing, both historically and currently, helps to expose who is involved in the process over time – external (outside government) and internal actors (elected officials and civil servants) (Banaszak, 2005). The fifth section on spending provides a clear measure of the change that has taken place over a particular mandate. While it is a crude tool – in that it doesn't tell us how the money is spent, it does provide one view of the importance of the issue to a particular government (Collier, 2006). The sixth section, women's movement involvement, outlines – and quotes, where available – the women's movement response to the policy change and activism on the file. It also serves to underline the tension (or lack of) between the movement and the government and the movement and women politicians. The seventh section outlines other group involvement in the policy issue – which can have a significant impact on development. Often these other groups – such as the teacher's unions – are particularly powerful, and run by and for women. (The chapter on domestic violence does not include other groups as there were so few others active.) The chapters on social welfare and education do discuss other involved groups. Finally, the eighth section provides greater detail on cabinet women's involvement in order to

highlight the direct impact of women on policy.

Throughout the examination of policy and during the interviews, I looked also at the role of the Premier. In the Canadian parliamentary system, much depends on the leader – and this case the Premier. Not only does the Premier decide who is in cabinet, he/she can also have a very hands-on approach to policy – a determined leader can influence all ministries (Dyck, 1991). S/He is much more than just one vote at the cabinet table, often he/she can be *the* vote. They are the highest-profile politicians in the province and the focus of electoral and media attention (Dyck, 1991). Their profile extends to the federal government too: since the 1960s, provincial party leaders have eclipsed federal ministers as their province's champions (Carty, Erickson, Blake, 1992). Therefore, I also followed where the leaders influenced policy in various areas – and how they dominated the agenda in some cases.

Finally, throughout the process, I looked for evidence of other factors such as broad national policy (as noted above) that shape all ministers' decision making – regardless of gender. I suggest in this thesis that the result of a right-wing shift in public policy discourse has been the creation of a new agenda for women: fiscal feminism. Fiscal feminism is a term I use to characterize the reaction of women in politics and the women's movement to a new era of fiscal conservatism. Arguably, this new era began in the late 1980s during the Reagan, Thatcher, Mulroney years and continued through more liberal governments (Smith, 2007). Clinton, Blair, and Chrétien, all more liberal leaders, reined in public expenditures significantly. In Canada, and in the provinces studied here,

those broader federal trends had a significant impact on provincial policy. The practical result was that women concerned with the advancement of women's issues needed to re-cast their goals in light of the new political reality – and discourse (Smith, 2007). What I call fiscal feminism is re-shaping of some of the traditional women's movement concerns – such as day care, domestic violence, pay equity – as economic issues. Women's issues can be resolved, as it were, if only women had adequate employment – or the reason these issues need to be resolved is to further the growth of the economy. Day care is only important, for example, in order to ensure that every woman can participate in the economy as fully as possible. The solution to domestic violence is to ensure that women are employed so they are financially able to leave abusive spouses. The broader social and/or feminist values of a particular public policy seem to have left the political public policy lexicon. As the examination of public policy is described in subsequent chapters, I looked for evidence of fiscal feminism.

Contribution to the literature

This study contributes to three streams of scholarship: representation theory, women in politics and the public policy process.

i) Representation theory (substantive or descriptive)

Much of the new work on women in politics explores the distinction between descriptive and substantive representation – and it has a considerable history. John Stuart Mill, for example, radically thought that representatives should be an "exact portrait in miniature of the people at large," (Mill, 1987). Descriptive representation, as a modern

interpretation of Mill would imply, is that representatives to government should reflect relevant social and economic cleavages – the composition of the legislature should correspond to the citizenry at large including class, gender and ethnic distinctions. Representatives need only look like the citizenry, they do not necessarily need to act specifically in the interests of women, Latinos, Asians – whatever group they are members of by nature.

A truly descriptive legislature in Ontario or B.C. would be quite different than either legislature was during the 1990s and early 2000s (Swain, 2001). In Ontario there would have been 52 women members. The reality was 18 women. In British Columbia, a truly descriptive legislature would have 38 women, but reality was 19 women. (I compared here the population breakdown (according to Statistics Canada, Census of 2001) to the gender breakdown of the two legislatures.)

Substantive representation, on the other hand, responds to public needs or demands and those who govern do so in their constituents' interest (Pitkin, 1967). Here, representatives act specifically and intentionally on behalf of citizens who share their gender, race or class.

Advocates for increasing the number of women in public office have used the argument that women will represent women's interests better (Pitkin's substantive representation). However, there are significant problems posed by assuming that women represent the interests of their gender. Phillips asks, when a woman has been chosen to be a candidate by her party and elected by her constituents at large, should she stand up and say she speaks for women's interests opposition to her party's mandate? Elected women's legitimacy derives from election, not nature (Phillips, 1991). Meanwhile, some

newer work argues that descriptive representation is important (Thomas, 1994; Arscott and Trimble, 2003) – that it sends a message about what is possible for women and creates and affirms role models. Dodson argues that the model of categorizing women representatives as either substantive or descriptive fails to encapsulate the subtlety and complexity of how women represent (Dodson, 2006). She argues that it is much more complex: the diversity of women's experiences means that women office-holders actions cannot solely be attributed to gender differences and that their actions cannot be analyzed without taking into account political institutions.

Regardless of whether or not women should represent differently, evidence suggests that in practice they do. Fieldwork on community development organizations finds that women leaders behave differently, lead differently[2] and they bring a more holistic view to social problems (Gittell, Ortega-Bustamante, Steffy, 1999). Women office-holders are more likely than their male counterparts to support bringing citizens into the public policy making process and to be responsive to disempowered groups (Centre for American Women and Politics, 1991).

Overall, feminist theory is divided on the issue of women in politics. The liberal feminist view is that women can reform political institutions while the radical feminist view is the state serves the interests of men, and therefore cannot address women's needs in public policy, because it does not understand women's oppression (Young, 2000). The issue of difference (between men and women) is also one that has been hotly debated in feminist theory over the years. Gilligan (1982) argued that difference between the sexes arises in a social, historical and cultural context but that women define their identities in

[2] Naples (1998) calls this "activist mothering" where mothering is a public act (caring for the community, children – not one's own) cited in Gittell, Ortega-Bustamante, Steffy, 1999.

ways unique to their gender – and therefore they have their own distinct norms for behaviour. Dodson's (2006) recent work makes a significant contribution to the discussion acknowledging the tendency to treat gender difference as a synonym for substantive representation of women.

Some argue that the paradigm of gender and politics is no longer relevant – meaning that thinking of women politicians as different from male is no longer a useful tool of analysis. Current thinking in the social construction mode (Gergen, 2001) argues, for example, that identity politics is waning (one is a member by nature, not by choice). Furthermore, interests and identities are not fixed or frozen (Dobrowolsky, 2000). That said, identity politics have not disappeared (nor does Gergen argue they should) and there are lessons that remain to be learned about the connection between gender and representation.

In Canada, where this study is situated, the Canadian Parliamentary tradition is founded on the Burkean model of representation – namely that legislators are expected to act for the common or community interest rather than identifiable or special interests (Brodie, 1994). Both representative theory, current feminist theory and parliamentary practice suggest that women should not be expected to represent women's interests particularly. This dissertation argues that women do, to some degree, represent women's interests and the evidence is found in public policy content and in how women legislators describe their involvement in decision-making.

ii) Women in Politics

Overall, the academic study of women and politics has found that women in legislatures are different from men – namely that they are more liberal and more feminist

(Johnson and Carroll, 1978; Darcy Welch and Clark, 1994; Randall, 1987; Thomas, 1991; and Welch, 1985). In Canada, early research in the field demonstrated similar results (Brodie and Vickers, 1982; Burt, 1986). Researchers found that the background, values and interests of women legislators were distinct from male legislators**.** In comparison to their male colleagues, they tended to be older (post-child rearing age), less likely to be lawyers (or have post-graduate degrees) and more likely to have come to public service from a background of community service (Carroll, 1984, Bashevkin, 1993). The literature is not monolithic however, several researchers have found little difference based on gender (Mezy, 1978 and Riengold, 2000).

Another stream of the literature has focused on how women behave differently in government than men do (Norris, 1986; Tomas, 1994; Thomas and Wilcox, 1998; in Canada Arscott and Trimble, 2003, among others). This group, by and large, has discovered that women display a greater interest in policy areas such as child care, labour law, health care (particularly breast cancer); that women conceptualize policy more broadly and that women are more liberal. Some in this group have found that women politicians also have an impact on procedure as well – that the nature of debate became less aggressive in their presence (Brock, 1997). Rosenthal (1998) looked at women leaders in U.S. states – namely committee chairs – and found that they were distinct from male chairs in background and behaviour and therefore had developed their own leadership style. Childs (2006) found that women in the British House of Commons described themselves at having a "feminized style" – a more measured, more collaborative approach to politics than their male colleagues. In the Canadian literature, Tremblay (1998) and Trimble (1997) found that women's behaviour in the legislature is

shaped by their background – and by their political affiliation too – but they both argue that women influence policy outcomes in meaningful ways (e.g. increased number of policy initiatives on "women's issues").

Some work has focused on why the entrance of women into the political realm didn't have an immediate impact on policy (Dahlerup, 1988; Kantor, 1974). One of the most compelling and enduring explanations has been "critical mass" – the number of women necessary in a group in order to create change in political discourse, social climate and policy (Dahlerup, 1988). In political science literature, critical mass refers to the idea that once an adequate number of women are elected or assume leadership positions policy will be more responsive to women (Grey, 2001). The critical level required for an impact to occur varies: it is described as 30 percent (Dalerup) and more recently as 60 percent (Gittell and Covington 1994 cited in Gittell, Orega- Bustamant and Steffy, 1999). Women, once achieving critical mass, are expected to have a greater impact on political culture, political agendas and public policy. Bratton (2005) in a recent study of state legislatures finds the opposite: that the lack of a critical mass results in greater activism on women's issues by female legislators.

Some have argued that women can only make a difference if they achieve cabinet or committee leadership posts (Norton, 1995; Davis, 1997). Rosenthal (2002) found that transforming Congress requires both critical mass and senior women in key committee and leadership roles. The focus of this dissertation – on senior women in leadership roles, some of whom have experienced a critical mass of women colleagues – will help demonstrate how leadership and critical mass are crucial to affecting public policy.

Finally, there is also emerging literature that asserts that a critical mass of women may not be the crucial turning point at which women representatives are able to substantially change public policy content (Kathlene 1994; Reingold 2000). In her studies that analyzed the speaking patterns of legislators, Kathlene found that women spoke less, interrupted less and waited until two thirds of the way through hearings before voicing their opinions. She suggests that as the number of women increases, the behavior of men becomes more controlling – the critical mass backlash. Reingold's study finds that gender differences are more of degree, and that the more women there are in legislatures, the greater their diversity, the less likely it is that they will agree on issues. The Reingold study is significant for its conclusions about the meaning of representation: women are descriptive representatives, but are not substantive representatives. Dodson's recent work on women in the United States Congress argues that in order for descriptive representation to become more substantive (for sheer numbers of women to have an impact, in other words) there needs to be external political pressure – namely from consciousness raising among the general population of women (Dodson, 2006).

This study contributes to the discussion in a number of ways. First of all, it demonstrates the validity of the "women legislate differently" work by looking at women in unexplored political situations. It explores the relevance of critical mass by comparing a cabinet where there was a critical mass and a cabinet where only one fifth of the group were women.

iii) Public Policy Process

This dissertation looks at three public policies (domestic violence, education and social welfare reform) and the actors involved. By doing so, it contributes to the literature on

the public policy process. In the first place, cabinet ministers are key policy decision-makers. Anderson notes that the policy decision involves action by some official person or body to improve, modify or reject a preferred policy alternative (Anderson, 1998). In Canada, this dissertation argues, this "decision action" is taken by cabinet ministers. (A cabinet post is the place to wield power in Canadian provinces, Studlar and Moncrief, 1997. It is the highest level at which decisions are made – the "court of last resort" Morton, 1997 13.)

As Peters (1993) points out, the results of the policy choices that politicians make are policy outcomes. By focusing on the continuum from the politicians, their parties and their choices to the resulting public policy, this study contributes to the understanding of the policy-making process by clarifying the role of the primary decision-makers.

In public policy analysis in Canada, the iron triangle (the relationship between the legislature/committees, the bureaucracy and interest groups) has been rejected as a model for understanding the influences on public policy for several reasons. There are no congressional committees, and relationships in sub-governments are considered more permeable (Pross, 1986). Instead, the term "policy community" is used to describe the government agencies, pressure groups, media and individuals who have an interest in and attempt to influence public policy (Pross, 1986; Coleman and Skogstad, 1990). Sabatier notes that in Westminster-style systems, such as Canadian provinces, advocacy coalitions are more likely to rely on more informal, and longer-lasting arrangements (Sabatier, 1999). This study finds, in the exploration of the three specific policies, that there were in fact, "advocacy coalition frameworks" (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993) at work which included actors from a variety of institutions sharing policy beliefs, within a policy sub-

system. This study will also explore the influence of the policy community – the ad hoc group of actors actively involved in policy-making (Birkland, 2001).

While cabinet ministers are elected, there are other key actors in the policy process who are not. Women bureaucrats, and especially bureaucrats from the provincial women's agencies, were involved in the three policy areas and sometimes had a key role in the policy process. Sawer (1990, 1995) in Australia, calls this category of bureaucrats who use the machinery of government to achieve feminist goals "femocrats". There has been recent Canadian work (Savoie, 1999 and 2003) that asserts that bureaucrats, particularly in key ministries and agencies have had a much greater impact on public policy than their elected colleagues.

This study underlines the fact that under a number of different circumstances (different provinces, numbers of women in cabinet, political parties) women will often behave differently from their male colleagues – and that their behaviour shapes public policy. Not only do they behave differently, they want to behave differently – they see themselves as having a different role – not necessarily a substantive one, but a distinct one.

In order to understand how the women in cabinet influence the public policy process, this study explores the three specific public policies in two divergent circumstances: a left wing government with a critical mass of women and a right wing government without a critical mass.

In order to understand if women represent differently, it is essential to look at records of policy achievement. Women may have focused on particular policy areas because those areas were the ones assigned to them. (Cabinet is appointed by the Premier

from among his/her party's elected representatives. Ministers are given ministerial assignments based not on their previous professional experience, but on their perceived political strength – though the regional composition of cabinet is also a critical factor in appointment (Dyck, 1991).) I also interviewed the ministers as to their own personal policy hopes and goals. In order to conclude that critical mass does not matter, the study would have to demonstrate that a) the advancement of a feminist perspective in a policy area did not correlate to the cabinets with a critical mass of women and b) that women cabinet ministers do not have policy objectives distinct from their male colleagues. Of course, political party as opposed to critical mass, must also be considered as a determinant of policy and so this study looks at two provinces with two different parties.

Location of study: British Columbia and Ontario

The study is located in provincial, sub-national governments in Canada. Canada is a decentralized federation of ten provinces, two territories and one Aboriginal sub-government (Nunavut), each of considerable political and economic significance in its own right (Dyck, 1991). Provinces are responsible, according to the Canadian constitution, for most of the activities of direct concern to citizens in their daily lives (Elkins and Simeon, 1980), and hold a number of important "policy levers" (Walks, 2004). Scholars refer to Canadian provinces as "small worlds" (Elkins and Simeon, 1980; Dyck, 1991). In the Westminster system, cabinet ministers are so significant that in a recent study, Walks uses the appointment to cabinet as a test of the political influence of an electoral district (Walks, 2004). There has been little research comparing provinces in the area of women in public office – though there has been work on individual provinces

(Maille on Quebec, Erickson on B.C. etc. in Arscott and Trimble, 1997). This dissertation examines the significance of women in what is effectively the elected legislative executive in two Canadian provinces.

Canadian provincial cabinets were chosen as the location of this study for five reasons: 1) Canadian provinces oversee a significant range of policy areas; 2) In parliamentary systems, cabinets effectively run government; 3) Canadian provinces are structurally equal but culturally distinct, rendering them good candidates for comparison; 4) There has been little research on women politicians in Canadian provinces and 5) there are a greater number of women cabinet ministers at the provincial level than at the federal level.

The British North America Act (1867) gave significant powers to the federal government in Canada and the remainder to the provinces. Since then, these powers have become increasingly important – and have an impact on policy areas traditionally important to women (Brownsey and Howlett, 2001). The provincial legislatures have significant power including: direct taxation for provincial purposes, education, hospitals, health, marriage, property and civil rights in the province, provincial laws, labour legislation (wages, safety, hours) and social security (Forsey, 2005). Provinces are structurally identical, yet are geographically, economically, culturally, and ideologically distinct (Dyck, 1991). They are, as a result, excellent laboratories for the study of policy determinants (Dunn, 1996).

The cabinet is appointed by the Premier (the leader of the governing party) at the provincial level, and is the "focus and fulcrum" of the system (Dunn, 1996). Provincial government has been called "cabinet government" (Dunn, 1996). All government bills

must be introduced by a Minister or someone speaking on his or her behalf, and Ministers must appear in Parliament to defend government bills, answer daily questions on government actions or policies, and rebut attacks on such actions or policies (Forsey, 2005).

Provinces each have their own unique political culture defined by one Canadian scholar as "… deeply-rooted, popularly held beliefs, values and attitudes. Culture is pervasive, patterned, cross-generational and enduring," (Wiseman, 1996). It is the context in which parties exist and policy evolves and so is part of the background to examining the provinces. In Chapter 2, I outline the history of the province as it pertains to women in politics – what proportion of women has it elected over time, and what, if any, impact those women have had on the policies of the province.

TABLE 1: Provincial Profile

Province	Dates	Governing Party	Geographic Location	Women in Legislature	Women in Cabinet
British Columbia	1996-2001	N.D.P.	West	29.3 %	42.9 %
Ontario	1999-2003	P.C.	Central	17.5 %	20 %

(N.D.P. – New Democratic Party P.C. – Progressive Conservative Party)

I have chosen to look at two provinces each with a different proportion of women in cabinet during a particular governing period. These three policy areas were affected by critical mass, but I have found that political party has a more direct relationship to policy content. Not surprisingly in the left wing governed province, with a considerable number of women at the cabinet table the debate and the ultimate policy outcome of domestic violence, education and social welfare reform, better reflect women's movement concerns than the right wing provinces with a smaller number of women at the cabinet table – but the difference is not dramatic.

As in most countries, the sub-national and municipal governments in Canada consistently elect a slightly higher proportion of women. (It costs less to run for office and the legislature is closer to home.) There have been women premiers in British Columbia (1991), the Northwest Territories (1991-95), Prince Edward Island (1993-1996), and the Yukon (2000-2003). Currently, 21 percent of the federal cabinet is female, while the province's female cabinet proportion ranges from 11 percent (New Brunswick) to 50 percent (Quebec) (Equal Voice, 2007).

For this study, I have focused on two of the largest Canadian provinces: British Columbia and Ontario. I have chosen these two provinces in order to: reflect geographical diversity; governing party diversity; political cultural diversity; and to distinguish between a range in the proportion of women in cabinet.

British Columbia is governed by a legislative assembly of 79 members elected from single-constituency ridings. The New Democratic Party, in power from 1991 to 2001, advocated a moderate socialism and government economic and social involvement. Their election platform for the period discussed here, focused on protecting health care, education and creating jobs. From 1996 to 2001, the NDP government had a record high number of women in the legislature and in cabinet, and the party was politically supportive of the traditional public policy concerns of the women's movement (such as pay equity and abortion).

The Ontario parliament is a unicameral body of 130 members, elected for a fixed term of 4 years. The Conservative government of 1995-2003 began with a dramatic election campaign, where the party presented a plain-spoken plan to reduce government spending. (The platform was called the "Common Sense Revolution".) The government

to be studied here was one that has been profiled for its negative impact on women (Collier, 1997), yet some of the most powerful ministers were women.

In each province, a single governing period has been explored – namely the time between two elections, in order to pinpoint the contribution of women and to focus on a limited amount of passed legislation. Elections in Canada take place at the discretion of the governing party (to a maximum of 5 years) and as a result, the time periods studied were slightly different.[3] In British Columbia, the focus is the New Democratic Party government from 1996 to 2001 and in Ontario, the focus is the Progressive Conservative government from 1999 to 2003. The time periods were chosen for two reasons. First, to maximize the number of women cabinet ministers to study and second, to minimize the challenge of speaking to women while they are in still in office. Other researchers have found this to be a significant problem as the women have little time (Rosenthal, 1998) and are unwilling to speak frankly while still in office (Burt and Lorenzin, 1997).[4]

Overview

The following dissertation examines provinces and public policy through the lens of women in provincial cabinet. Chapter 2 provides an in depth look at the two provinces, which includes history, political culture, the activism of the women's movement, the history of women's involvement in politics, the policy of the dominant political parties.

[3] Since 2004 in Ontario election terms have been fixed at 4 years and since 2005 election terms in B.C. have been fixed.

[4] Rosenthal received a number of responses to her survey where the legislators had written that they were sorry but they did not have time to complete the survey due to legislative and family responsibilities. Burt and Lorenzin found that while still in office, women legislators were too focused on re-election messages to be able to speak analytically about their experiences.

Much of this information has been tallied in various academic, legislative and media sources, but the compilation here is new.

Chapters 3 through 5 comprise the core of this dissertation and include a detailed examination of the public policy efforts of two disparate sub-national governments. These chapters, organized by policy area (domestic violence, social welfare and education) look in-depth at the legislative record including: an analysis of the debates on the key issues in Hansard (the legislative record). I have followed the policy process from political party policy to campaign to speech from the throne (the equivalent of a State of the Nation address), to policy promises in the media, to meetings with stakeholders, through the legislative procedural process to final passage in Parliament. For comparison I also provide the expenditures on each policy area. I also examined reactions and inputs to the process by stakeholders and the women's movement. I highlight where women are mentioned in legislative agendas of the governing party including in speeches from the throne, party platform pre-election publications, public speeches and budget speeches.

Finally, Chapter 6 offers a discussion of the implications of this research on the public policy process, the influence of party and of the influence of critical mass. The dissertation concludes with implications for our understanding of the nature of substantive and descriptive representation as well as a discussion of fiscal feminism and how it was demonstrated.

Chapter 2

Women Legislators in British Columbia and Ontario

This chapter is largely descriptive in nature and designed to provide a context for understanding the events that took place in British Columbia and Ontario. It is also intended to help clarify the political context within which women cabinet ministers work and public policy is created. The original research component of this chapter is the compilation of the history of elected women in both B.C. and Ontario from confederation to the present date. This information is not available from any other source, nor has it been previously published in its entirety.

The chapter includes a general statistical profile of British Columbia (B.C.) and Ontario; the political party history of the provinces; the development of the women's movement in the two provinces; the history of women's involvement in politics in Ontario and B.C.; selected policy positions of the dominant provincial political parties (abortion, pay equity and child care); and the election platforms of the two provincial governing parties – 1999-2003 Progressive Conservatives in Ontario and 1996-2001 New Democratic Party (NDP) in British Columbia.

The economic background of the two provinces is key to explaining how policy decisions get made – and in particular, the policy decisions examined later in this thesis. It is also a crucial piece of the puzzle that has helped to create the state of fiscal feminism. The political background helps to illustrate the political culture of the provinces – which in turn has an impact on women in politics (Rule and Zimmerman,

1994). For example, Ontario has a long and stable political history with few radical jumps from one party to another – but B.C. has long been politically volatile – which has a significant impact on relationships with stakeholders and on the bureaucracy (Dyck, 1991). The political platform background will help explain how each government focused, first and foremost, on the economy – which profoundly altered the priorities of women's issues and the ability of women cabinet ministers to defend them.

Population

Ontario is Canada's largest province by population – 11,410,046 – and British Columbia is the third largest by population – 3,907,738 (Statistics Canada, 2001 Census). In both B.C. and Ontario, a vast majority of the population live in urban centres and are well educated (Statistics Canada, 2001). (I have primarily used the 2001 Census as a source as opposed to the 2006 Census as the dates are closer to the time period studied here.)

Overall, women in Ontario are better off than women in B.C. Women are somewhat better educated (17 percent of women in Ontario have a college degree vs. 15 percent in B.C.); slightly more women are employed (Ontario-59percent B.C.-56 percent); women earn more (Ontario - $26,100, B.C. $23,500) (Statistics Canada, 2001).

According to, *Women in Canada 2005* (Statistics Canada) the majority of visible minority females in Canada live in either Ontario or British Columbia. British Columbia and Ontario also have the highest number of Aboriginal people in Canada[5] (Statistics Canada, 2006). There has never been an aboriginal woman representative in either provincial legislature (Arscott and Trimble, 2003). There have been four black women in the two provincial legislatures: Rosemary Brown of B.C., elected in 1972; Zanana Akande in Ontario, elected in 1990; Marianne Chambers of Ontario elected in 2003; and

Margeuritte Best elected in 2007 (Arscott and Trimble, 2003). There have been two women of Asian heritage elected in B.C. Ida Chong and Jenny Kwan – both elected in 1996 (Arscott and Trimble, 2003). All of the visible minority women, save for Ida Chong, were members of left or centrist parties.

Economy

The B.C. frontier economy was founded on the fur trade but with the building of the Canadian National Railway, it evolved into a resource-based economy: fishing, forestry, mining and agriculture – all of which remain significant contributors to the economy (Government of B.C., 2001).

During the period of government that is the focus of this paper, 1996-2001, the B.C. economy slowed primarily due to the difficulties facing B.C.'s resource sector (Finlayson and Peacock, 2002). In 1998, employment growth dropped to 0.1 percent and remained below the national average until 2005 (B.C. Stats, 2005).

The NDP government of the day was quite cognizant of the problem. They held an Economic Outlook Conference in Vancouver in early 1997 to consult with forecasters and economic experts before releasing the provincial budget (B.C. Budget, 1997). In 1998, the government presented a three-year plan to stimulate the economy including a small business corporate income tax cut, marginal income tax rate cut and financial incentives for film production (B.C. Budget, 1998). The following budget focused on health care (increased spending for the next eight years) and continued tax cuts particularly focused on small business (B.C. Budget, 1999).

The slowed economy – and the pattern of stalled growth outside the province's primary urban centre – had an impact on the 2001 election results. In a public opinion

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[5] Aboriginal People in Canada includes Métis, Innuit and First Nations peoples.

poll, B.C. voters cited health care as their primary concern, followed by the economy and taxes (Ipsos-Reid, May 8th 2001 poll). It also had an impact, as will be discussed later in this thesis, on the decisions and pressures facing the government.

The Ontario economy was founded on agriculture, lumber and resources – all of which still contribute to the provincial economy (Ontario Budget, 2003). The auto and auto parts manufacturing sector is also significant employer (Ontario Budget, 2006). B.C. however, is the more unionized province – 34 percent of the working population are unionized versus Ontario at 27 percent (Statistics Canada, 2003 and this includes public sector workers and teachers). Currently, Ontario has a diverse economy with high concentrations of manufacturing and financial and business services (Ontario Budget, 2006).

In the four-year period from 1999-2003 under examination here, the Ontario economy performed well with a one-year exception (2001). From 1996 to 2003, the Ontario economy's real growth rate averaged over a full percentage point higher than that of the economy of the rest of Canada (Ontario Budget, 2003). The government took credit for some of this growth by arguing that "tax reductions and responsible fiscal policies implemented since 1995 have reinforced strong economic fundamentals, boosting incentives for investment and job creation," (Budget Papers, 2003). The Ontario economy grew by 6.1 percent in 1999 (the peak year for the government term) but just 1.5 percent in 2001 due to a global slowdown in trade – in part due to the events of 9/11 (Budget Papers, 2001). However, when the government first took office in 1995, the economy was not doing as well and the fiscally conservative approach to policy was to last the entire two terms:

> We must get government spending under control. We cannot ignore the threat to our children's future, to our province's future. To balance our books, Ontario must continue the spending cuts begun in July. Your government's expenditure control will enable it to balance the provincial budget by fiscal year 2000-01, and put Ontario back on the road to sound financial management, (Hansard, September 27, 1995).

The focus on fiscal restraint during both governments in both provinces was to have a significant effect on public policy – and particularly on policies that had a greater impact on women.

Political Parties

Political party systems in British Columbia and Ontario are quite distinct from one another. While the party system in Ontario closely reflects that of the federal system (Conservative, Liberal and New Democratic Party- dominated), the party system of B.C. is unique. Its history has been dominated by the Social Credit party (far right wing) and the NDP (Barman, 1991a; Dyck, 1991; Erickson, 1997). The B.C. Liberal party that ousted the NDP in 2001 and which currently forms the government, has no connection to the federal Liberal party. It is a right-of-centre coalition of Social Credit and B.C. Reform party supporters who were determined to end the NDP government (Blake, 1996).

TABLE 2: Provincial Parties on Political Spectrum

Political Spectrum		
← LEFT	**↔ CENTRE**	**↔ RIGHT →**
Ontario NDP B.C. NDP	Ontario Liberals	B.C. Liberals Ontario Progressive Conservative B.C. Social Credit

After 1903, when parties really took hold in British Columbia, the province entered a relatively calm period of non-polarized two party politics: the Liberals and the Conservatives (Dyck, 1991). (Prior to 1903 government was non-partisan as the focus

was on national issues and parochial concerns – Blake, 1996.) However, there was always a socialist element – socialist and labour parties existed, but did not achieve electoral success until 1933 with the CCF (Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, later the New Democratic Party) promising the socialization of education, resources and health (Blake, 1996). For the next 60 years, the province see-sawed from long Social Credit regimes to shorter NDP ones (Blake, 1996). After a one-term NDP government in the 1970s, the Social Credit party won every election until 1991 when they were defeated after a long series of scandals. The political party system of B.C. has been characterized as "bi-polar", oscillating between free enterprise and socialism with a streak of populism, "highly class-conscious and ideologically polarized" (Blake, 1996; Dyck, 1991).

Dyck noted that there has been intense ideological conflict in every B.C. election since 1933 and that there is has always been strong class division in voting behavior: the working class solidly voted NDP (the provincial workforce is more politicized than in some other provinces); the middle and upper income classes vote Social Credit (Dyck, 1991). This helps to explain why the left-wing NDP have historically done so well in B.C. – particularly in comparison to other provinces.

Ontario's party history, on the other hand, is marked by both conflict and consistency. Since the first French and English settlement, Ontario has seen ethnic, religious, class, regional, urban, rural conflicts (Dyck, 1991). The predominant value of the province is "conservatism" – demonstrated by long periods of Conservative party dominance, even though the CCF/NDP have been historically strong (Dyck, 1991). In recent years, the province has been governed by all three parties (Liberal 1985-1990; NDP 1990-1995; Conservative 1995-2003; Liberal 2003- present).

Both governments that are the focus of this study were in their second terms and were, in part, led by new leaders. (The first term was dominated by one leader/Premier and each party chose a second leader during the second term.) In Ontario, the Conservative government was led by Mike Harris from 1995 until he stepped down in 2002. Taking over was his former Finance minister and Deputy Premier, Ernie Eves. In British Columbia, the NDP went into their second term (the first being 1991-1996) led by Glen Clark, the former Finance Minister to Premier Michael Harcourt. Clark resigned mid-term (1999) under allegations of criminal behaviour and was succeeded by an interim leader, Dan Miller, and finally by Ujal Dosanj, former Attorney General, who became the first visible minority premier in Canada. Dosanj led the party for just over a year (2000-2001) (Elections B.C.).

Historically in both federal and provincial parties there have been strong ties between the NDP and the women's movement. The NDP in the 1960s and 70s was a "hotbed of feminist activism" (Young, 2000). According to Young, "By 1975 the NDP had endorsed virtually every policy stance espoused by major feminist organizations" (Young, 2000). But that did not mean the party always gave them high priority (Young, 2000).

The Conservative party, on the other hand, was slower to respond to the women's movement than either the NDP or the Liberals, but several circumstances in the 70s helped to increase their responsiveness: the leadership campaign of Flora MacDonald which, though unsuccessful, broke symbolic barriers; the activism of the feminist spouse, Maureen McTeer, of the federal leader; and the efforts by the party to increase their support among younger and minority voters (Young, 2000).

The Social Credit party in B.C. retained a women's auxiliary through the 1970s and 80s that was designed to support women's service, not to promote women to electoral office or to highlight women's issues (Erickson, 1997). The party did see a marked increase in women running for office in the early 1990s due to the barrier-breaking of Rita Johnson, who was briefly the Premier, and the significant number of retirements among incumbents (Erickson, 1997).

Women's Movements

In the 1880s in Ontario the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Canadian Women's Suffrage Association began to pressure the federal government to enfranchise women (Status of Women Canada, 2001). Numerous petitions and legislation were presented without success until the federal government shifted the responsibility for voters lists to the provinces. This change ushered in an era of significant activism at the provincial level (Status of Women Canada, 2001 and Hill, 1948). (This was a classic example of downloading creating an opportunity for women as in Beckwith, 2007.)

Repeated efforts for female suffrage were made in British Columbia in 1902, 1903, and 1906, but they were defeated (Belenger, 2005). In 1913 a petition for woman suffrage was submitted to the government, but this too was refused. The question of female enfranchisement was put to a referendum in 1916, and female suffrage was passed by a large majority and came into effect in 1917 (Hill, 1948).

After the changes to the Electoral Act, the Dominion Women's Enfranchisement Association focused its attentions on the Ontario legislature. In 1909 a deputation of

1,000 members, requesting full franchise for women, was sent to the legislature of Ontario and was defeated. Several more bills lost in the years between 1911 and 1916 (Hill, 1948). Finally, in 1917, woman's suffrage became a plank in the Liberal platform – notably supported by Premier Hearst and in February, a bill was introduced and supported by the Liberals and Conservatives (Hill, 1948). So both provinces saw the introduction of the white female franchise in the same year after long campaigns and considerable activism. The same women who were involved in the franchise movement also worked on other women's causes such as widow's pensions (the precursor to welfare) and day care (Cleverdon, 1950). (More on both these issues to follow.)

Several scholars suggest that the eventual granting of the federal franchise (in 1918) had much to do with WWI. The federal government wanted to be re-elected and thought that women would not want to see a change in government during wartime (Markoff, 2003; Cleverdon, 1950; Elections Canada, 2007). Further supporting this contention, the franchise was first extended to female relatives of enlisted men in 1917 and a year later to all women (Elections Canada, 2007). Notably, objectors to the war, the Dukaboors and the Mennoites were disenfranchised in B.C. in 1917 (Elections B.C., 1988). A crucial point in understanding the process of the advancement of women and a theme which will be revisited later in this thesis, is that there are often other broader political forces at work. These broader forces including events such as wars or economic downturns, can impact public policy events in unexpected ways that are only marginally connected to simultaneous or preexisting social or political movements. (Tuhoy, 1999, in her analysis of change in health care policy discussed how broader political forces –such as neo-conservative fiscal stringency for example – help create window of opportunity

for change.) In this case, the war had a more immediate impact than the longstanding fight by suffragettes to gain the female franchise (Cleveredon, 1950).

After the achievement of suffrage, the second major wave of women's movement in Canada was the establishment of institutional or governmental arm of the movement. It was initiated by the hearings, research and report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (1967-70) (Backhouse and Flaherty, 1992). The Commission itself was called in the wake of the joining of forces of two major women's groups: the Committee for the Equality of Women (CEW) and the Fédération des Femmes du Quebec (FFQ) (Begin, 1992). The process of the commission – public hearings held across the country and published recommendations – galvanized most women's groups in the country and increased the articulation of feminist issues (Begin, 1992). Recommendations from the Royal Commission resulted in the establishment of Status of Women Canada – a federal government agency to promote gender equality, and the full participation of women in the economic, social, cultural and political life of the country. It also resulted in the appointment of a federal Minister Responsible for the Status of Women in 1971 (Backhouse and Flaherty, 1993). Concerned about the implementation of the Commission's recommendations. CEW, met and formed a new organization – the National Action Committee on the Status of Women – now the largest feminist organization in Canada consisting of a coalition of more than 700 member groups (Begin, 1992; www.nac-cca.ca). Women politicians and activists drove this development – and notably, the federal Liberal government and several progressive male ministers were receptive to change (Backhouse and Flaherty, 1992).

Ontario had two government organizations dedicated to the promotion of women's issues: The Advisory Council on the Status of Women and the Ontario Women's Directorate. The Advisory Council, created in 1973, reported directly to Margaret Birch (the first female cabinet minister in Ontario – a Conservative) and it was mandated to monitor and assess legislation (Burt and Lorenzin, 1997). The Conservative government terminated the Council in 1996 (Collier, 1997). The Ontario Women's Directorate, a government agency under the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, was founded in 1983, by a Conservative government with just 4 women members. It has historically funded women's groups and women-focused initiatives but since the Harris Conservative government (1995 on) its mandate has been to fund projects that focus on preventing violence against women and improving women's economic independence. It is important to distinguish between the two Conservative governments. The first 1940-1985 was a long-standing regime that was relatively centrist (right-centrist) in nature as compared to the second Conservative governments (1995-2003) who were far more ideologically right-wing (Noel, 1997; Ralph, Regimbald and St. Almond, 1997).

By the late 1970s most provincial governments had followed the federal lead and appointed a minister responsible for women's issues – but not B.C. The N.D.P. party itself had proposed such a ministry in 1972, but failed to follow through because the party leader at the time was against it (Erickson, 1997). (This was due in part, apparently to his concern about the government acquiescing to demands from the party convention floor and the prominence of League For Socialist Action men taking up the charge for women's rights (League For Socialist Action, 1974). Subsequent Social Credit (right wing) governments did not take up the issue and so it was not until 1991, when the

N.D.P. formed government again, that a free-standing Ministry of Women's Equality was founded. The Ministry had both program and policy responsibilities, but arguably its most significant contribution was the development of the "Gender Lense Framework" – a tool for reviewing all public policy to determine if it discriminates against women or supports equality of women (Erickson, 1997).

The B.C. NDP government of 1991-96 started on a high note for women:

> This government is proud that seven of its portfolios are held by women, the highest representation in British Columbia's history. But we are far from satisfied. We will take every opportunity, as membership of each government board is changed, to improve the balance of gender representation in these public bodies…We will ask all parties in the assembly to help end the discriminatory wage gap between men and women in the workplace by considering legislation that sets a framework for pay equity in the public sector, (Speech from the Throne, Hansard March 17, 1992).

The Speech from the Throne is a statement in the legislature – generally 20-45 minutes in length that sets the policy direction for the legislative term. Implementation was to prove less impressive.

The Conservative government of Ontario (1995-99) made no mention of an agenda for women in its initial Speech from the Throne, with the exception of indicating its intention to repeal the NDP Employment Equity legislation (Hansard, September 27, 1995).

Women in Provincial Politics

During the 1890s women in most Canadian provinces (including B.C. and Ontario) had the municipal franchise and women ratepayers could vote for school trustee (Hill, 1948). In both Ontario and B.C. during the same period, women could also run for school trustee (Hill, 1948). This long history of women's involvement in education politics is a theme

that will be discussed again later in this work. Most women got the vote in B.C. in 1917 and could stand for elections (Aboriginal, Japanese-Canadian, Chinese-Canadian and Indo-Canadian women (and men) were not enfranchised until 1949 (Erickson, 1997; www.chrc/ccdp.ca.en). Two women ran in Ontario in 1917 when there was a full female franchise, but neither won (Erickson, 1997; Burt and Lorenzin, 1997).

The first woman elected to the B.C. provincial legislature, was Mary Ellen Smith in 1918 (Norcross, 1984). She was also the first woman known to have taken her husband's seat in the British Commonwealth (Erickson, 1997). She was appointed Minister Without Portfolio (the first in the Commonwealth) in 1921, but resigned shortly thereafter preferring to do her work from the floor of the House (Norcross, 1984). British Columbia sent its first woman representative to the House of Commons, Grace MacInnis, in 1965 and B.C.'s first woman was appointed to the Senate in 1953, Nancy Hodges (Arscott and Trimble, 2003).

In Ontario, Agnes McPhail of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (or the CCF, which later became the New Democratic Party) and Rae Lucock (also of the CCF) were the first women elected to the provincial legislature in 1943 (www.stillcountingathabascau.ca). Miss McPhail was not new to politics, in 1921 Ontario elected her as its first woman to sit in the federal legislature for the Progressive Party of Canada and later for the United Farmers of Ontario. Ontario's first female senator was appointed in 1930 and the first woman to sit in the Ontario cabinet was Margaret Birch in 1972 – she was Provincial Secretary for Social Development (Arscott and Trimble, 2003; Erickson, 1997; Burt and Lorenzin, 1997).

In Ontario, after Miss McPhail and Mrs. Luckock's multiple victories, the increase in the number of women elected to the legislature was slow. British Columbia's progress was faster and more sure. By 1983 there were 9 elections in which more than 10 percent of the legislators were women. In Ontario, by comparison, it took until 1988 to see more than 10 percent women in the House. The better performance in British Columbia may be attributed to two factors: the first is more competitive elections (Arscott and Trimble, 2003; Erickson, 1997). (Ontario was handily dominated by the Progressive Conservatives for 43 years, whereas the B.C. Social Credit party fought off a strong NDP or Liberal party in virtually every election.) Electoral volatility has been noted as a factor in increasing gains for women (Darcy, Welch & Clark, 1994; Erickson, 1997). The NDP (and the CCF which preceded it) in both provinces (as well as in the rest of Canada) was a leader in getting women to run. The second factor is the commitment of left-wing parties, particularly the NDP, to run more women. In their analysis of women in Canadian politics, Arscott and Trimble note that across the country, the proportion of women who are nominated in the competitive parties (Liberal and Conservative) are stalled at 20 and 17 percent respectively whereas parties less likely to win, NDP and the Bloc Quebecois have higher average proportions of women running (Arscott and Trimble, 2003). Others argue that B.C. numbers of women legislators have been consistently higher due to the strength of the post-suffrage movement, a rapidly developing society and political culture and a longstanding resistance to tradition (Erickson, 1997; Dyck, 1991; Bashevkin, 1993).

TABLE 3: Women in B.C. Legislature 1871-2005

Election	Number of Women and party	Total number of Members	Percentage Women	Governing Party
1871-1916 Thirteen Elections	0	25-42	0	1871-1903 –non-partisan 1903-1916 Conservative
1916	0	47	0	Liberal
1918 (by-election)	1 (independent)	47	2.1	Liberal
1920	1 (Liberal)	47	2.1	Liberal
1924	1 (Liberal)	48	2.1	Liberal
1928	0	48	0	Conservative
1933	1 (Liberal)	47	2.1	Liberal
1937	2 (1 Liberal, 1 CCF)	48	4.2	Liberal
1941	5 (1 Liberal, 1 Conservative, 3 CCF)	48	10.4	Liberal
1945	2 (Coalition)	48	4.2	Coalition
1949	2 (Coalition)	48	4.2	Coalition
1952	3 (1 Coalition, 1 Social Credit, 1 CCF)	48	6.3	Social Credit
1953	1 (Social Credit)	48	2.1	Social Credit
1956	2 (1 SC, 1 CCF)	52	3.9	Social Credit
1960	3 (1 SC, 2 CCF)	52	5.8	Social Credit
1963	2 (NDP)	52	3.9	Social Credit
1966	4 (3 SC, 1 NDP)	55	7.3	Social Credit
1969	5 (4 SC, 1 NDP)	55	9.1	Social Credit
1972	6 (1 SC, 5 NDP)	55	10.9	NDP
1975	6 (2 SC, 4 NDP)	55	10.9	Social Credit
1979	6 (2 SC, 4 NDP)	57	10.5	Social Credit
1983	6 (2 SC, 4 NDP)	57	10.5	Social Credit
1986	9 (4 SC, 5 NDP)	69	13.4	Social Credit
1991	19 (3 Lib., 16 NDP)	75	25.3	NDP
1996	19 (7 Lib., 12 NDP)	75	25.3	NDP
2001	20 (18 Lib., 2 NDP)	79	25.3	Liberal
2005	17 (10 Lib., 7 NDP)	79	21.5	Liberal

Abbreviations: CCF: Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, in 1961 becoming the New Democratic Party, NDP SC – Social Credit Coalition – a coalition of the Conservatives and Liberals who ran together to ensure that the CCF would not win.

Sources: Electoral History of British Columbia 1871-1986, Elections B.C., 10 January 2007, www.elections.bc.ca; Canadian Parliamentary Guide, various years; Blake, Donald

E., 1985, 2 Political Worlds: Parties and Voting in British Columbia, Vancouver: University of B.C. Press.

TABLE 4: Women in Ontario Legislature 1867-2007

Election	Number of Women and party	Total number of Members	Percentage Women	Governing Party
1867-1939 20 elections	0	82 to 112	0	12 Liberal, 7 PC
1943	2 (CCF)	90	2.2	Conservative
1947	0	90	0	Conservative
1948	1 (CCF)	90	1.1	Conservative
1951, 1955,1959	0	90	0	Conservative
1963	1 (PC)	108	0.9	Conservative
1967	2 (1 PC, 1 NDP)	117	1.7	Conservative
1971	2 (PC)	117	1.7	Conservative
1973*	3 (2 PC, 1 Lib)	117	2.6	Conservative
1975	7 (3 PC, 3 NDP, 1 Lib)	125	5.6	Conservative
1977	6 (3 PC, 2 NDP, 1 Lib)	125	4.8	Conservative
1981	6 (4 PC, 1 NDP, 1 Lib)	125	4.8	Conservative
1983	6 (4 PC, 1 NDP, 1 Lib)	125	4.8	Conservative
1984*	7 (5 PC, 2 NDP)	125	5.6	Conservative
1985	8 (5 PC, 2 NDP, 1 Lib)	125	6.4	Liberal
1988	19 (1 PC, 3 NDP, 15 Lib)	130	14.6	Liberal
1990	28 (2 PC, 19 NDP, 7 Lib)	130	21.5	NDP
1995	12 (6 PC, 4 NDP, 2 Lib)	130	9.2	Conservative
1999	18 (9 PC, 3 NDP, 6 Lib)	103	17.5	Conservative
2003	23 (3 PC, 2 NDP, 18 Lib)	103	22.3	Liberal
2007	29 (7 PC, 3 NDP, 19 Lib)	107	27.0	Liberal

* By-elections
Abbreviations: CCF: Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, in 1961 becoming the New Democratic Party, NDP; PC – Progressive Conservative; Lib – Liberal

Sources: Electoral History of Ontario, General Election Results 1999 and 2003 www.elections.on.ca; Equal Voice, www.equalvoice.ca; Canadian Parliamentary Guide, various years)[6]

Across Canadian legislatures, women were fairly scarce even until the mid 1980s when the proportion of women was about 10 percent in most provincial houses of parliament. Momentum increased through the late 1980s to late 1990s as most political parties nominated or came close to nominating 25 percent women (Arscott and Trimble, 2003). Young and Campbell (2001) also point out that the increases of the late 1980s and 1990s were due to increasing numbers of professional women, feminist activists inside and outside parties and reformation of electoral financing which made it easier to raise funds. According to Arscott and Trimble, the stalling at or near 25 percent women in the legislature has become the political version of the corporate glass ceiling – the invisible boundary through which no women can seem to pass. They argue that the primary cause of this is that the political parties that have only made limited efforts to recruit greater proportions of women candidates once 20 percent has been reached (Arscott and Trimble, 2003). They also note that central appointment of candidates (where the leader of the party names a candidate and bypasses the electoral nomination process) is highly criticized when used as a means to increase the number of women candidates. (The data presented here differs from Arscott and Trimble's work as it breaks down women's electoral success by party and has been brought up to the current date – 2008.)

It is important to state, that there are clear differences between parties in their efforts to run more women candidates. In Canada left wing (NDP and Green Party) and centrist (Liberal) parties tend to run more women than right wing (Progressive Conservative, Social Credit) parties. In Ontario, for example, in the 1999 election 15.6 percent of the Progressive Conservative candidates were women, compared to 18.5

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[6] Determining which candidates are female is not as straightforward as it might appear. Many names, particularly Sikh names, can apply to both men and women. One of the strategies to deal with this is by

percent of the Liberal candidates and 29 percent of the NDP candidates (Elections Ontario, 1999). The same pattern held true in 2003, where 18.5 percent of the Progressive Conservative Candidates were women, as compared to 23.3 percent of the Liberal candidates and again 29 percent of the NDP candidates (Elections Ontario, 2003). In the most recent election, the gap was even wider in spite of a three-party public commitment to nominating more women: 22 percent of PC candidates were female, 35 percent of Liberal candidates and 39 percent of NDP candidates were women (Elections Ontario, 2007; Equal Voice, 2007). However, because all three parties made an effort to run more women, more women ran (104 versus 78 in the previous election – Equal Voice, 2007). The result was an increased proportion of women in the legislature: 27 percent, up from 22 percent. In B.C. while more women ran in 2005 than 2001 (48 to 40 respectively in the two major parties), the numbers of women decreased in the legislature. This can, in part, be attributed to the fact that it was a highly competitive election and the NDP, who traditionally run and elect more women, had only 3 female incumbents running in 2005. The Liberal Party ran more women in 2005 than in 2001, but most of the women were one-term incumbents and had difficulty holding on to their seats.

In British Columbia, in 2001, 26.6 percent of both the NDP and the Liberal candidates were women. Interestingly, the Green Party, who achieved some 12.4 percent of the popular vote and won no seats, had 35 percent female candidates (Elections B.C., 2001). In the last election in which the Social Credit (right wing) party were competitive, 1991, 24 percent of their candidates were women compared to 36 percent of the NDP candidates (Elections B.C., 1991). The results, as depicted in the chart above may make it appear that the Social Credit party ran more women as many more women were elected,

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reading the French entries of the Canadian Parliamentary guide. Women are born (née) and men are né.

but in fact, when you compare the size of the caucuses, the proportions make more sense. The NDP caucus after the 2001 election was only 2 people – both women – and the Liberal caucus was 77 people – 18 or 23 percent of whom were women (Elections B.C. www.electionsbc.ca).

It is also important to note the overlap between the NDP and the women's movement – which helps to explain why that party breaks past the 25 percent barrier across provincial and federal politics. Adamson (1995) noted that the women's movement in Canada grew out of the political left – including the NDP, the Communist party, the student and peace movements – and that organizational skills were brought from politics to the women's movement and back again. In the late 1980s the NDP federally and in the provinces instituted an affirmative action nomination policy with a goal of 50 percent candidates from traditionally disadvantaged groups – including women (Interview Sandra Clifford, 2007). As for the anomaly of women in the right-wing Social Credit party in B.C.. Creese and Strong-Boag (1992) note the lengthy history of independent women activists in the Social Credit party attributed to their rise to leadership roles in the party.

There have been few women party leaders in either province – a significant sign when party leaders play such a significant role in the parliamentary system. In fact there have only been three elected women Premiers – Pat Duncan, Liberal, of Yukon (2000-2002), Catherine Callbeck, Liberal, of Prince Edward Island (1993-1996) and Nellie Cournoyea, (no party) of North West Territories (1991-95). (N.W.T. does not have a party tradition (Dyck, 1991). (Note: the two Liberal premiers were from the centrist Liberal party, not the right-wing B.C. Liberal party.) Arscott and Trimble characterize the

Ontario and B.C. party leaders as caretakers of parties headed for defeat – they call it "partisan CPR" as women leaders are expected to "resuscitate" a dying party (Arscott and Trimble, 2003). Lyn McLeod was leader of the Liberal Party of Ontario from 1992 until 1996. In B.C., Rita Johnston was interim leader of the Social Credit government – and hence briefly (6 months), the Premier of the province. Grace Mc Carthy was elected leader of the Social Credit party in 1993 for just 6 months. Joy McPhail was leader of a reduced NDP party from 2001 to 2003 when Carole James, who remains the leader (at 2007), took over (Arscott and Trimble, 2003; B.C. Legislative Assembly). Arscott and Trimble's book, *Still Counting*, provides an overview of the electoral achievements of women in Canada – both federally and provincially. It outlines the scope of what they refer to as a "democratic deficit" and argues that party indifference or complacency has ensured that women's level of representation has hit a glass ceiling (Arscott and Trimble, 2003).

Increasing the number of women in provincial legislatures is a focus for several women's groups in Canada. Equal Voice, for one, is a multi-partisan action group established in 2001. It is dedicated to increasing the political presence of women and women elected to all levels of political office in Canada. Equal Voice has a chapter in Vancouver, B.C. as well as 4 chapters in Ontario (www.equalvoice.ca). The Arscott and Trimble website, www.stillcountingathabascau.ca, out of Athabasca University has posted a considerable amount of research on the number and history of women in politics in Canada, but the site has not been updated since 2003. Since then, the public counting of women candidates at various levels of government and the publication and promotion

of those numbers is done by Equal Voice.[7] Some of the provincial election offices (the government organizations that run elections) compile statistics on women candidates – Elections B.C. does so, but Elections Ontario does not.

Young Women Vote, established in 2003 by three young Ottawa political staffers encourages young women (18-35) to vote in elections. They established a website (www.geocities.com/youngwomenvote) and launched an online "Pledge to vote" campaign to get 20,000 young women to commit to voting. There is also a Vancouver-based organization, the Canadian Women Voters Congress, a non-partisan volunteer organization that has run "campaign schools" – three day conferences – for potential women candidates since 1999 (www.canadianwomensvoterscongress.org).

Public Policy

This section outlines the public policy history of the two provinces in areas of particular concern to women: abortion, pay equity and child care. All three issues are provincial areas of responsibility, though abortion was once a federally regulated matter and child care has historically had funding support from the federal government. Of course, as in many policy matters in Canada, the federal government has a role by virtue of providing some of the funding – there will be more on this subject in subsequent chapters (Cameron and Simeon, 2002). All three issues are also of central concern to the women's movement (Jenson, 1992; Chicha et al, 2004; Prentice, 1996) and help to paint a picture of the evolution of women's issues in the two provinces.

Access to abortion has been a longstanding issue for the women's movement in Canada overall (Jenson, 1992). Abortion was illegal in Canada from 1869 (the first

[7] I am a founding member and the Ontario electoral researcher.

published Criminal Code) until 1988 when the Supreme Court of Canada struck down the law as unconstitutional (Brodie, 1994). It was found to violate Section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms because it infringed upon a woman's right to “life, liberty and security of person”(Morton, 1992). In 1990, the federal government (Conservative) introduced a bill that would sentence doctors to two years in jail for performing abortions where a woman's health was not at risk. The bill was passed by the House of Commons, but died in the Senate after a tie vote. Since 1988, Medicare has paid for hospital abortions, but not all provinces pay for clinic abortions (Morton, 1992). Now, New Brunswick is the only province in Canada that refuses to pay for abortions performed in clinics (CARAL, 2003; Childbirth by Choice, 2006). Access across the country is uneven and compromised – particularly in rural communities (CARAL, 2003; Palley, 2006).

In response to the shooting of a doctor who performed abortions in 1994, British Columbia introduced the Access to Abortion Services Act, the first legislation in Canada to prohibit protests outside abortion clinics, and doctors' offices and homes. After a legal struggle in 1996, the B. C. Court of Appeal underlined that specific, geographical limits on free speech are justified to protect vulnerable groups (Childbirth by Choice, 2006).

Ontario’s abortion struggle has sometimes been violent: protests in front of clinics were common before 1994, a clinic in Toronto was firebombed in 1992 and a doctor who performed abortions was shot at home in 1995 (Childbirth by Choice, 2006). The government of Ontario pays for any abortion performed in a hospital and most of the fees for clinic abortions. Abortion clinics are funded under the *Independent Health Facilities Act* of 1990 and in 1993, the NDP government added travel supplements for women who

have to travel from northern to southern Ontario for an abortion (Northern Health Travel Grants www.health.gov.on.ca).

A temporary injunction (which is still in effect) was granted on August 30, 1994 protecting women going into clinics and specific doctors at their offices and homes (Childbirth by Choice, 2006). When the Conservative government was elected in 1995, they announced that they would not provide new funding for abortion clinics, meaning that certain aspects of abortion care are not "billable". For example, drugs used for sedation are not covered so clinics which have opened since 1995 charge a fee beyond what Medicare pays for. During the same period when hospitals were "restructured" a number of smaller hospitals closed and merged with Catholic hospitals. Catholic hospitals do not provide abortions – and the result was reduced access (Morton, 1992; Childbirth by Choice, 2006; Palley, 2006).

There is a pattern across both provinces: access is increased under NDP regimes, and scaled back under conservative ones.

Pay Equity

In 1970 Canada ratified the *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* which guaranteed the right of everyone without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, including the right to equal pay for equal work and to just and favourable remuneration (Heritage Canada, Human Rights, 2007). By 1977 the *Canadian Human Rights Act* had come into force. Section 11 of the Act prohibited wage discrimination between male and female employees performing work of equal value (Chicha, Bilson, McCrimmon, 2004). The federal government and most Canadian provinces have enacted some form of pay equity

legislation, as have most OECD countries (Baker and Fortin, 2000).

In 1987, under the Liberal-NDP accord government, Ontario passed the *Pay Equity Act*, a proactive piece of legislation that applied to public sector as well as private sector employers with more than 10 employees. Under the NDP government in 1993, Ontario amended its *Pay Equity Act* to include two new methods of job comparison, proportional value and proxy comparison (Chicha, Bilson, McCrimmon, 2004). It was the NDP and their explicit pre-existing party policy supporting it, that insisted upon pay equity as a component of the Accord.

The Progressive Conservative government made several attempts to undermine pay equity during their tenure in government. In 1996 the government passed the *Savings and Restructuring Act, 1996* that repealed the proxy comparison method arguing that it was too expensive for government to pay out to all the employees of the broader public services. (The broader public service includes teachers, doctors, nurses, etcetera.) The Service Employees International Union brought the case to federal court, where the legislation was found unconstitutional. Later, the government passed the *Public Sector Transition Stability Act, 1997*, which stated that employers and unions are not bound to maintain adjustments from a previous pay equity plan when there is a sale of a business (Chicha, Bilson, McCrimmon, 2004).

While other provinces moved forward on pay equity, the Social Credit-dominated B.C. did not. B.C. remains the only province or territory in Canada without pay equity legislation. Some parts of the public service have taken steps to address pay equity, and some unions have bargained for this principle. Both internationally and nationally, B.C. is considered “laggard” when it comes to pay equity (Fuller, 2001). Pay equity has largely

been advanced in the public service through the collective bargaining process. The B.C. Human Rights Code protects women from sex discrimination in employment, and from sex-based wage discrimination regarding similar or substantially similar work. It does not currently offer protection based on work of equal value (Fuller, 2001).

Under the NDP in 1995, the B.C. government introduced the *Public Sector Employers' Council Pay Equity Policy Framework* – a proactive policy that required all public sector employers to develop pay equity plans with each bargaining unit or employee representative in a non-unionized workplace (Chicha, Bilson, McCrimmon, 2004). In 2001, the NDP government introduced pay equity amendments to the *Human Rights Code* to extend pay equity covering all employers in the province. It was to be enforced on the basis of complaints by employees to the B.C. Human Rights Commission (Chicha, Bilson, McCrimmon, 2004). However, the new law never took effect. The opposition Liberals promised in 2001, if elected, they would scrap the legislation and set up a task force to study the issue (CBC Archive, March 28, 2001). They were good to their word.

The Liberal government repealed the pay equity amendments and announced an independent review of provincial pay equity legislation. A Task Force was established and its report released in March 2002. The report underlined the need for government action on pay equity, but critics noted that the government was unlikely to act on the report's recommendations (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2002). There has been no legislative action to date.

There has been a clear link between the NDP in both B.C. and Ontario and activism on moving forward on the pay equity file. A number of former NDP women

legislators noted that they were very proud of pay equity accomplishments (Byrne, 1997). The social movement roots of pay equity in B.C. and Ontario are, by and large, accredited to the experiences of women helping to solve labour shortages during the first world war (Creese, 1988). Pay equity took leaps forward during NDP governments and steps back during conservative governments.

Child Care

From 1942 to 1946 the federal government subsidized day nursery care for mothers working in essential wartime industries (Varga, 1997). The costs for these centres were shared 50-50 between the federal government and the participating provinces (Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan). Alberta opted out of the program, while Manitoba and British Columbia didn't have enough wartime workers to qualify (Beach and Bertrand, 2000). Funding was pulled when the war ended but protests from Ontario parents led to the continuation of day care in the province (CBC Archive, 1998).

Since 1966, the federal government has provided child care fee subsidies for low-income families. The government also provides child care services for Aboriginal families on reserve – expanded to off reserve in 1988 (Beach and Bertrand, 2000). The Federal Liberal governments 1993-2005 had long promised a national child care program. By the end of their mandate in 2004, in a minority government, they finally delivered funding to the provinces and territories to significantly increase child care spaces and subsidy funding. The program was subsequently cancelled by the Conservative government (2005-present) and replaced with a taxable child care tax

benefit – $100 per month for every child under 6 years of age (Canada, 2005).[8]

The first child care establishment was opened in Toronto, Ontario in 1881 by a school teacher in an attempt to help children stay school. (Mothers would keep older children at home to care for younger ones.) (Varga, 1997;Beach and Bertrand, 2000). The number of child care centres expanded slowly – and were in poor areas (Varga, 1997). Inspired by the labour needs of the war, the *Day Nurseries Act* was passed in 1946 providing provincial funds to cover 50 percent of the costs of child care programs and a system of licensing and regular inspection for centres (Beach and Bertrand, 2000).

Home day care was first regulated (and allowed) in 1984 and one of the most significant developments of the late 1980s was allowing school boards to operate child care programs (Beach and Bertrand, 2000). In the first year of the Conservative government in Ontario, funding for subsidies was cut, pay equity funding was capped for staff in child care centres and funding for centres in new schools was cancelled (Collier, 1997). In 1996, the government provided capital support for for-profit child care centres and in 1999 offered tax incentives for corporations to set up on-site child care. In 1998 responsibility for managing the delivery of child care was downloaded to municipalities and the Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families was introduced to provide payments to low- and modest-income families with children under 7 years of age (Beach and Bertrand, 2000).

The first child care center in B.C. opened in Vancouver in 1910 by the Associated Charities of Vancouver – an organization that had been providing financial relief to poor families for several years (Scott, 2004). In 1930, the Vancouver Day Nursery

[8] The actual cost of full-time daycare is much higher. The average cost in Toronto, for example is over $7,000 annually (City of Toronto, Child Services Plan, 2001)

Association (later the Foster Day Care Association of Vancouver) was established to provide an employment service for women and a system of family day care homes opened. Over time, the government provided greater support and regulation for child care centres and at-home child care facilities. There is no municipal government involvement in child care, and since the 1980s, wage supplements have been available for workers in licensed child care centres – including for-profit centres (as of 1995) (Beach and Bertrand, 2000). As in Ontario, the roots of child care provision were in welfare activism and women's religious charitable organizations.

Through the 1990s, responsibility for child care moved around from ministry to ministry in B.C. This would have an inevitable impact on the primacy of the issue as it was managed by different groups – and different ministers (Beach and Bertrand, 2000). Instead of focusing on implementing change at the provincial level, the focus of the NDP government was to pressure the federal government for additional funding (Beach and Bertrand, 2000).

A review of these three policy areas in the two provinces reveals a number of patterns that will be repeated again in this thesis. First, is that the federal government has a significant role to play in the determination of provincial policy making. The federal government has attempted to legislate abortion; the federal government adoption of human rights principles moved the bar for pay equity action; and funding for childcare has been at least partially a federal responsibility. The second pattern is that conservative governments are not as responsive to traditional women's issues as left-wing governments (though there are exceptions). Pay equity failed to gain ground in B.C. where right-wing governments have dominated. Abortion access was reduced during the

Conservative government tenure in Ontario. Thirdly, it seems clear the women's movement can play a role in the development of policy, but it takes a willing administration to implement it (Young, 2000). And, finally, there is more work to be done to elucidate the involvement of elected women in public policy.

Election Platforms 1999 Ontario and 1996 in British Columbia

I turn now to the politics of the parties during the elections that brought them to government in the two provinces. The key relevance of the platforms is that they highlight the predominant shared feature of the two governments: a keen concern for the economy. This, as will be demonstrated later in this work, is a crucial component in understanding the direction of policy – and the resulting focus for all legislators.

As previously mentioned, the two governments that are the focus of this paper were in their second terms. However, each faced a more successful opposition than they had in their first terms. In their first term of office, 1995-1999, the Progressive Conservatives in Ontario won 82 seats and 45 percent of the popular vote – a majority that was reduced to 59 seats in 1999. The Liberals won 31 percent of the popular vote in 1995 increasing to 40 percent by 1999. In B.C., the NDP won 51 seats in 1991, but just 39 in 1996 – and they came second to the Liberals in popular vote. These two governments were not at their apex – their popular support had clearly eroded.

TABLE 5: Ontario Election Results 1995 and 1999

	1995	**1999**
Progressive Conservative	82 seats 40 % popular vote	59 seats 40 % popular vote
Liberal	30 seats 31 % popular vote	35 seats 40 % popular vote
N.D.P.	17 seats 20 % popular vote	9 seats 12 % popular vote

Source: Elections Ontario, General Election Results 1995 and 1999.

TABLE 6: B.C. Election Results 1991 and 1996

	1991	**1996**
N.D.P.	51 seats 40 % popular vote	39 seats 40 % popular vote
Liberal	17 seats 33 % popular vote	33 seats 42 %t popular vote

Source: Elections B.C., General Election Results 1991 and 1996.

N.B. The First-Past-the-Post (winner-take-all) single-member system in Canada has resulted in some distortions of electoral results as well as one party dominance, enfeebled opposition and "loser-wins" which is what happened in 1996 in B.C. (Milner, 2004)

B. C. Campaign 1996

The NDP government called the election on the same day they delivered their annual budget in order to provide a foundation for an election platform (McInnes and Howard, 1996). The election was considered quite competitive (McInnes and Howard, 1996). The budget included a modest income-tax cut (one percentage point in each of the next two years) and a two-year tax holiday for new small businesses (Budget Speech, 1995-96). It underlined the government's accomplishments in reducing the deficit while investing in people (particularly job training, health care, education and natural resources) (Budget Speech, 1995-96).

On the other hand, the opposition Liberals raised concerns about rising welfare rolls. Mr. Campbell, the Liberal leader, promised to cut provincial income taxes and to

make deficit budgets illegal. He also promised to make education an essential service (thus outlawing strikes by teachers) (McInnes and Howard, 1996). These issues were not unappealing to voters – the Liberal party won the popular vote and, as will be discussed later, the significance of the concern with rising welfare rolls and economic issues would inform the NDP government as well.

During the 1996 election, the Women's Election Agenda Coalition, spearheaded by Vancouver Status of Women, devised a questionnaire for party leaders and candidates. The questions covered a range of issues, including welfare, health care, lesbian rights, job creation, funding of women's centres, and many others. The questionnaire helped to raise women's issues during the election but the party responses to the questionnaire were "by far the best from the NDP" and the Liberal responses were generally quite brief and in many cases, unsatisfying…There were no radically opposed positions outlined in the responses, the clear distinction was depth of policy information" (ProChoice Action Press, 1996).

The NDP Speech from the Throne outlined the priorities of the new government. The vision was one of "a government on the side of working families and the middle class" (Hansard, June 25, 1996). The speech outlined plans for a three-year tax freeze, a two-year freeze on tuition fees and a two-year tax holiday for small businesses. It also promised a plan to protect forestry jobs and the fishing industry. On the social services side, the government planned to expand funding for hospitals and schools – all the while ensuring that these services meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population (Speech from the Throne, June 25, 1996).

Ontario Campaign 1999

The Ontario Progressive Conservative Speech from the Throne (Hansard, October 21, 1999) provides an interesting contrast in the approaches of the two governments. The Conservative speech highlights stories of individuals who have done well and "asked for no assistance from government". The government promised to cut both personal taxes and property taxes as well as to introduce legislation that would prevent governments from raising taxes without voter approval. Other initiatives outlined included cutting government red tape and major investments in infrastructure. On the social services side, the speech promised increased training for welfare recipients, as well as testing for teachers (Speech from the Throne, October 21, 1999).

The 1995 Conservative campaign was founded on "The Common Sense Revolution" a 30-page right-of-centre policy platform that outlined specific policy plans. This theme was carried forward into the 1999 election campaign in which the Conservatives focused on two main messages: further tax cuts and more spending on health (Noel, 1999). The campaign promised an additional 20 percent cut in provincial income tax rates but very few specifics other than "increased spending" on education and health care (Monahan, 1999).

The opposition Liberal Party's campaign was primarily negative (Fletcher and MacDermid, 1999). Their platform also contained promises of more money for health care and education as well as a "pledge" to balance the budget and to hold the line on taxes (Urquhart, 1999). The NDP platform did not mention the restoration of welfare benefits (significantly scaled back in the government's first term) but promised to roll

back the Harris tax cut for people with taxable incomes of more than $80,000 (Urquhart, 1999). Note again, how financial issues dominated for all three parties.

Not only did both winning parties in both governments focus on economic issues, but all the opposition parties did as well. It is an indicator of the key issue of the time – and that social issues were not the primary focus for any party left or right – with a critical mass of women or without.

Conclusion

To set the stage for further discussion, this chapter has described two provinces that are economically vital with long right-of-centre histories. In the period studied here, they have significantly different political governments – one left of centre with more women in government and one right of centre with fewer women in government. However, we have also seen key similarities between the provinces: a keen attention to the economy overall and a history of less-than-enthusiastic commitments to child care, abortion access and pay equity. The next chapter will examine in more detail both the women of the two governments – looking for patterns of background, experience and links to the women's movement. It will also look at the legislative accomplishments of those women and those governments.

Chapter 3

Domestic Violence Policy

The story of domestic violence policy in Ontario and in B.C. is one that is dominated by women. It was women activists who brought attention to the issue, who worked behind the scenes in the bureaucracy and who kept the issue in the media. (This has been noted in studies outside of Canada as well – Gelb, 1989.) Women politicians from all parties have spoken publicly on their concerns about domestic violence and have been handed responsibility for it when in government – with some notable exceptions. One would expect, particularly on this key feminist issue, that women politicians would play an important role in the development of policy. In Ontario, however, when the Conservative government decided in its first term to fundamentally shift the focus of domestic violence policy and spending, they assigned the task to a male minister.

Lise Gotell notes that through the late 1980s and early 1990s there was a heightened recognition of the problem of domestic violence in Canada (Gotell, 1997). However, the issue has been configured in a new way – namely that the state has become a protector of victims and a punisher of criminals – but not supportive of the prevention of crime or helping women after the fact (Gotell, 1997). The experiences of Ontario and B.C. help substantiate Gotell's thesis, and contribute further to this thesis' overall finding of a sea change in Canadian politics that swept women politicians and a feminist agenda along with it.

As the history of domestic violence policy unfolds as described below, several

other patterns also emerge. First of all, federal policy action shapes provincial action. When the federal government made domestic violence a priority, the provinces followed suit and when it seemed to fade to the background, the same happened at the provincial level. This can, in part, be attributed to the practice of matching funding whereby the federal government promises support to an organization (such as a shelter) or issue if the province antes up dollar-for-dollar matching support. It also can be explained by the Downs (1973) issue attention cycle – policies have a window of prominence and may then move off the front burners of attention. Policy action made its way into the "policy stream" by virtue of various crises – in this case, high profile murders of women by their partners (Kingdon, 2003).

The second identifiable pattern is the use of government reports to advance the agenda. On both the provincial and federal levels, government-sponsored and initiated arms-length reports serve as a third-party endorsement for the need to take action. This happens in almost all areas of public policy and has several benefits for the government including that it buys time to consider the right approach and it manages the consultation process, keeping significant objectors at arm's-length as well. Cobb and Ross (1997) note that governments use various tactics to appear to take action when they are in fact delaying action.

Finally, this analysis demonstrates that there are often external events that shape public policy. In the case of domestic violence, it is sadly, and inevitably, that a high-profile spousal murder serves as an instigator of government action. The issue of domestic violence also serves as an example of a policy area that changed direction during the trend to move away from state-based answers to social problems and the focus

on fiscal restraint.

1. Federal policy and funding

Preventing and prosecuting violence against women has been an articulated concern of the Canadian federal government since the early 1970s. Several scholars note the importance of federal action – in a federalist system – in helping to advance domestic violence policy (Chappel, 2001; Gray, 2006). Judy LaMarsh, federal Liberal government Secretary of State and Member of Parliament from 1960-68, can in part, be credited with helping to put the issue on the federal agenda (www.parl.gc.ca, Kome, 1985). LaMarsh was the second female cabinet minister in Canadian history, and was committed to "correcting inequities" (LaMarsh, 1970). (Ms. LaMarsh was also instrumental in launching the Royal Commission on the Status of Women and the Canada Pension Plan, LaMarsh, 1970; Kome, 1985). The Royal Commission explicitly addressed "wife abuse" (O'Neill, 2003).

Since the Royal Commission (as discussed in Chapter 2), there has been within the federal cabinet, a Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Status of Women, 2007). The Minister is responsible for Status of Women Canada (SWC), the federal government agency which promotes: "gender equality, and the full participation of women in the economic, social, cultural and political life of the country…SWC focuses its work in three areas: improving women's economic autonomy and well-being, eliminating systemic violence against women and children, and advancing women's human rights" (www.swc-cfc.gc.ca). Status of Women has a Policy Research Fund which has published numerous papers over the years on women's issues – and several on

family violence and violence against women with strong policy recommendations.

In 1980, Status of Women published *Wife Battering in Canada: The Vicious Circle*, based on broad consultations and was the first Canadian book on the subject. According to Walker (1998), the consultations came about due to feminists in the bureaucracy who wanted to do movement work while being funded by the state. The Status of Women report increased public awareness of the issue and helped to instigate a report on family violence by the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs. The committee (nine men, two women) heard from women's groups and regional representatives. The report urged criminal sentences for abusers, funding for shelters and police training (House of Commons Canada, 1982). Afterward, federal provincial and territorial governments began providing funding for shelters. The number of shelters in Canada increased from 78 in 1978 to over 400 by the end of the 1980s (Denham and Gillespie, 1999). Most shelters received some public funding for core services – but this was eventually reduced (Denham and Gillespie, 1999).

By the mid-1980s, there was evidence that the curtailing of feminist claims on the state had begun – and the culture of fiscal focus had started to take hold. From a political perspective, federal Conservative party governments of 1984-93 challenged feminist interventions in public policy and reduced support for programs that benefited women preferentially (Burt, 1997). In 1990, funding for women's groups was reduced from $12.4 million to $7.4 million (Burt, 1997).

The current major federal intervention in domestic violence is the Family Violence Initiative, launched in 1988 and coordinated by the Public Health Agency of

Canada. (At the time, the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues was Barbara McDougall. Some noted that McDougall was distant from the movement, but McDougall herself stated that there was growing confluence between the movement and women in power resulting in the mainstreaming of issues such as child care and women's issues – Kelber, 1994.) Then Justice Minister Kim Campbell was pleased with the government's criminalization efforts: "The power of the new law is that it speaks to all women…all women are vulnerable" (Gotell, 1997). Gotell also points out that this was a key turning point in violence against women discourse because while the government was adopting feminist language ("violence against women") it was focusing more on the violence, and therefore criminal aspect of the problem (Gotell, 1997).

Since 1996, the Family Violence Initiative has been provided with annual funding of $7 million to be shared originally among seven departments (now 15) as a supplement to expenditures from their ongoing budgets that they and other departments, agencies and Crown corporations make to address the issue (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2002). Funding levels have not changed in a decade.

The mandate is to address family violence, which includes spousal, child and elder abuse and murder. The initiative has four major components: social science research (including the annual publication by Statistics Canada of "Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile"); policy development (provincial/territorial, federal and international); short-term funding for "innovative" family violence projects across the country; and public legal education.

The new Liberal government of 1993 held high promise for women's groups. A

record number of women were elected. Some 22 percent of candidates were women (as compared to just 10 percent in 1984) and 53 were elected – 17.9 percent of the House (Arscott and Trimble, 2003). In 2000, 62 women were elected – 20.6 percent of Parliament (www.parl.gc.ca). However, as Burt (1997) points out, the Liberal program for women was disappointing for the movement and illustrates the difficulty in relying on numbers to affect change. Young (2001) argues that there was a growing gap between the feminism of the Liberal party (as articulated by the National Women's Liberal Committee) and the feminist principles of the women's movement. Once the Liberal party elected more women, the policy questions "faded away" due to their interest in promoting party over cause (Young, 2000). This can also be attributed to the growing concern about deficit reduction that was dominating the Liberal party.

In response to the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, the Liberal government established a plan of action called "Setting the Stage for the Next Century" (Burt, 1997). It included 8 objectives, many of them reiterations of earlier promises (Burt, 1997). One of those objectives was "to reduce violence against women". It did form a substantial portion of the report and touched on broad issues related to violence against women including community based action, education, media awareness, support for shelters, criminal justice reform and addressing violence in First Nations' On-reserve and Inuit communities (Status of Women Canada, 1995). Various women's groups used the report as a benchmark of principles to later argue for policy reform or legal action. (Ontario Women's Network on Custody and Access is one example.) There has been no update or similar document produced by Status of Women since. At the time, the Minister of State, Responsible for Status of Women, was Sheila Finestone, a life-long

feminist and former president of the Federation des Femmes Quebec (Parliament of Canada, 2007). Arguably, Finestone was the strongest Minister responsible for Status of Women. Throughout her term as Member of Parliament and later as Senator, she spoke constantly about women's issues. "Gender violence…tears at the very fabric of society. We need to act not just for ourselves, but for our daughters and our granddaughters. It is for their right to walk safely and earn fairly anywhere in Canada," (Hansard, December 6, 1994).

By the late 1990s overall funding for domestic violence had been cut back as part of the government-wide program of restraint (Denham and Gillespie, 1999). Wide sections of the safety net (such as transitional housing) were no longer funded in some provinces and the reduction of funding for legal aid in many provinces has made it more difficult for women to press charges (Denham and Gillespie, 1999).

Responsibility for criminal justice and the administration of justice is shared between provinces/territories and the federal government. There is no explicit mention of domestic or family violence in the Criminal Code of Canada but charges could include assault, sexual assault, criminal harassment, uttering threats, intimidation, forcible confinement, attempted murder, murder (Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, 2001). In recent years, a number of key *Criminal Code* amendments have been passed to improve the criminal justice legal framework for addressing family violence including criminal harassment, witness protection, peace bonds, increasing penalties (APFWLD, 2001).

At all stages of the evolution of changes to the Criminal Code, women parliamentarians, the Status of Women and the women's movement were active

participants in the discussions. For example, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women published a paper called "Too Little, Too Fast: Brief on Bill C-126" (Bain, Bazilli, Rebick, 1993) with a sharp critique of the government's new anti-stalking law. The Status of Women Policy Research Fund published a paper prior to the passage of Bill C-41 on abuse as an aggravating factor in convictions. The paper which made specific policy recommendations designed to influence legislation including: "There should be a presumption that custody should not be awarded to the perpetrators of domestic violence" (Status of Women Policy Research Fund, 1998). On the issue of increasing penalties for criminal harassment, Minister of Justice, Anne McClellan said:

> We know from Statistics Canada data for 1999 that eight out of ten victims of police-reported incidents of criminal harassment were women. We know that eight out of ten accused were men. We also know that more than half of the female victims were criminally harassed by a current or former intimate partner. This data characterizes criminal harassment for many as an issue of violence against women and as an issue of family violence, (Legislative Assembly of Ontario, Standing Committed on Justice and Human Rights, October 2, 2001).

According to the second national government report on Family Violence by Statistics Canada 17 percent of all violent offences reported to police in 1997 were spousal violence (Statistics Canada, 1999). The study was aware of the limitations of the data – namely that relying on reported incidents likely underestimated the true incidence of domestic violence. In 1999 the General Social Survey reported that 7 percent of married or common law people experienced some sort of violence by a partner in the past 5 years – 690,000 women and 549,000 men (Statistics Canada, 1999). Women who experienced more extreme forms of violence and were more likely to report multiple incidents (Statistics Canada, 2000). Women in B.C. reported among the highest rates in Canada (10 percent) and women in Ontario among the lowest (7 percent) (Statistics

Canada, General Social Survey, 1999).

2. History of Domestic Violence Policy

In the early 1970s in Vancouver the Vancouver Status of Women office (set up by recommendation of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women – see Chapter 2) and Women's Place (a drop-in community centre) were becoming more aware of women with "marital difficulties" (Walker, 1990). The result was the establishment of Transition House for women leaving their husbands. It was immediately filled (Walker, 1990). In 1975-76 the Vancouver United Way commissioned a pilot study of incidents and through the same period academic and media interest became focused on the subject (Walker, 1990).

In 1984 the British Columbia Ministry of the Attorney General established the Wife Assault Policy – an effort to establish a coordinated response by the justice system (Chambers, 1998). The policy was first announced by the right-wing Social Credit government in a submission to the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Group on Wife Assault. Action was inspired by both the federally-organized working group and the fact that other provinces had similar policies (Collier, 2006). While the male Attorney General made a few mentions of the policy in Hansard (notably, March 26, 1985) a review of the Hansard subject index for the years 1984 and 1985, reveals that Grace McCarthy, Minister of Government Affairs spoke most frequently on the issue – particularly in support of the government's initiatives to expand the number of transition housing spaces for women fleeing abusive situations (Hansard, 33rd Parliament). Women's organizations, on the other hand, argued that the changes were ineffective and

not supported by government action (Kachuk, 1998).

More significantly, feminist researchers considered that the policy was patriarchal and heterosexist – procedural instructions for criminal justice personnel were only for white, English speaking women (Kachuck, 1998). Specific cultural training for Aboriginal women or for non-English speaking women was entirely absent (Kachuk, 1998). The great failing of the policy up to this point, was its "inability to persuade the justice system that wife assault was not a private matter (Kachuk, 1998). Notably, Attorney General Brian Smith's language reflects Gotell's aforementioned thesis on the shift in language and domestic violence: "We have a new policy which recognizes the criminal nature of wife assault, with a view to affording the highest level of protection to persons in need of assistance," (Hansard, March 26, 1985).

The early story of domestic violence policy in B.C. was that it was initiated and supported by grassroots women's organizations with the assistance of broader action that was taking place on the federal level. The Social Credit party at the provincial level, regardless of the women in caucus, took few pro-active steps – though again, the strongest supporter was a woman, Grace McCarthy. In 1990, attune to the gender gap in support for the Social Credit party, the government established an Advisory Council on Community Based Programs for women and announced a 25 percent budget increase in shelter finding (Collier, 2006).

Eventually, the B.C. approach was fully articulated in the Violence Against Women in Relationships Policy (by the NDP in 1993) which broadened the definitions of abuse and issued clear directives in regard to mandatory arrest, harsher sentences and

victims services (Chambers, 1988). The policy took a four-part approach: swift police response, domestic violence charges go to court, enforcement of legal sanctions and treatment programs for offenders (Kachuk, 1998). The new NDP government (via Carol Gran, Minister of Women's Programs and Government Services) in 1991 established a Task Force on Family Violence. The Task Force was established as a result of the Minister's province-wide consultation with women and the public reaction to the government's public awareness campaign. The report of the task force, "*Is Anyone Listening?"* called for a "victim-centred approach", acknowledged that there were groups that were particularly discriminated against (especially Aboriginal peoples) and recommended increased funding, education and coordination of programs and services. It also noted that there was significant criticism of the current policy due to its inconsistent and uneven implementation across the province (Task Force on Family Violence, 1992).

The women of the NDP government spoke extensively in the legislature on the issue. When introducing the Estimates for the Budget of the Ministry of Women's Equality, Minister Penny Priddy stated: "…even one woman being abused is unacceptable. The violence must end. This government is committed not to reducing violence against women, but to eliminating it. That means we work with communities to prevent violence from occurring in the first place and to ensure that intervention occurs as quickly as possible when it does happen," (Hansard June 12, 1992). Other women ministers were strong supporters of the initiative: Minister Gretchen Mann-Brewin noted: "It is unconscionable that there should be any violence against women and children in this province…this is a beginning to stop that,"(Hansard, April, 6, 1992). The women's movement in B.C. was also supportive of the changes that ensued – particularly the

increases in funding of $10 million per year to the Stopping the Violence Initiative, core funding for the B.C./Yukon Society of Transition Houses (Collier, 2006). Later, in 1994, the NDP also increased funding to the wages of front line anti-violence workers (Collier, 2006).

In B.C. we note two key patterns. First of all, the tendency of right-wing governments to shift domestic violence policy to the private sphere and left wing governments to expend more effort on pro-active, preventative programs. Secondly, women government members, regardless of the party in power spoke out on the issue most frequently.

In Ontario, the efforts to combat violence against women took place along a similar timeline – and action was often inspired by crises (Kingdon, 2003). After a series of attacks on women in 1982, a Pink Ribbon group was established in Toronto. (The group eventually became the Metro Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children.) The group released a report which encouraged the provincial Ministries of the day develop a common protocol for dealing with abused women and their families (Begin, 1991). At the same time, the Conservative government of the day charged the Standing Committee on Social Development with developing a report on "Wife Battering". There were two women on the Standing Committee (Marion Bryden, NDP and Sheila Copps, Liberal), but all those who spoke publicly on the work of the committee and its report were men – from all three parties. There were four Conservative women members at the time, though none spoke out on the issue. Minister Robert Welch – the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues noted in the House, "It was the report and the response to the report that encouraged us to get more involved than had been the case.

The financial enrichment has been there as far as this program is concerned," (Hansard, November 26, 1984).

Some of the ensuing initiatives included a Domestic Assault Prosecutor program to ensure that lawyers were available to women, and a public education campaign, which began in 1984 (Begin, 1991). The Conservative government was, at least paying attention – in 1984-85 new funding was provided to transition houses and shelters. However, both the opposition and women's groups objected to the limited focus of funding. NDP member of Provincial Parliament, Richard Johnson said "We still do not get the support from police officers around the province we would like. Even more important, we have structures in our provincial programs in government institutions at the moment that inflict heavy penalties on battered women and do not assist them," (Hansard, April 30, 1984). In Ontario, women politicians had yet to move to the forefront of the issue – while women's organizations clearly had.

The Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OAITH) had presented at the Standing Committee and were ultimately pleased that the subject had increased its profile on the political agenda, but they were concerned that some 100 recommendations made by various service providers were not reflected in the report – and they noted that the report did refer to the primacy of the family (Walker, 1990). Bill Wrye, Liberal member from Windsor, noted that the report was positive, but the time had come for legislation (Hansard November 26, 1984). None was to come for some time.

Under the Liberal/NDP accord from 1985 to 1987, only one anti-violence initiative was announced ($7 million) (Collier, 2006). According to Richard Johnson,

who was then the Chair of the Standing Committee on Social Development, it was the threat of bringing the issue back to the committee for further review that instigated the Liberal government's increased funding (Walker, 1990).

During the NDP government years from 1990-1995, there was considerably more activity on domestic violence policy and there were a great many more women politicians involved. The Minister (Without Portfolio) Responsible for Women's Issues was a former director of a women's shelter; for a time, the Attorney General was a woman; and the minister of Community and Social Services was also a woman. "In fact, one of the things we have done since we became the government has been to give great priority to that issue, whether it be funding for women's shelters; the appointment of more women to the provincial bench, where a great many of these issues are dealt with, in court; training for crown attorneys so they may more sensitively and adequately deal with these kinds of issues; issuing rape shield directives which directed crown attorneys to ensure that women who were questioned in sexual assault trials as to their prior sexual history were not abused on the witness stand," stated Howard Hampton, Attorney General (Hansard, December 3, 1991).

There was considerable increase in funding to domestic violence prevention and to shelters between 1992 and 1994 in spite of the fact that the province was in a recession (Collier, 2006). In 1991, the government promised to spend an additional $20.3 million on campaigns against sexual assault and wife abuse (Walkom, 1994). The 1991 budget outline $12 million for new beds in shelters – and the minister noted: "Violence against women is a major social problem which we must work resolutely to eliminate," (Ontario Budget Speech 1991). Spending on programs and shelters rose by 52 percent over the

five-year mandate (Byrne, 1997). There was also a considerable shift in the language used to describe violence against women. It was no longer, according to Hansard transcripts, referred to as "Wife abuse", but instead had adopted the terminology of the women's movement: Violence against women. According to the Speech from the Throne: "We will deal resolutely with violence against women and children. It is time for society to come face to face with this reality," (Lieutenant Governor Lincoln Alexander, Hansard November 20, 1990). According to the Premier, Bob Rae, "Our purpose was to create a framework of public policy that would steadily reduce discrimination against women, visible minorities and the disabled," (Rae, 1996). Rae's cabinet had a record number of women in it (some 42 percent, Byrne, 1997) but at the same time, the party also had an explicit policy agenda to address domestic violence – so while women played a role in supporting improvements at the cabinet table, so too did party policy.

3. Getting on the public agenda

In 1995 in Ontario, Liberal Leader Lyn McLeod talked on the campaign trail about the need for new legislation to toughen the definition of and penalties for domestic violence (Ibbitson, 2000). It became a polarizing issue between the Liberals and Conservatives during the campaign.

Responding to the campaign issue, the new Conservative government directed the Ontario Women's Directorate to issue a short and controversial report on how to "align services for battered women with the current government's priorities" (Ontario Women's Directorate, 1997). Among its suggestions, the report recommended that women who flee batterers only be allowed to stay in a shelter for 48 hours and then return home with a

restraining order against their spouses. Minister Diane Cunningham assured people that women would not be quickly ejected from shelters (Mallan, 1996). The report was done by a private company (McGuire Associates Consultants) and questioned the importance of funding for shelters.

Representatives of women's groups voiced strong opposition to the government report. Kathy Willis, president of the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OAITH), said if women are forced to return to an unsafe environment they will end up feeling that the system cannot protect them and will remain stuck in abusive relationships (Mallan, 1996).

Liberal leader, Lyn McLeod said in the House:

> The real goal of the McGuire report and your real goal, the goal of your government in commissioning it, was to find efficiencies in the programs that deal with violence against women; that the real goal is to find ways of cutting dollars. That's why that report recommends that you shift dollars away from programs that provide protection for women to what you call prevention, (Hansard June 11, 1997).

The foundation of the Conservative approach, however, had been set by the McGuire report: focus on prevention and punishment and scale back funding to shelters and services. Women's groups were explicitly not consulted for the McGuire report (Collier, 2006). What is important to note that the early days of this government the fiscal agenda is of the ultimate importance. Even though the economy had begun to improve, the government's chief focus was cutting costs.

Domestic violence was also at forefront of the political agenda because in 1996 a woman, Arlene May, a mother of three, was murdered by her estranged boyfriend. In response, the government created the Joint Committee on Domestic Violence (Cross,

2002). The report was released in August of 1999 and was not well received. Women's groups noted pointedly that the result was the wearing thin of the social safety net – which in turn, meant that women in abusive situations had no where to go and no means to financial independence (Toronto Star, September 26, 1999). They also noted that the experts called to testify were from the "hard on crime" ministries and that there was no mention of feminism or gendering of the problem in the report (Toronto Star, September 26, 1999).

In British Columbia, it was also violent incidents that brought the issue to the political forefront. (A crisis, again, moved the issue onto the agenda Kingdon, 2003.) In 1996 a woman and nine members of her family were shot and killed by her ex-partner and in the same year, a woman from the same city was stalked and non-fatally shot by her ex-partner (Chambers, 1998). The British Columbia Ministry of the Attorney General ordered and inquest into the family massacre in order to explain the lack of earlier police intervention. It was clear, certainly to front-line workers, that police workers were not responding adequately to the safety needs of women (Chambers, 1998). It was also clear to researchers that the overall attitude toward and treatment of incidents had not changed, in spite of previous policy revisions (Kachuk, 1998). Women in cabinet did speak out on the issue, but not widely. The Minister Responsible for Women's Equality noted: "All of us would agree that it's imperative that we look at prevention. To that end we have refocused all our grant money into projects that involve the community in prevention," (Hansard, July 18, 1996). Certainly in the legislature, the most pro-active person to raise the issue was a woman, Liberal critic Lyn Stephens.

The policy changes were managed by the Ministry of Women's Equality, created

by the previous NDP government (Erickson, 1997). Its program and policy responsibilities included violence against women. The government provided additional funding to transition houses, sexual assault issues and women's centres and added eleven new government funded centres (Erickson, 1997). The government also increased wages of front-line anti-violence workers – a move that was welcomed (Collier, 2006). Overall, the very active grassroots organizations of B.C. were pleased that domestic violence was being taken more seriously. However, they were also concerned that the government response emphasized criminality – which has had mixed results (BCASVACP, 2007). Activism on the file in the second mandate was spurred by the 1996 murders but the majority of the work was positive for the movement, if limited in scope (Collier, 2006).

4. Policy action

The B.C. government Speech from the Throne in 1996 did not mention violence against women. (The Speech from the Throne is a statement in the legislature that sets the policy direction for the legislative term.) It did however, mention crime:

> People look to their government, as well, to fight crime and the causes of crime. They want to know their communities will be safe places in which to live and to raise their families. My government has responded with a range of initiatives to give our province's police and the judicial system the tools they need to combat crime, (Lieutenant Governor, Garde Gardom, June 25, 1996).

The new Ontario government did not mention violence against women in its Speech from the Throne either. It also mentioned crime:

> Your government will continue to replace aging jails with more secure facilities. It will expand strict discipline rehabilitation programming for young and adult offenders. And it will ensure that criminals are accountable for their own actions by exploring all reasonable ways to make them contribute to the costs they have imposed on the taxpayer, (Lieutenant Governor, Hilary Weston, Speech from the Throne, October 21, 1999).

It is unusual for a government to present a Speech from the Throne mid-term, but they do have the option to do so. In B.C. the NDP government presented a Speech from the Throne at the launch of the 3rd session of the 36th Parliament. Lieutenant Governor Garde Gardom said, " Also, there will be further expansion in the network of residential services that provide safe places for women and children fleeing violence. Government will work with a broad coalition of partners on a province-wide strategy to prevent violence against women before it happens," (Hansard, March 26, 1998).

Women cabinet ministers were not as active on the domestic violence file in Ontario as they were in B.C.: Ontario ministers raised it more rarely in the legislature and did not refer to it as an accomplishment of their government in interviews. In Ontario, the male Attorney General answered most of the questions on the file as the government's focus was criminalization and he managed the legislation himself – without the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues. The B.C. ministers, on the other hand, both talked about it in the legislature and described in interviews their pride in their accomplishments on the file.

The two provinces took two approaches to domestic violence policy: legislation (Bill 117 Ontario, 2000) and policy change (the amendments and revisions to domestic violence policy in B.C. from 1996 to 2000, which included new programs, shelters and new approaches to justice in domestic violence cases).

Ontario funding and legislation

Upon entering its second mandate, the Conservative government was faced with the report from the (aforementioned) May inquest with its 213 recommendations and a highly

engaged women's shelter sector who were determined to see action. At the same time, the government was keen to take action on being tough on crime. "This government will not tolerate violence against women...I will continue to work closely with my colleagues to ensure violence prevention initiatives across government are coordinated and effective," said Helen Johns, the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation with Responsibility for Seniors and Women," (News Release, Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, December 22, 1999).

The Cross-Sectoral Violence Against Women Strategy Group, representing 160 groups, drew up a set of demands in a document called *Emergency Measures for Women and Children*. These measures included an immediate increase of $50 million for shelters, crisis lines, sexual assault programs and the renewal of second stage housing, and a further $50 million to implement legal reforms suggested by the May Inquest (including better legal aid funding) (Cross, 2000). The NDP and Liberal leaders both met with the Strategy Group and signed the document. However, the Conservatives sent lower-ranking parliamentary assistants. During the meetings, the Conservative members refused to commit to any of the measures put forward by the Strategy Group. Instead announced $5 million for a program to assist children who witness domestic violence and a $5 million increase in funding for transitional support programs just prior to the delegation's news conference. According to Ontario Women's Justice Network, some media mistakenly saw this as a "speedy and very positive response" to the delegation, when in reality the money had already been allocated in the spring budget and had nothing to do with the movement's lobbying efforts (Cross, 2000).

Shelter workers continually argued that there was little being done to address the

problem facing women leaving abusive spouses: poverty and housing (Monsebraaten, 2003). Second-stage housing providers were also highly critical of the government's approach to domestic violence. They argued that the withdrawal of funding in 1996 created a disconnection between second stage housing services and other violence against women service providers. "We believe that this is unacceptable...Counselling programs have been carved to the bone. Many second stages are in crisis survival mode," (Alliance of Second Stage Housing presentation to the Standing Committee on Justice and Social Policy, November 24, 2000).

Notably, in the second mandate, the government handed full responsibility for domestic violence policy and public announcements to the male attorney general. Press conferences on the initiatives were attended by both the Attorney General and the Minister Responsible Women's Issues. When announcing the intention to legislate, he said: "This will send a clear signal that domestic violence is not tolerated in Ontario…A conviction would leave the abuser with the "serious social stigma" of a criminal record and allow for jail time of up to two years," (Boyle, 2000 A01). A group of activists stormed the press conference and slammed the government for not providing more shelter space to battered women stuck in abusive relationships (Boyle, 2000). The government approach focused on criminalization, not supports. According to the Premier, "We are trying very hard to ensure that women who are in abusive situations are not financially dependent and we don't think you solve that problem by making them financially dependent on the state," (Hansard December 4, 2000).

In both 2001 and 2003, Minister of Community and Social Services, increased funding for counseling and other services in shelters (Ontario Ministry of Community

and Social Services 2001, Ontario Budget 2003). Feminist columnist Michele Landsberg, among others, continued to be highly critical of the government's action (or inaction) on domestic violence. The new funds were considered too little, and too late. She noted that one shelter turned away 1,000 women in a single year (Landsberg, 2003).

B.C. policy action

The B. C. government took several major steps on this file: commissioned two external reports; consulted broadly; developed an alternative justice option for domestic violence: and expanded programs and services with a new overarching policy. Just as in Ontario, the government early in its mandate commissioned an external report on violence against women. The results were quite different. In B.C. the emphasis was on the cost of violence. The study argued that violence against women in British Columbia costs about $382-million a year for expenses such as policing, safe houses and lost pay (Canadian Council on Social Development, 1996). The Minister of Women's Equality, Sue Hammell noted, "That is a cost not only supported by the taxpayers, but it's indicative of the human cost of violence against women." The research by Richard Kerr and Associates also calculated that $161 million was spent on income assistance for divorced or separated women who faced repeated incidents of violence in previous relationships (Canadian Press, 1996).

In 1996, the new government announced, A Safer Future for B. C. Women program. It was unique in that its focus was primarily on systemic change, addressing societal attitudes, commonly accepted behaviours that lead to, or support, violence against women (Status of Women Canada, 1998). According to the Minister of Women's

Equality, Sue Hammel, the government consulted quite broadly and deeply on its approaches to violence against women:

> A significant amount of our energy goes into working with the community around prevention projects…it's only if you stay connected to the grass roots that you do actually hear what is going on in the community… So let me say that we talk and meet with the grass roots of the community and then feed back their concerns to various ministries, and sometimes we look for policy change and sometimes we work directly with another minister around an issue.
>
> One example would be that we got feedback from the community that the harassment policy should be translated into Punjabi and Chinese, so we did that. That's two ministers, plus linking with the community and providing some information so the community can then be more knowledgeable around that particular issue. We worked with the Attorney General on the cell phones and around strengthening notification procedures and protection orders, (Hansard, May 3, 1998).

Also in 1996, the government adopted alternative measures including allowing for restorative justice approaches to violence against women in aboriginal communities – however it was not well received. Fay Blaney, Vice President of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women and a member of the Aboriginal Women's Action Network (B.C.), noted that restorative justice was being implemented without appropriate consultation with Aboriginal women (PATHS, 2000).

The government however, had intended to broaden the approach:

> While the courts remain an appropriate forum for dealing with more serious crimes, the formal justice process may not, in some cases, meet the needs of individuals and communities. Most British Columbians believe that alternatives are needed to enhance and complement the formal justice process, (B.C. Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, 2004).

In 1999, the Minister's Advisory Council on women's health presented another report to the Minister of Health and Minister Responsible for Seniors and the Minister of Women's Equality. It outlined the costs to women's health of domestic violence and the

gaps in services. “Up until this point, the health response to violence against women in B.C. has been fragmented, uncoordinated and often informal. The report called for cross-sectoral collaboration and sustained funding. It also outlined the systemic racism and discrimination of the current system.” (Minister’s Advisory Council, 1999).

During the second term of the B.C. NDP government, progress on anti-violence initiatives slowed and while the majority of the government activity was considered positive by the movement, none of the actions were considered significant (Collier, 2006).

The final policy change was revisions to the Violence Against Women in Relationships Policy (VAWIR). VAWIR stipulates that police officers are required to arrest in all cases where there is evidence that an offence has taken place (B.C. Ministry of Attorney General, 2000). If there are grounds to believe an offence has occurred, officers are ordered to use no discretion and arrest the suspect (Pacey, 2002). In 1996, further emphasis was placed on arrest and longer sentencing was stipulated for domestic violence and stalking (B.C. Ministry of Attorney General, 2000).

The 1996 reforms stated that the police must conduct a complete investigation in every case of spousal assault, and that if any evidence indicates an assault has occurred, then an arrest must be made. Kachuk (1998) and others questioned mandatory arrest and its effectiveness – asking if in fact, it escalated violence (Welch, 1994). Kachuk (1998) also raised concerns with the ability of the justice system to interpret the policy.

According to Collier (2006) the two approaches – in Ontario and B.C. – to domestic violence shared a great deal: both took the issue seriously and spent

significantly on neo-liberal criminalization initiatives. But they also demonstrated key differences – namely, that overall the left-wing B.C. government policy was more responsive to the women's movement and the right-wing Ontario government alienated the movement (Collier, 2006).

5. Expenditures

Inspired by the work of Cheryl Collier (2006) who argues that expenditures can reveal policy differences, I present here government expenditures on domestic violence. I rely on Public Accounts for both provinces. Expenditures are reported for programming and services, but not separated out in accounts of health care, prosecution, incarceration and other costs related to domestic violence. (Public Accounts are the annual audited statements of the government's revenues and expenditures and are therefore a more accurate measure of spending than articulated promises in budget speeches, budget papers, press releases and other government announcements.) Expenditures, particularly on programs and services help to illuminate the degree to which a government is dedicated to the problem – hence I also present my calculations of the proportion of the total budget dedicated to domestic violence.

In B.C. the Women's Equality Ministry manages and funds the lion's share of anti-violence programs but in Ontario, Violence Against Women initiatives are managed by the Ministry of Community and Social Services. In B.C. other women's services are provided by the Ministry of the Attorney General – and listed in Public Accounts as "Women's and Seniors' Community Services"

TABLE 7: Ontario Expenditures on Violence Against Women Initiatives

Under the Ministry of Community and Social Services

Fiscal Year	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
VAW expenditures (millions)	$72.3	$82.5	$85.7	$91.2
Percentage of Entire Government Expenditures	.12	.13	.14	.14

"To ensure the provision of effective and accountable social and community services through direct service delivery and transfer payments to municipalities, First Nations and community agencies that provide community-based supports for persons who are in need including….victims of family violence,"
Ontario Public Accounts, Details of Expenditures 1999-2000.

TABLE 8: B.C. Expenditures on Stopping the Violence 1997-2001

Fiscal Year	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001
Total Program Expenditure (millions)	$32.8	$32.9	$33.5	$49.9
Percentage of Entire Government Expenditures	.14	.13	.13	.19

'Stopping the Violence Branch is responsible for funding, managing and administering programs to support community-based prevention projects and counseling programs, transition houses, safe homes and second stage housing," (B.C. Ministry of Community Services, 2007).

The B.C. and Ontario governments spent roughly similar proportions of their budgets on anti-violence initiatives – with the exception of the final year of the NDP mandate in B.C. where under the direction of the second premier of the term, Ujal Dosanjh, expenditures increased to their highest levels since 1995 (Collier, 2006). According to the annual Statistics Canada reports on family violence, police-reported incidents of spousal violence actually declined on a national basis over the 10-year period from 1993 to 1999 (Statistics Canada, 2006). However, the report also noted that it was impossible to tell if

that meant actual incidents were going down, or that shelters and preventative programs were having an effect. For example, 1997-98 over 90,000 women entered 413 shelters and in 2001-02 some 101,000 women entered 483 shelters (Statistics Canada, 2003).

Compared to previous administrations in B.C., funding increased when the NDP government came to power, though late in the Social Credit term of office, a 25 percent increase in shelter funding had been announced (Collier, 2006). After the NDP government left, there were substantial cuts under the Campbell Liberals (Collier, 2006). After the Conservatives left government in Ontario, there was a small increase in funding for domestic violence – and a $60 million domestic violence strategy – but neither were considered significant improvements by the sector (Collier, 2006).

It is interesting to note that the sole (relative) increase in funding in both provinces occurred under the direction of a male politician – albeit one who was particularly committed to the issue. More importantly, Collier's analysis of the expenditures of the two provinces highlights that while expenditure remains relatively constant over time, what government spends the dollars on can make a significant difference (Collier, 2006). She also finds that when you take a closer look at what the dollars are paying for, you will find some policy differentiation between parties (Collier. 2006).

6. Women's movement involvement

In each province, there were two major actors and activist organizations on domestic violence. One of the most consistent and analytical critics of violence against women policy in B.C. has been the B.C. Institute Against Family Violence. It was established in 1989 as a private, non-profit organization to support and initiate research and education

programs in anti-violence. The B.C. Institute has commissioned and published research papers on a myriad of feminist anti-violence subjects, acted as a resource for community projects and regularly commented on government policy. A second group, the Feminist Research, Education, Development and Action (FREDA) Centre for Research on Violence against Women and Children at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver is a collaboration of community groups and feminist scholars who focus on action-based research and policy recommendations.

In Ontario, two groups have been the most active in raising domestic violence issues: the Metropolitan Action Committee Against Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC) and the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OIATH). Both were highly critical of the government's approach. Ultimately the focus of all the critiques of the government at the time was on the criminal justice approach to violence – and particularly in the context of cutting funding to women's groups, shelters and welfare rates.

At the same time, an analysis of the Standing Committee transcripts on Bill 117 reveals that a number of groups other than shelters and advocates had significant input into the public debate on the issue. In the fall of 2000, members of the public and organizations made presentations and submissions to the Standing Committee on Justice and Social Policy. During the three sessions, some 11 groups representing women's shelters, transition housing, legal aid lawyers and lawyers groups made presentations that supported the legislation, but had specific criticisms of some aspects of the Bill. A total of 13 presenters vehemently opposed the legislation arguing that it incited violence and

was profoundly prejudicial toward men. Of the 13, six were individuals who only represented themselves. There was no media coverage of these objectors or their organizations (Standing Committee on Justice and Social Policy, October 24, 30 and 31, 2000).

The ultimate effect of listening to days of testimony against the legislation, helped the government members feel that their proposal was more balanced. Member of Provincial Parliament, Conservative Garry Guzzo complimented one of the individual presenters:

> I'm not suggesting that the people who appeared before have an axe to grind, but they appear to have one. They represent a group; they're organized for that purpose. Let me tell you that not just in this legislation but in a lot of legislation and a lot of committee hearings that detracts from how all of us…feel. (Standing Committee on Justice and Social Policy, October 24, 2000).

The Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OAITH) and METRAC said that the government was taking a limited approach to addressing domestic violence by focusing primarily on the criminal justice system. In recent years, the province has created domestic violence courts with specially trained crown attorneys. The group argued for a more balanced approach, including beefed-up community supports for abused women (Boyle, 1999).

Lynn Stephens, Liberal member of parliament, was the critic on women's issues throughout the NDP mandate in B.C.. She frequently raised concerns about the government's approach to violence prevention. She introduced her own Private Member's bill on several occasions, but it proceeded no further than First Reading (Bill

M204, The Domestic Violence Protection Act in B.C., introduced in April of 1997):

> This government, in my view, is not doing enough to protect women and children…. The ministry's Stopping the Violence initiative needs to have some big, sharp teeth. So I would encourage the minister again – in fact, I would challenge the minister – to advocate to her colleague the Attorney General on behalf of women who have been abused, to make sure that they bring before this House some legislation to deal with domestic violence in a more meaningful way.
>
> There have been studies done that clearly show that the cost to society from domestic violence is significant in health care and through the justice system. Instead of dealing with this issue in a rather superficial way, what we need to do is come to grips with a very serious problem that costs a lot of money and affects a lot of lives, (July 6, 1996, Hansard).

There are a number of organizations in B.C. that are very politically active including the British Columbia Association of Specialized Victim Assistance and Counselling Programs (BCASVACP), founded in 1992 to coordinate programs – but also to provide a unified voice to the province. During the NDP mandate in B.C. the association raised concerns about the appropriate implementation of restorative justice programs, child protection and privacy issues (www.endingviolence.org). The B.C. /Yukon Society of Transition Houses, founded in 1978 is a feminist advocacy and education organization (www.bcysth.ca). They commented on legal developments, racism and raised concerns about funding for transition housing. One of the most vocal commentators was the B.C. Institute Against Family Violence. During the mandate they published reports on sentencing, intervention for men and the challenges of delivering service to a multicultural society (www.bcifv.ca).

The relationship between the stakeholders and the women politicians in Ontario was often hostile – one cabinet minister referred to her significant

unhappiness with their critical approach (Interview, September 2007) whereas in B.C. the dialogue was open and characterized as "respectful collaboration" (Bell, Browning and Hamilton, 1999). That isn't to say that there was no conflict – several organizations raised serious concerns about policy directions. One example was BCACSVP's concern that mandatory arrests were resulting in arrest for the woman making the complaint (www.endingviolence.org).

7. **Cabinet women's role**

The B.C. government leadership determined that Sue Hammell, the Minister of Women's Equality, would manage this issue – as opposed to the Attorney General in Ontario. Hammell's views on violence against women were progressive and included a broad analysis of the problem.

> When I think of preventing violence against women, I think of changing the way our society works. I think of changing the attitudes and behaviours, which lead to violence against women, and I think of challenging the social structure and conditions that allow violence to occur. This is the goal of our ministry. Throughout the year, we will be dedicated to engaging the community around issues of prevention of violence in a much more proactive way, (Sue Hammell, June 5, 1998 Hansard).

It is perhaps no surprise that funding for domestic violence programs went up during Ujal Dosanjh's premiership in B.C. It is rare for an attorney general to appear in court, but while holding that office, he personally petitioned the Supreme Court of Canada to increase the 4-year sentence imposed on a man who had stabbed his wife 47 times. Dosanjh was outraged at the leniency of the sentence and argued that "If the court sends a message that it's all right to kill a nagging wife, then we're sending a message to all Canadians that, while we say domestic violence is unacceptable, the sentences don't reflect that," (Mickleburgh, 1999).

One former cabinet minister from Ontario, thought that the domestic violence legislation "went too far," (Interview, 2006). In part, this was because she didn't think of particular policies as "women only issues," she continued. "I never found that support for legislation fell on gender lines. Individual views and riding perspectives (*local or district political concerns*) were the strongest influences…what was good for Ontario as a whole and politically wise were the strongest factors in cabinet," (Interview, 2006).

The junior women members of cabinet in Ontario – Tina Mollinari and Brenda Elliott – spoke on behalf of the government on the issue of domestic violence and met with representatives from shelters and services. Senior women members of cabinet did not speak to the issue in the House or in the media – Janet Ecker and Elizabeth Witmer – although Witmer has become a spokesperson on the issue since leaving government. Currently, as Critic of Women's Issues for the Conservative Caucus, she is active on the domestic violence file.

On the issue of domestic violence and the defense of the legislation in the House, it was clearly a strategy by the Ontario government to have the male Attorney General handle the legislation – after all, a courts-focused approach more appropriately falls under the purview of the Attorney General than a Women's Issues minister. One obvious demonstration of that was when the issue was raised during Question Period in the House, opposition members generally called on either Diane Cunninghan or Helen Johns, the Ministers Responsible for Women's Issues, but they deflected the questions to the Attorney General (Jim Flaherty or David Young).

> We are tripling the number of domestic violence courts in Ontario. That money was provided by the Ministry of Finance in the most recent budget. That's real

> progress. That makes a difference. We know it makes a difference, (Attorney General, Jim Flaherty, Hansard June 22, 2000).
>
> These tragedies indeed strengthen our resolve to do more. We must do more to help victims of domestic violence and to ensure that this cycle of violence ends, (Attorney General, David Young Hansard October 1 2002).

Conclusion

There are several identifiable patterns and conclusions to be found in domestic violence policy. First of all, events external to government can clearly instigate action. The deaths of women at the hand of their spouses inspired policy action in both B.C. and Ontario. The overall focus on fiscal issues in both provinces – what some have called neo-liberalism and the withering away of the welfare state (Bashevkin, 2002) – lent credibility to the political attention paid to criminalization over shelter support and preventative measures. It also contributed, particularly in Ontario, to the related policies of reducing other social supports.

At the same time, it is also clear that the policy direction of the governing party has some influence on the outcome. (This an ongoing theme in studies of Canadian politics: Tuhoy, 1992; Carty, Cross and Young, 2000; Arscott and Trimble, 1997.) The B.C. initiatives went well beyond the criminalization agenda – though they did continue Social Credit trends to severely punish offenders. And clearly in Ontario, the direction shifted substantially from the NDP support of the shelter system and various anti-violence initiatives to a much more justice-oriented approach. The differences found here can be attributable to both previously existing party policy – modified somewhat by the women at the cabinet table and the overall economic climate.

Another key issue raised by the examination of domestic violence policy is the

pre-eminence of the leader. The prominence of the leader is an ongoing theme in the study of provincial policy (Carty, Erickson and Blake, 1992; Savoie, 1999). It was the party leader in B.C. whose personal commitment to the issue resulted in an increase in funding and prominence and it was the leader's decision in Ontario to have the male Attorney General handle the file that took away, at least symbolically, women's voice on the subject in cabinet and in the legislature.

It is also notable that the foundation for policy direction, in both instances, had been set by earlier initiatives. Policy change did not occur quickly, but over a considerable time frame – and in incremental degrees. (Incrementalism is also an ongoing theme in policy studies in the provinces Battle, 2001; Bradford, 2003.) In B.C. it was the original 1992 Stopping the Violence Initiative established by the NDP government, followed by the external report in 1996. It was also the criminalization and shelter support initiatives that had been started by the previous Social Credit government that were continued over the next two NDP mandates. In Ontario it was the 1996 Framework for Action on the Prevention of Violence Against Women in Ontario (The McGuire Report). The external reports both followed the government's political direction on recommendations: In B.C. to move ahead with changes and improvements on a variety of social fronts and in Ontario to focus on a criminal justice solution.

The women's movement – and several agencies in particular – were very involved and engaged in both provinces. The file was managed by the female, high-profile Women's Equality minister in B.C. but by the male Attorney General in Ontario. The Women's Issues minister in Ontario only had a supporting role. There's no question that the move away from the Women's Issues ministry (and minister) was significant. It

would have been much more challenging for a woman – or a man – holding that portfolio to manage the sharp rightward turn in policy. At the same time, the women's movement was supportive at all levels and in both provinces of increasing the criminal penalties and the means of intervening legally in abusive relationships. This acceptance of the criminalization agenda was a sign of the movement toward fiscal feminism whereby the movement re-adjusted its priorities in light of the overarching mood of retrenchment of the state.

Chapter 4

Social Welfare Policy

The history of welfare policy in Ontario and B.C., as that of domestic violence, reveals that women have taken an active role in driving and shaping policy. It was women's organizations that first developed programs for women in financial need. The few women politicians in the first 75 years of the 20th century all spoke out on the issue, regardless of political party. The women's movement was very much engaged – though torn as to how to help women in need while rejecting the patriarchal welfare state. The women politicians interviewed for this study were very passionate about welfare reform and felt that they contributed a unique perspective on the issue while in government. This issue, above domestic violence and education, was one where women politicians articulated key differences between their point of view on welfare and that of their male colleagues.

In spite of the prominence of the issue for women, welfare policy is a clear illustration of the rise of fiscal feminism. Both the women's movement and women politicians were influenced by the rightward shift in rhetoric and public policy that shaped political decision-making from the 1990s on. Backed into a corner by the challenges to the very concept of state support, women politicians and the women's movement changed gears and became focused on lessening the impact of reform and reluctantly defending the status quo. As several scholars have noted, (McKeen, 2004; Rebick, 2000) the language of protest about welfare changed during this period as well: the "feminization of poverty" became "improving quality of life". (There has been a more recent shift again to now talking about welfare reform in even more gender-neutral

terms: “Child poverty” and “vulnerable families” - Ontario Budget, 2007-08.)

When the evolution of welfare policy in the provinces is examined below, as in domestic violence policy, several patterns emerge. Again, the federal government demonstrates that by contributing to a program they can significantly shape it. The federal government came late in providing assistance to the provinces for welfare, but made their impact known. In B.C., for example, funding was withheld as a policy was seen to have violated the “principal of transferability” (the Constitutional Act, 1982 states that provincial governments provide “reasonably comparable levels of public service” Constitution Act, Section 36, 2). The expansion and contraction of the Canada Assistance Plan, as described later in this chapter, had an enormous impact on the delivery of welfare support and programs.

Again, as in other policy areas, government-initiated reports (federal and provincial) help drive policy forward. The federal Marsh report (1943) is still cited as a groundbreaker in welfare policy – its chief recommendation of a universal benefit for children has not been met. Two reports in Ontario and B.C. initiated key changes in welfare policy – *A Time for Action* and the *Report of the Minister’s Advisory Council* respectively. *Time for Action* (1992) divided recipients who were disabled from all others. The B.C. Minister’s report (1994) called for a reduction in expenditures on welfare.

Finally, study of this policy area reveals the clearest illustration of the move away from state-based policy solutions to social inequity as well as the overall trend to fiscal conservatism. This trend has been noted in a number of other studies: Cohen, 1997;

Harder, 2003; Bashevkin, 2002.

Social welfare policy is an area of political and academic exploration that generally includes a broad range of state interventions (mechanisms to distribute benefits) – including health, education, old age security, income security and social assistance – as well as labour market interventions such as minimum wage and employment equity. But for the purposes of this study, I focus solely on social assistance policy – also called welfare in Canada – because this was an area of policy activity for both the governments of B.C. and Ontario in the late 1990s and early 2000s. It was also a policy area very much at the centre of media attention and issue group attention (Downs, 1973). In the section on the history of social welfare policy in Canada – and in the two provinces – I also mention family allowance and mother's allowances for these were both the political and policy foundations of state-provided welfare.

Again, there are 8 elements to examine: 1. Federal policy and funding; 2.History of social welfare; 3. Getting on the public agenda; 4. Policy action; 5. Expenditures; 6. Women's movement involvement; 7. Other group involvement; 8. Cabinet women's role.

1. Federal policy and funding

Welfare in Canada has been profoundly influenced by the federal government although it is primarily a provincial issue. The federal government became involved at several key stages: during the Depression, after the Second World War and in the mid-1960s. The significant provision of funds to the provinces for welfare support began in the 1960s and the eventual scaling back of that funding had a huge impact on the provinces. Moreover, as long as the federal government provides funds, they also insert themselves into the policy process – as noted later in this chapter when they intervened in a B.C. policy

change.

Social welfare in the British North America Act describes social assistance as a "matter of local or private nature". In 1919, the federal government introduced a tax deduction for dependent children as well as a pension for disabled members of the armed forces and for the dependents of deceased members of the armed forces (Jenson, 1999; Shifrin, 1985). But it was not until the Rowell-Sirois Commission of 1936 that Ottawa proposed a comprehensive national program (Lippert, 1994). The shift from purely local responsibility to a combination of federal/provincial/municipal responsibility started during the depression of the 1930s (Leigh, 1964). The federal government enacted the Federal Unemployment and Social Insurance Act in 1935 to deal with widespread unemployment, but it was declared a matter of provincial responsibility by the Supreme Court. Federal and provincial governments agreed to a constitutional amendment allowing for federal action and the Unemployment Insurance Act was finally passed in 1940 (Hum, 1985).

The Report on Social Security for Canada, 1943, known as the Marsh Report made it clear that tax benefits were insufficient to meet the real needs of families with children. Only 44 percent of families of wage earners had sufficient income to guarantee a nutritionally satisfying diet (Jenson, 1999). Marsh argued that the government should cover the base needs of children in a single, universal, combined benefit (cited in Jenson, 1999). By 1945, the federal government provided two universal income support programs: tax deductions for dependent children and family allowances (as well as a number of social assistance programs for poor families and single mothers). All were consolidated in 1966 with the Canada Assistance Plan (Jenson, 1999). Growth in

programs and expenditures was gradual – unlike the New Deal in the U.S. – in part due to federal/provincial challenges (Pal, 1987).

Up until that point, Ottawa was not very involved in the provinces' modest social programs (Lippert, 1994). It was not until the Canada Assistance Plan (enacted in 1966, and some argue, inspired by the U.S. War on Poverty) that individuals other than widows, disabled or the aged qualified for assistance (Lippert, 1994). There was a rash of federal government reports and activity in the late 1960s and early 1970s on welfare and reform beginning with the Economic Council of Canada report that indicated that some 25 percent of Canadians were living below the poverty line.

The issue was a significant one for the public and there was considerable public support for change. More reports followed including the Working Paper on Social Security of 1973 which argued for full income support for those outside the workforce and income supplements for those with insufficient earnings (Shifrin, 1985). There were a number of challenges in moving ahead with guaranteed income supplements namely: an unsupportive professionalized bureaucracy, difficulty in getting the provinces to agree to a program, and by the mid 1970s, insufficient federal funding to significantly increase support for welfare (Johnson, 1985; Hum, 1985).

So then, as now, the federal government is responsible for Family Allowances, Unemployment Insurance (now called Employment Insurance), Old Age Security and the provinces are responsible for health, education and social assistance (which includes workers compensation) (Pal 1985). The Canada Assistance Plan (or CAP in effect from 1966 – 1995) specified that the federal government share the cost (50/50) of provincial

assistance payments for food, clothing etc. (Doe, 2003). Significantly, CAP established that government could blur the line between the working poor and the recipients of social assistance. Furthermore, CAP allowed that the funding of certain services could be defined as "facilitation of labour-force participation" (Jenson, 1999).

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) published a number of papers critiquing the Canada Assistance Plan during the early 1980s. Their key concerns were that the CAP tool too-narrowly defined need and that significant social challenges (spousal abuse, the lack of child care, teenage pregnancy and family break-ups) crossed economic categories and were not at all addressed by CAP (National Action Committee, 1983). They also took issue with the unevenness of program delivery across the country. As the funding was in the form of a matching grant, provinces facing greater economic hardships were less likely to provide sufficient support – and CAP did not account for differences in capacity. NAC also noted that there was little public accountability for the funds (NAC, 1983).

In 1993, the federal government introduced the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB) which provides a tax-free monthly payment to eligible families to help with the cost of raising children. The benefit includes a basic benefit, a supplement for each child under seven, a supplement for the third and each additional child and the National Child Benefit supplement (NCB). The supplement, replaced the Working Income Supplement, which had been available only to working poor families. As of 1998, it has been available to all poor families – however, the provinces are allowed to take the federal payment to welfare recipients and use the funds (as they see fit) for children's programs. The federal government also administers Child Benefits for five provinces and territories – including

B.C. (Status of Women, 1999).

The most significant change to the modern welfare system in Canada was initiated by the federal Conservative Mulroney government (1984-1993) in 1990 (Brown, 2003). By putting a "cap on CAP" (imposing a ceiling on transfers to Canada's wealthiest provinces), the federal government opened the door to an era of significant retrenchment of welfare across the country (Baker, 1997; Evans, 2002 and others). The move both allowed provinces to reduce spending and limited the ability of the federal government to standardize welfare (Bashevkin, 2002). National voluntary associations met in Ottawa in 1990 and raised concerns about the new limits on the extent of financial support for social programs – noting that there would be a significant impact on the feminization of poverty (Canada Council on Social Development, 1991).

In a continued effort to reduce expenditures, the subsequent Liberal government (1993-2002) replaced the Canada Assistance Plan in 1996 with the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) which combined federal government payments for health and social services (Rice and Prince, 2000). It moved the government from a conditional cost-sharing arrangement to a far less conditional and smaller block fund (Rice and Prince, 2000). The financial impact on provinces was significant and most embarked on their own unique form of retrenchment – downloading to municipal governments was a popular strategy. The change has had a significant impact:

> The change to the CHST will significantly decrease cash transfers to the provinces; reduce the federal government's ability to enforce national standards…and disproportionately cut provincial spending on welfare and social services….Families with young children…are likely to be hit hardest by cuts to welfare, childcare services and job training programs,(Steinhauer, 1995).

Beckwith points out that downloading has the potential of providing positive opportunities

for feminist movements but also notes, as was the case in Ontario and B.C., that such state reconfiguration can shift women's movements away from a state-involved position and into autonomy (Beckwith, 2007).

As Bashevkin notes, this funding shift coincided with the loss of national policy guidelines and the failure of the federal Liberals to deliver on their promised supports for day care and job training (Bashevkin, 2002). This had a decisive effect on provincial policy – particularly in B.C. and Ontario – as shall be discussed later in this chapter.

The Canadian women's movement was paying attention. The National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) vociferously opposed the implementation of the CHST and focused for the next several years on women's material condition (Evans and Wekerle, 1997). There were two major protests: a 10-day march against poverty from Montreal to Quebec in 1995 and a cross-country caravan in 1996 organized by NAC and the Canadian Auto Workers – Women's March Against Poverty – which involved an estimated 100,000 women (Evans and Wekerle, 1997).

Other objections were vociferous – even from within the governing party. Warren Allmand, a Liberal Member of Parliament declared that the legislation ran counter to what it meant to be a Liberal and urged several amendments:

> I am doing *(this)* first of all because social programs in this country are not the cause of the deficit…Second, I am opposed to those provisions in the budget and in the budget bill because they would cause severe harm to those in need. They would widen the gap between rich and poor in this country and in my view lead to social unrest and increased crime, (Hansard, Monday June 5, 1995).

Many women government members defended the elimination of CAP, but some did not, including M.P. Anna Terrana of B.C. "In an attempt to spread the cuts among Canadians,

a lot of programs have been eliminated. This concerns me a lot. It concerns me particularly because women, immigrants, children and poor families need these programs," (Hansard, April 3, 1995). The National Council on Welfare also found the shift to block funding very problematic:

> The federal budget speech of February 27, 1995, marked a giant step backward in Canadian social policy. Followed through to its most likely conclusion, it would dismantle a nation-wide system of welfare and social services that took a generation to build. Sadly, the policies of the 1990s would take us back to the 1950s.
> (National Council of Welfare, The 1995 Budget and Block Funding, Report No. 88.)

Those who raised concerns about the implications of the elimination of CAP were proven right as an examination of provincial policy demonstrates below. The system was not dismantled, but certainly the reduction of funding signaled that the federal government would not be expending efforts to expand or improve the current system and it furthered the shift in policy discourse toward a singular focus on fiscal constraint.

2. History of social welfare

The provinces (and municipalities) initiated welfare programs long before the federal government did. In British Columbia, Clarkson argues that the early phases of family legislation in B.C. were largely designed to increase the political stability of the frontier province – particularly as there were proportionally few women (Clarkson, 2007). At the turn of the century, most welfare programs were provided by private organizations – religious, charitable or women's groups. In B.C., women's groups were more prominent than in most other jurisdictions (Little, 2005). A number of women's groups were active: The Friendly Aid Society, Vancouver Women's Forum, the New Era League, and the

University Women's Club (Little, 2005). In B.C., those who led the suffrage movement, also worked for social reform (Little, 2005). They were "bastions of maternal feminist activity" (Weiss, 1984).

The Mother's Allowance program was introduced in 1920, at the end of some three decades of lobbying by women's groups, labour and religious leaders – largely middle class white women (Clarkson, 2007). The campaign, considered highly professional by the Premier, was led by B.C.'s first woman MLA, Mary Ellen Smith:

> Mr. Speaker, there are no illegitimate children. It may be there are …people who will contend there are illegitimate parents, but in God's name do not let us brand the child (Mary Ellen Smith quoted in Norcross, 1979).

The mother's allowance lobby grew out of a number of social developments – the great losses of young men in the First World War, concurrent losses to the Influenza epidemic, and huge immigration to the province (Barman, 1991a). Reform happened under the new Liberal government – which had strong ties and connections to the aforementioned women's groups (Clarkson, 2007). It followed similar developments in Canadian provinces and many U.S. states, but was more generous – for white women, at least, as it excluded most racial minorities (Purvey and Walmsley, 2005). At the time B.C. was characterized by virulent racism – there were concerns that non-white immigrants would reproduce at a higher rate than whites, hence their exclusion from this program (Little, 2005). The act, uniquely, was rights-based and used that language – unlike most other legislation and programs of the time that required moral and financial worthiness. The program was over-subscribed and had to be scaled back in its second year (Little, 2005).

Clarkson (2007) noted that the Mother's Allowance was a means for the Liberal

government of the day to appease the new female electorate and appeal to the growing labour and veteran's groups. He attributes the rights-based act to a long-term child-centred vision held by the leaders of B.C. that certainly improved the lives of some women but eventually proved to be a limited tool for the expansion of equality rights (Clarkson, 2007).

In 1945, the B.C. government introduced the Comprehensive Social Assistance Act and for the next 40 years the foundation of the B.C. welfare state was maintained by both the Social Credit and NDP parties. Social ministries grew from three in the early 1940s to eight by the early 1980s (Prince, 1996). Both parties had populist, grassroots (non-professionalized social services) approaches, though the Social Credit party leaned toward workfare and negative portrayals of beneficiaries while the NDP were skeptical of workfare and it's stigmatization of those on welfare (Prince, 1996).

Workfare as a policy option was first raised in the 1970s (Prince, 1996). Right wing critics argued that the B.C. system was not working and that governments actually discouraged people from working: Welfare caseloads and spending rose sharply through the early 1970s despite significant economic and employment growth in B.C. (Lippert, 1994). As a result, the GAIN Program (Guaranteed Aid in Need) was introduced in 1976 (Lippert, 1994). It consolidated a number of existing programs into two components: income assistance and supplemental aid (Lippert, 1994).

The decade from 1983 to 1991, was characterized by sharp fiscal restraint by the Social Credit government in B.C.. Facing a deep recession, the government scaled back throughout the system. Welfare eligibility was reduced while unemployment increased.

Benefit levels did not increase with inflation and were scaled back in some years. Some community programs for disabled families were eliminated (Prince, 1996). There was considerable contracting out through the 1980s – blurring the line between the provincial role in social assistance and that of the voluntary sector (Prince, 1996). All of these reforms received significant negative media attention across the county – and had a role to play in the unraveling of the Social Credit party by the early 1990s (Prince, 1996).

Ontario welfare history is similar to that of B.C. in that welfare for women was initiated by women at the municipal level. In 1846 in Ontario the provincial legislature permitted townships to raise funds through property taxes to help pay the costs of relief to the poor. The provincial Charity Aid Act (1874) provided provincial financial support for local social welfare programs (Transitions, 1988). Most relief took the form of in-kind benefits rather than direct assistance (Transitions, 1988).

In 1914, frustrated by the lack of government action in addressing women in poverty, the Toronto Local Council of Women established its own mothers' allowance. It was a three-year pilot project (which ran out of money) and was intended to induce the government to act (Little, 1998). Eventually, the Committee on Mother's Allowance was established in 1918 by the province and included groups such as the Toronto Women's Council, Catholic Charities and the Toronto Trades and Labour Council (Little, 1998). The Ontario Mothers Allowance was limited to widows, mothers of two or more children and British subjects (including First Nations). It was called an "allowance" as opposed to B.C.'s "pension" which implied entitlement. The Ontario rates were significantly lower than other provincial rates (Little, 1998). All other provinces included women with one child within the first decade of the program – except Ontario, which did not add them

until 1935 (Little, 1998).

The consultation that took place in Ontario excluded unwed mothers. Women's organizations, church groups and charities were unanimous in their opposition to the inclusion of unwed mothers. The Local Council of Women of Ontario believed that unwed mothers should turn to the father of the children for financial support (Little, 2005; Little, 1998).

In 1929 two key events occurred to shape income support policies: the stock market crash and the condemnation of the province's over-reliance on private charity by Ontario Royal Commission on Public Welfare (Transitions, 1988). The Ontario Old Age Pensions Act (1929) introduced a cost-sharing program – 50 percent federal, 30 percent provincial, 20 percent municipal that shaped many subsequent program arrangements (Transitions, 1988). The federal government passed the Unemployment Relief Act in 1930 – an emergency piece of legislation that was renewed annually for the duration of the Depression. In 1935 the Ontario Unemployment Relief Act enshrined the notion of municipal responsibility for general welfare (Transitions, 1988).

The Social Assistance Review Committee, established in 1986, issued a major report (*Transitions*) which recommended a major overhaul of social assistance and pointed out quite clearly that current benefits were entirely insufficient, eligibility rules too complex, and that the two tier system of short term and long term benefits should be abolished (Transitions, 1988). The follow up report, *A Time for Action*, 1992 called for new a unified program including two basic categories of need: those with disabilities and all others (Time for Action, 1992). It also acknowledged the challenges to the provincial

government of increasing numbers of welfare recipients – in part because of federal tightening of Unemployment Insurance eligibility (Time for Action, 1992).

3. Getting on the agenda

In B.C., Increased levels of unemployment from the late 1980s to mid-1990s, combined with tighter federal Unemployment Insurance regulations, and decreased funding from the federal government (the aforementioned cap on CAP) combined to increased the case load and the cost to the province of providing assistance (B.C. Ministry of Social Services, 1995-96).

> Since the NDP took office in 1991, the welfare rolls increased by about 100,000, to the point where one in 10 people in British Columbia are getting social assistance. Welfare spending has almost doubled and has continued to climb this year. As of the third quarter of the fiscal year 1995-96, the Ministry of Social Services was more than $90-million over budget for the year (McInnes, 1996).

The B.C. Benefits program launched in November 1995 moved to a "life-cycle" system of income support which included: Family Benefits, dental and optical benefits, youth works program, welfare to work program, fraud protection and a separate support system for people with disabilities (Ministry of Social Services 1995-96).

TABLE 9: Annual Income of Households that Receive Social Assistance, 2000

Province	Employable	Disabled	1 Child
British Columbia	$6,253	$9,568	$10,595
Ontario	$6,453	$11,541	$11,563

Source: Doe (2003)

Two major changes occurred in the first NDP mandate: the introduction of B.C. Family Bonus – which effectively removed children from social assistance, giving them

ongoing benefits when their families were low-income, not just unemployed (Jenson, 1999). At the time, B.C. was the only province to introduce a general income-tested child benefit fully replacing welfare benefits, although some other provinces had gone part way in this regard. (Since then, both Quebec and Ontario have introduced similar programs.)

But the controversial aspect of reform (starting with new forms asking beneficiaries to list the income of dependent children) was a welfare fraud "crackdown" (Gawthrop, 1996). The whole welfare plan was ambitious – its aim was to eliminate welfare and replace it with full employment and pensions and social supports for those temporarily or permanently unable to work (Doe, 2003).

The B.C. Benefits program included: hardship assistance (for those ineligible for regular benefits), bus passes, alcohol and drug rehabilitation, housing (7,800 units and 26,000 units of non-profit coops), and child care (Doe, 2003), However, 27,000 people were removed from the "Unemployable" list only to be reinstated if they could provide evidence of their inability to work (Rice and Prince, 2000).

Premier Harcourt was legendarily quoted as saying "We want to clear the cheats and deadbeats off the welfare rolls… We want to catch those varmints," (as quoted in Gawthrop, 1996). The premier claimed to have saved $46 million annually by reforming welfare, but several organizations challenged those numbers noting that most of the savings came from reducing payments and giving loans rather than grants to those waiting for Unemployment Insurance (Gawthrop, 1996). But really, as he later clarified, his objective was to move beyond welfare altogether: "There is nothing social democratic about a system that traps people in poverty and depression and reminds them every day that they rely on the charity of the state…The system is a capitalist invention…that pits

the working class against itself" (Mason Lee, 1996 D.2).

The changes were hugely controversial and posed significant challenges to the NDP government's traditional support from the left. The social services minister originally on the file, Joan Smallwood, was considered too much of an anti-poverty advocate by bureaucrats – and in a media interview once declared that welfare fraud was not a problem. Smallwood resisted the rightward pull of her colleagues and was pulled from the portfolio in 1993 (Gawthrop, 1996). She was replaced by Joy McPhail who had a reputation for being tough.

> …(S)he *(Joy MacPhail)* has a tough reputation in the party, partly because she swears a lot, and partly because in 1993, when the government needed to crack down on welfare fraud, she did the job of rooting out false claims despite representing a working class riding in which government social programs are significant.
> (Hume, 2001 A7)

So in B.C., while the intention of the leader may have been to progressively reform social welfare, the result was not progressive. Reform was taking place in a time of increased costs for welfare and reduced federal support and an overall change in public and political support. Women were very much involved in the changes in the system as it evolved in B.C., but notably, when the woman minister was seen as being too sympathetic, she was replaced.

In Ontario, in 1987, the Liberal government called for a review of how welfare was delivered: the Provincial-Municipal Social Services Review, which recommended that the province assume full responsibility for social assistance funding (municipalities were contributing 20 percent of costs and 50 percent of administration costs) (Report of the Provincial-Municipal Services Review,

1989). (In Ontario, social welfare is cost-shared between the provinces and municipalities.)

Between 1990 and 1993, the NDP government of Ontario increased welfare benefits by 13.5 percent, but acknowledged that was not helping to reduce the number of cases – which had doubled from 1989 to 1994 (Turning Point, 1993 and Managing Social Assistance, 1994). In 1993, the government proposed its own welfare reform program called Turning Point. It would consist of a child income program for low-income families with children and an Adult Benefit to cover necessities. Adult beneficiaries would be able to participate in JOBLINK, which would connect them to training and apprenticeship programs (Turning Point, 1993). Financial pressures delayed implementation – and the program was not to be (Lippert, 1994).

Social assistance reform began in the first mandate of the Conservative government (1995-1999) in Ontario with the introduction of Ontario Works requiring welfare recipients to work. During the campaign (1995) the rising costs of welfare were an election issue. The Conservative party platform, The Common Sense Revolution, stated: "Ontario pays the highest welfare benefits not only in Canada, but anywhere in North America…The simple fact of the matter is, we can't afford it," (Common Sense Revolution, 1995 as cited in Quaid, 2002).

The first step of the new government was to reduce welfare rates by 21 percent and the second was to develop workfare guidelines. But something happened between the campaign and implementation – instead of a strict no-option workfare program, the government designed a system with three options: community participation (work), employment placement, or employment support (training) (Quaid, 2002). According to

then Social Services Minister, Janet Ecker, "No single choice within Ontario Works is mandatory, but over-all participation is a requirement for each recipient," (Gombu, 1996). Many of the women cabinet ministers implied that this key shift in policy was due to the influence of the women at the table. In B.C., as in Ontario, there were two compelling drivers for welfare reform in the 1990s: the reduction of support from the federal government with the switch from CAP to CSHT and the economic slowdowns in both provinces resulting in high unemployment and increased welfare rolls (Baker, 1997; Evans, 2001). While in Ontario, there was the added political party commitment to change (the Common Sense Revolution) both provinces faced a fiscally unsustainable system. According to a 1994 Report of the Minister's Advisory Council on Income Assistance in B.C.:

> These are difficult times…Almost all British Columbians have been affected personally by the loss of jobs, the recession…and the impact of federal and provincial political restraint…Direct costs of B.C.'s income assistance program are now more than $1.8 billion annually and climbing. The caseload of persons needing assistance rose 10.4 percent in 1993. These trends will continue unless something can be done, (Ministry of Community Services, 1994).

4. Policy Action

The major policy development of the second mandate of the Conservative government in Ontario was the Learning, Earning and Parenting program – which encouraged teen parents to stay in school and take parenting courses. LEAP was mandatory for 16 and 17 year old parents on Ontario Works who did not complete high school. It required regular attendance at educational programs leading to a high school diploma and participation in the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program (Making Welfare Work, 2000).

The second policy push was the Welfare-To-Work Action Plan to increase the number of work placements for welfare recipients. As in other jurisdictions that have tried workfare programs, Ontario was having difficulty finding job placements for recipients (Beauchesne, 1996). The government proceeded to solve the problem with four tactics:

1. establish an Ontario Works Placement Secretariat to help develop more community placements;
2. increase funding to the Ontario Workplace Innovation Fund – dollars available for municipalities to create work projects;
3. increase funding to municipalities that exceed their placement targets and holding money back from municipalities that fall short; and
4. demand that the Ontario Public Service find more community placements. (Making Welfare Work, 2000)

TABLE 10: Provincial Welfare Programs

	British Columbia	**Ontario**
Program Title	B.C. Benefits	Ontario Works
Ministry Responsible	Human Resources	Community and Social Services
Income testing	Means tested	Means tested
Requirements	Single parent employable when child reaches 7	Parents of children 6 years or older required to participate in employment assistance

Source: Jenson and Thompson, 1999.

In B. C., the B.C. Benefits program was governed by three pieces of legislation: B.C. benefits (income Assistance), B.C. Benefits (Youth Works Act) and the Disability Benefits program. Reform was focused on fiscal management and cost containment. Under the program, the Prevention, Compliance and Enforcement Branch was established to deal with welfare fraud (Mirchandani and Chan, 2005). Most cases reported involved

undeclared income and lost/stolen cheques. Restitution was usually limited to repayment (Marichandani and Chan, 2005).

B.C. Human Resources Minister, Dennis Streifel told the Globe and Mail that the province's welfare caseload has dropped 15 percent to less than 190,000 cases – "we're on the right track," (Globe and Mail, 23 December 1996). (The number of people relying on social assistance in B.C. was about 340,000 – or 9 percent of the population, Statistics Canada, 1997.)

The opposition Liberals raised concerns about the focus on fraud – though the preponderance of their criticism focused on the inability of the government to create jobs for people. Gordon Wilson, leader of the Liberal party, said:

> So I caution, when we start to draft legislation that takes as its primary assumption that those people on income assistance somehow are more likely to be fraudulent – and that seems to be where we're headed… As I said before, the debt that this government is now trying to deal with was not created by the people that this bill is enacted to deal with. The poor among us did not create our debt. Those people who need income assistance are not responsible for the rising deficits on an annual basis and the debt, (Hansard, July 24th 1996).

In B.C. women ministers actively managed the social welfare file, but they did not diverge from the direction given them by the Premier. In 1999, British Columbia for the first time engaged a private sector agency, Job Wave, to assist and support individuals as they rejoined the workforce (Harris and Manning, 2005). The other key development during the NDP's second term was the rescinding of the residency requirement for welfare, introduced in the first mandate. Social services minister Joy McPhail introduced a 3-month residency requirement for people arriving from out of province. It was projected to save $25 million a year, but when the program was announced, the

federal government withheld $47 million in transfer payments (McInnes, 1996). In 1998, Human Resources Minister Jan Pullinger ended the requirement and expanded welfare eligibility to include refugees (Canadian Press, 1998).

A final key development of the second mandate was to dissolve the Social Services ministry and divide its responsibilities into two new ministries. The Ministry of Human Resources, under former Social Services minister Dennis Streifel, maintained responsibility for income assistance programs, and the Ministry of Children and Families was created with authority in the areas of child health, welfare and protection with Minister Penny Priddy (Reimer, 1996). The tougher part of the file was handed to a male minister, while the softer issues related to welfare were hived off to a female minister.

A number of former ministers and bureaucrats noted that there were significant challenges inherent in the culture of frequently revolving ministers. (This culture has transcended parties White, 2006.) Not only does it take a considerable amount of time to master a policy file, the frequent changes mean that ministry staff spend an inordinate amount of time bringing a new minister up to date – sacrificing time that would have otherwise been dedicated to developing new policy or developing a previous policy further.

Both provincial governments entered their second mandates with welfare reform near the top of the agenda. While welfare reform was such a key issue in the B.C. election, it received little attention in the Speech from the Throne. Instead, the speech focused on the changes to funding cuts for social programs from Ottawa and in strengthening the economy for middle class families:

> Ottawa is steadily withdrawing funding from health care, education, child care and the social safety net. And many other provinces are responding with deep cuts of their own in those areas… And where working families encounter obstacles when they're trying to make ends meet, my government believes it has a responsibility to act. (Hansard, June 25, 1996)

The Ontario Speech from the Throne, on the other hand, addressed welfare reform head on. Welfare reform had already succeeded in reducing the rolls and further changes were planned to enhance the system including more workfare placements, mandatory teen programs, mandatory drug rehabilitation and tough anti-fraud measures.

> Thanks to welfare reform and a strong economy, more than 437,000 people like Mr. Weber are bettering their lives and fulfilling their dreams after escaping the trap of welfare dependency…
>
> Teen parents on welfare must return to school to remain eligible for benefits. The new Learning, Earning and Parenting, or LEAP, program offers child care, parenting courses and other supports while they complete their education…Your government knows that people cannot get off welfare and into jobs if they are struggling with the challenge of drug addiction or illiteracy. It will provide mandatory remedial training for able-bodied welfare recipients who need basic instruction in reading or math, and mandatory treatment for welfare recipients addicted to drugs…
>
> Your government is determined to expand work for welfare to all able-bodied recipients. It will take steps to increase its placement targets, open park and road maintenance programs to workfare participants, and tie municipal funding to participation levels…To ensure fairness for those who play by the rules, the government will introduce a zero-tolerance policy that permanently bans anyone convicted of welfare fraud from collecting welfare again. (Hansard October 21, 1999)

Both governments – from different sides of the country and different ends of the political spectrum had chosen to engage in welfare reform inspired primarily by the cuts in federal funding and their own unique philosophical approaches to welfare. The results, interestingly, were very similar: cutbacks in benefits and eligibility (with some later expansion) and a fundamental review of the purpose of welfare. The Conservatives in

Ontario felt that it should be primarily a short-term relief program and at least some of the NDP in B.C. thought it should be abandoned altogether and replaced with pensions and full employment.

5. Expenditures

The B.C. government spent proportionally more money providing welfare to their citizens than did Ontario (8.8 percent of total expenditures versus 5.5 percent in the most extreme comparison). This can be attributed to several factors: The B.C. government of the time was facing a more challenged economy than was the Ontario government of the late 90s and early 2000s. The Ontario government's cutbacks of over 20 percent to benefits in their first term, brought the costs down considerably. The cuts in Ontario were targeted to non-disabled recipients: over the course of the second Conservative mandate, Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) expenditures remained stable annually while Ontario Works (OW) payments decreased from $1.9 billion to 1.5 billion. Notably, benefit levels in both provinces in the time periods are quite similar – Ontario's are slightly higher. (See page 106 of this chapter.)

In the earlier years of the first NDP mandate in B.C., expenditures on social assistance were as high as $2.5 billion (1996) and 2.3 billion (1995) but they remained relatively stable in spite of policy changes over the period of 1996-2001 – largely due to the implications of a weaker economy.

TABLE 11: Ontario Social Assistance Expenditures

Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program

Fiscal Year	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Ontario Works (Billions)	$1.9	$1.6	$1.5	$1.5
ODSP (Disability) (Billions)	$2.1	$2.0	$2.0	$2.1
Combination as Percentage of Entire Government Expenditures	6.5	5.8	5.5	5.5

The purpose of the two Ontario programs was described as: "To manage a system of social services through direct service delivery and transfer payments to municipalities, First Nations and community agencies that provide community-based supports for persons who are in need including….persons with disabilities and persons unable to obtain employment," (Ontario Public Accounts, Ministry Expenditures).

TABLE 12: B.C. Social Assistance Expenditures

British Columbia Benefits

Fiscal Year	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001
Total Program Expenditure (billions)	$2.1	$1.9	$1.9	$2.1
Percentage of Entire Government Expenditures	8.8	7.7	7.6.	8.0

The mandate of the B.C. Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance is to "…help people in B.C. achieve economic security though attachment to the labour market and when necessary, through income support and related services," (Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance, Annual Report 1998-99). The B.C Benefits Program is based on individual or family income or assets, is comprised of three major programs:

- Income Assistance – to help return to the workforce
- Income Support – for persons with disabilities
- Youth Works – for 19-24 year olds, support with the mandatory condition of participating in training

Sources: Ontario Ministry of Finance, Public Accounts of Ontario, Schedules, Ministry Statements and Details of Expenditure 1999-00, 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03.
British Columbia Ministry of Finance, Public Accounts, Consolidated Revenue Fund Supplementary Schedules, 1997-98, 1998-99, 1999-00, 2000-01.
Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance, Annual Report 1998-99

Calculations of percentages mine.

6. Women's Movements Involvement

Women's movement organizations were vocal in both provinces on the subject of welfare reform, but their impact was minimal. McKeen noted that feminist response overall to welfare policy, both in B.C. and Ontario has been ignored, both by government and left-liberal actors and seen as adversarial – and, more significantly, it was treated as irrelevant (McKeen, 2004). McKeen found that a divide had grown, in part due to the rise in right-wing/fiscal conservatism rhetoric that shifted the view of welfare from a broad social responsibility to an individual one. This had a clear impact on how the women's movement could respond. The March on Poverty to Ottawa in 1996, notes McKeen, was a demonstration that the shift had occurred. The march, organized by the Canadian Auto Workers and NAC, did not further or promote the "feminization of poverty" analysis, but instead focused on the structural conditions (high unemployment) that lead to poverty and women's inequality (McKeen, 2004).

Judy Rebick, former president of NAC, suggests that that right-wing rhetoric (both from the federal government and from the United States) successfully changed the tenor of the discussion about welfare by convincing people that the poor were responsible for their own fates (Rebick, 2000). This in part explains the difficulty for the women's movement in getting through that noise, but Rebick goes on to argue that:

> Feminists have never supported the welfare state, as it exists…the system of welfare delivery has always been patriarchal, patronizing and demeaning of women on welfare. Nevertheless, in the face of an ideological assault on the very idea of welfare…defending the status quo seems like the best option, (Rebick, 2000).

Joan Smallwood, once minister of Social Services in B.C. agreed – her leader's approach to welfare reform left her "…to defend the traditional welfare model," (Mason Lee, 1996).

That is not to say that by the time radical surgery on welfare was being performed in Ontario, there was no protest by women's groups – just that what they were able to ask for, and in some cases, what they asked for had changed substantially. Henceforth what I label, fiscal feminism, the shift to asking for what is possible within the context of fiscally conservative times, prevailed. One group, the Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter held forums on women's poverty, posted information from Ontario feminists on fighting welfare reform on their website and made the connection between welfare restrictions and reductions to an increase in violence against women.

> Women from across Ontario have joined together over the past seven years to build a united voice against the dismantling of our services and supports. We join with women in British Columbia in sisterhood and solidarity against any cuts that violate security and equality rights for women!! Eileen Morrow, Coordinator, Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OAITH) (Warning Letter to B.C. Women, www.rapereliefshelter.bc.ca)

DAWN, the Disabled Women's Network, a national feminist organization raised concerns about the impact of reform on women with disabilities (physical and mental).

> DAWN Ontario has some serious concerns regarding SARA(*Social Assistance Reform Act*), which includes the Ontario Works Act and the ODSP (*Ontario Disability Support Plan)...* We are concerned how things will change and what will happen... We find the vagueness of the act a frightening situation as it leaves much room for individual interpretation.
> (Presentation to the Standing Committee on Social Development, October 20th, 1997)

Some groups were remarkably even handed, despite the corner they had been painted into by government. The LEAP program, introduced in Ontario in 2000, did receive praise from a study funded by Status of Women Canada, "The Ontario government has clearly recognized the economic benefits that young mothers would accrue if they stayed in school…the government should be commended for its efforts to improve the education of young mothers," (Davies, McMullin, Avison and Cassidy 2001).

When looking back at the evolution of welfare policy in Canada, as earlier in this chapter, it seems clear that advances in understanding the particular burden of poverty on women were made most dramatically in the early part of the 20th century by the first wave women's movement. Indeed, many of the same personalities involved both in B.C. and Ontario in the creation of income support, were also involved in the suffrage movement. When contrasted with the role of the second wave women's movement in the development and advocacy of domestic violence policy, the activism on the issue of welfare and the feminization of poverty seems muted at best. Little (1998 and 2005) and others (Abramovitz, 1991; McKeen, 2004) make some compelling arguments about the inherently sexist and morally punitive nature of welfare policy, but the intellectual activism has not seen a parallel increase in awareness on the political stage.

7. Other Groups Involvement

In Ontario in early 2000, several reports were issued – *Broken Promises the Failure of Welfare Reform in Ontario*; *Discouraged, Diverted and Disentitled* – all of which demonstrated the negative impact on recipients of Ontario's welfare policies. The Ministry claimed to have saved $58 million in fraudulent welfare payments in 2002 – but

both the media and social activists called into question the validity of the data (Mirchandani and Chan, 2005). Interestingly, one of the key challenges to implementation was the unwillingness of the administrators to implement workfare. Very few work placements were ever found and only very small number of people opted for community service (Quaid, 2002).

Other objections were loud and public. The director of the Canadian Labour Congress, Ontario region, said "...it punishes the unemployed and creates more poverty by displacing public service workers," (Editorial, Globe and Mail, November 28, 1998, as cited in Quaid 2002). The native community asked a judge to strike down the workfare law as it violated treaties – they won their case (Quaid, 2002). Unions and labour councils threatened to cut off support for charitable organizations that participated in workfare. The workfare policy itself galvanized opposition.

According to Workfare Watch, an ad hoc group of activists, "While many people have left social assistance because of Ontario's strong economic growth, little, if any of this can be directly attributed to the Ontario Works employment programs," (Workfare Watch, 1999). Workfare Watch's qualitative study argued that because benefits were slashed so significantly and the support for education and employment initiatives was so limited, the actual impact of reform was to deepen poverty – and reliance on welfare.

Left-wing groups had strong objections to welfare reform in B.C. as well. The New Socialist Group referred to the cuts as the "harshest ever carried out in B.C.," (Sears, 1996). "It's more than ironic that in the province of the most prolonged prosperity, an NDP government has been the most conservative," said the B.C. Social Planning and

Research Council (Howard, 1996 A4). The recommendations from a conference by the B.C. Teachers Federation stated that the B.C. benefits legislation contributed to escalating poverty, and the Federation called for restoration of benefits to previous levels (Sarti, 1996). Presenting during budget consultations in for the 2000 budget, Julie Paterson, of Prince Rupert, said, "Finally, I'm concerned about the welfare system. B.C. Benefits has been cut to the bone. Instead of perpetuating poverty I would like to see an increase in welfare rates to a reasonable standard of living (Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services Monday November 30th, 2000).

8. Cabinet Women's Role

In Ontario, the proportion of women in cabinet stayed relatively steady over the length of the mandate ranging from 20 percent to 24 percent by the end. According to a junior woman cabinet minister, Brenda Elliot was a great advocate around the cabinet table for women. "She helped shift the balance of social welfare reform to women," (Interview, May 26th, 2006).

A former staffer noted that the women cabinet ministers brought compassion to the table and a new angle. His minister, he said, was aware of the social welfare angle of many other policy areas – including health, environment and education – and she was a constant advocate (Interview January 26th, 2007). She was also a strong advocate for welfare reform and believed that it helped women:

> When I traveled this summer I spoke to a number of women whose marriages have broken up or who have found themselves in difficult situations and are trying to make it on their own. I talked to them about how the welfare situation was helping them. What I can report to this House is that those women said to me that our changing the welfare system from just a cheque, a dead end of ongoing

> dependency, transforming that into an opportunity to learn new skills, to get a job, to find income, to stand on their own two feet, was the best thing that we could do for them. Our welfare transformations were working for them and, more important, for their families.
> (Brenda Elliot, Hansard, 4 December, 2002)

It is difficult to underestimate the importance of party and party discipline when discussing government policy – even in retrospect. The women's current views are consistent with their previously articulated views. Jan Pullinger, for example strongly defended her government's decision to increase residency requirements:

> For a significant length of time we had up to 2,200 people a month coming to British Columbia to escape from those punitive policies, primarily from Alberta and Ontario. That did increase our welfare rolls; there's no question. We have dealt with some of that, but it certainly put an excessive burden on British Columbia," (Hansard, June 5 1998).

The Canadian (and Westminster) traditions of cabinet solidarity are clear: Decisions of the cabinet must be supported by all of its members; by convention, those not supporting a decision must resign from the cabinet (Parliament of Canada, 2006). "What was good for Ontario as a whole and politically wise were the strongest factors in cabinet," added another former minister (Written survey, November, 2006).

However, there is a key difference, at least according to the former cabinet ministers, in their gendered approach to and perspective on the problems and policy at hand. Women see themselves as playing a clear and distinct role is in the hashing out and compromise discussions of policy planning. Because of the principle of cabinet solidarity and cabinet secrecy, even former cabinet ministers chose their words carefully when attempting to elucidate the differences that arose between themselves and their male colleagues.

For example, Janet Ecker, former Ontario cabinet minister discusses her perception of the evolution of the National Child Benefit:

> There was some gender divide. It wasn't meant to be a welfare top up – so the provinces would get the money and then invest it in children's things, but that meant for social activists that it was a clawback...it was a political risk for us to do that. The women tended to see the outcome, the benefit as worth the risk, but the men less so.
> The child welfare piece was another one that was on our agenda. It didn't have a lot of broad appeal – not a school, road or hospital. Women helped on that. (Interview April 19th, 2006)

Another cabinet minister made similar views clear:

> I think it would have made a difference to have more women at the table. I think some of the outcomes would have been different. We bring a different life experience and that would have resulted in different outcomes. A lot of decisions that were made – I would fight very, very hard in cabinet. Sometimes on some of these decisions I would see a moderation – it wouldn't have gone totally in the direction I was advocating for. But people would say to me, 'How can you sit at that table and make those cruel decisions?" And they did seem heartless at times to people. I just want you to know how different that decision would have been if I hadn't been at that table (Interview May 26th, 2006).

In B.C. the proportion of women in cabinet varied over the course of the mandate from a low of 30 percent to a (then record-breaking) high of 42 percent. According to one minister:

> This (*welfare reform*) was one of the most controversial issues in our caucus and in our party. We did try to change welfare by taking dollars away from employable individuals and putting in place a program that would support their retraining and returning to work. I'm not sure that this was particularly successful although we did see our numbers on the welfare roles drop. One thing that I am proud of is our move to support the working poor with money being provided to working families with children. As we all know, there are many people working who have an income below the poverty line and this was meant to assist them (Interview August, 2007).

When speaking of welfare reform, former women cabinet ministers use gender-neutral language. One former minister noted: "I have never felt that women had any one

issue that belonged to them…to me it was more about fairness for all. I guess as mother I thought in terms of families," (Written survey November 23rd 2006). When discussing the child care amendments to welfare legislation, Minister Sue Hammell said: "Bill 13, on its own and as part of the B.C. Benefits legislation, strongly reflects a belief that the opportunity to work and achieve self-sufficiency and self-determination is fundamental to the quality of life for British Columbians and their communities," (Hansard July 22, 1996). There is no mention of women.

In spite of significant evidence that welfare is a women's issue (it was a women-initiated state support for women and women are the primary beneficiaries), women provincial cabinet ministers, certainly in the mid-1990s and regardless of party, did not see welfare reform as a women's issue. Looking at the federal level, Bashevkin noted that in spite of the number of elected women and the role of women voters in electing the Chretien (Liberal) government, that female political elites were "complicit" in this gender-neutral (on the surface) or gender-denying approach (Bashevkin, 2002). An examination of the transcripts of the House of Parliament (as discussed earlier in this chapter) supports that finding.

Non-government members did make the connections – particularly members from the left in Ontario. Marilyn Churley, former minister in a previous NDP government drew a clear line between welfare cuts, domestic violence and the removal of rent control and argued that they all affected women. "The reality is, these women and kids are suffering because of your cuts and because of your decontrol of rents…you need to bring back rent control, and you need to raise the housing allowance for women on welfare, so they can afford to rent an apartment," (Hansard December 5, 2000). And of course, the

lone objector to the B.C. approach, Minister Joan Smallwood, was moved out of the role of Social Services minister and into the lower-profile role of Minister of Housing, Recreation and Consumer Services – and then remained out of cabinet until 1999 (Legislative Assembly of B.C.).

It was clear from the interviews that where women cabinet ministers claim to have the most significant impact on social welfare policy is in the private discussions that take place in cabinet. There, whether they are managing the file or not, they not only speak up on the issue, but in retrospect argue that they changed the direction of the policy – " softened" the government's position. And that that task was theirs as women, not necessarily as representing women generally, but just being women and having a perspective on the issue distinct from that of their male colleagues.

> Most women…are still seeing the needs and having to advocate – their kids are still in the education system… Women approach politics differently – not necessarily better – but differently. Male politicians tend to focus on a very clear, black and white long term goals to the exclusion of collateral issues, collateral damage. Women tend to be more focused on how you got there. In politics, you need both. We all want the shining city on the hill but it's how you get there…If you get both perspectives on the table, you get better government decisions, I always felt, (Interview April 18th, 2006).

Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated some key components of this thesis: that fiscal feminism, born of necessity from the rightward turn of public policy discourse, led to a re-framing of welfare policy by the women's movement and by women cabinet ministers. Both groups remained very passionately concerned about this policy area, as evidenced in the interviews, but focused their interventions on moderating the impact on women of punitive reforms. The chapter has also underlined the significance of the role of the

federal government in setting the framework for policy. Not only can they challenge smaller policy changes – as seen when B.C. altered their residency requirement – but when welfare payments were significantly reduced, the provinces felt compelled to pass on the federal reduction in support to welfare recipients.

Chapter 5

Education Policy

While not a traditional area of feminist policy focus, education policy has been strongly influenced by women since its inception. Long before women got the vote in Canadian provinces, they could vote for and run for school trustee (Hill, 1948). Many women politicians, particularly those interviewed in this study, have long and extensive backgrounds in education, either as teachers or school trustees. In this policy area, women take an active and vocal role regardless of party. The major non-governmental activists on education policy are the women-dominated teacher's unions who, in addition to acting as a voice for an employee group largely comprised of women, also frequently engage in policy discussions about women's issues in the classroom.

From 1996-2003 in Ontario and B.C., education reform was a high-profile issue. Governments dealt with private school funding, teacher training, classroom size and need for capital spending. What the governments shared on the policy front was an approach to education policy – as evidenced by the broad trends in curriculum reform – that positioned education as a means to educate people for employment.

Education policy review reveals similar patterns that have been discussed in previous chapters. In spite of women's activist role both in history and in the time period reviewed here, education policy too has been caught up in the right-wing rhetoric of the last 15 years. Some of the cabinet ministers from the NDP spoke of the importance of education to civic democracy and their government oversaw a few small education initiatives that raised the profile of women's issues in the curriculum. However, for the

most part, members of both governments, and certainly both governments' education policies emphasized education as a means to produce employees, above all. Women's clear experience and passion for education policy was evident in interviews and transcripts, but much less so in policy accomplishments. (B.C. education policy development was challenged by having five ministers in four years.) Education policy too, falls under the umbrella of fiscal feminism – a policy area of interest and activism, but one profoundly shaped by market-focused rhetoric.

As in other policy areas, the federal government has a role – but less influential than for domestic violence and social welfare policy. Its influence was felt more profoundly on issues of overarching federal concern: culture and the Canadian identity, maintenance of the two official languages, and employment (vocational learning) (Doerr, 1981; Hargarves, 1981). As a result the federal government directly funds these three areas.

Education policy tracing also reveals a reliance on government-instigated reports to drive policy change: The Rozanski report in Ontario and the Sullivan Report in B.C., discussed below, helped set the stage for broad reforms. Again, as in other policy areas, major external events also drive decision-making, such as the reluctant NDP decision to move ahead with a safety plan in schools (Kingdon, 2003). It was pushed forward after several school-related violent events. (Six young women were convicted in 1997 for their role in a fatal beating of a fellow student in Victoria B.C. and in neighbouring Alberta in 1999, a student was shot and a teacher wounded (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, April, 2004 and July, 2004).

Education policy is a vast field of research, but for the purposes of this study, the focus is on the provincial-level political administration of education. Ministerial administration in the provinces can include both higher education (colleges, universities and apprenticeship) as well as primary and secondary education. The main players in educational policy making in Canada are the education ministries, teachers' associations, school trustees and university faculties of education (MacIver, 1990). Provinces tend to go back and forth between having one minister responsible for the full continuum of education and having separate ministers for each department (Levin, 2005). Some provinces have merged the two into super-ministries, but both British Columbia and Ontario traditionally have two ministries to manage K-12 (Kindergarten to the end of high school) and postsecondary education. In 1999, the Ontario government separated the two to form two ministries and in B.C. the government moved to a two-ministry system in early 1998.

This study focuses solely on primary and secondary education (K-12), as issues surrounding it were a major concern for each government. Highlighted here, both in the history of education policy and in the discussion of recent government action, are the three areas of traditional provincial intervention: school board structure and financing, academic standard-setting and teacher training.

As in previous chapters, there are 8 elements to examine: 1. Federal policy and funding; 2. History of education in the provinces; 3. How the debate came to the public agenda in the 1990s; 4. Policy action; 5. Spending; 6. Women's movement involvement 7. Other group involvement; 8. Cabinet women's involvement.

1. Federal policy and funding

Education was a provincial responsibility before there was a national government. When the Province of Upper Canada (now Ontario) entered the field of education in 1807 they provided exclusive grammar schools (Phillips, 1957). Almost immediately, there was pressure to expand the system (the Common Schools Act, 1816), which allowed for the establishment of local schools and school boards for the broader public (Cameron, 1972). Curriculum was subject to review by district boards of education and funding was provided on a per-capita basis (Cameron, 1972).

Education policy is an area that was clearly defined by the British North America Act as being decidedly in the purview of the provinces (Section 93 of the BNA: "…and for each Province the Legislature may exclusively make Laws in relation to Education…"). However, developments since then have seen the role of the federal government in education, particularly education funding, expand considerably (Stevenson, 1981). Federal involvement in education is justified either by the connections between education and other areas of federal responsibility (defense, communications, the economy, the arts, research) or the inability to separate provincial versus federal jurisdiction (Stevenson, 1981). Federal involvement in education took a leap up with the Youth Training Act (1939), intended to address the impact of the Depression on communities (Stevenson, 1981). Federal funding for vocational programs was expanded with the Technical and Vocational Training and Assistance Act (1960) ensuring that the federal government would pay 50 percent of the cost of vocational high school programs (Young and Machinski, 1974). Elementary and secondary expenditures by the federal

government also rose during that period – from 1960-1968 expenditure went from $1.3 Billion to $7.8 billion (Stevenson 1981).

In the 1970s the federal government's interest in school curriculum, as it pertained to national identity, meant that federal funds were made available for French education. The results were clear: in B.C., for example, in 1970-71 the proportion of children learning French at the elementary level was 5.7 percent. By 1976-77 it was 20 percent (Hargraves, 1981). Pan-national testing of students was (and still is) managed by the Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC), which is partially funded by the federal government (www.cmec.ca). There is no federal minister of education but responsibility for the wide range federal education issues is divided among various ministers.

A study by Pamela Cross that outlines the progress of the recommendations from the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (1970) noted that several key issues were, thirty years later, still being implemented. Those issues include the provision of textbooks that portray women in diversified occupations, a revision of government publications to ensure portrayal of women in diverse occupations and co-educational guidance programs (Cross, 2000).

No discussion of education in Canada – and particularly Ontario – should fail to acknowledge the history of religion in the development of the system. The British North America (BNA) Act provided for the public support for Catholic and Protestant education in Upper and Lower Canada (Ontario and Quebec). Quebec's older settlements and therefore education system (dating from the1630s) was primarily aimed at conversion and Catholic religious education – practical matters were included later (Phillips, 1957).

In both provinces, the Church of England and the Roman Catholic church struggled for control of education and the unique federal solution was to fund two separate but equal systems (Martin and Macdonnell, 1984). Funding was limited to elementary school but then expanded to include the first two years of high school in the 1920s (Institute of Catholic Education, 2006). In Ontario, it was expanded to included support for the final three years of high school in 1984 by Conservative Premier, Bill Davis – a decision he became convinced of when a few young Catholic students approached him on his front lawn (Interview, 2002).

British Columbia, however, initially rejected all attempts to create publicly financed segregated schools (Martin and Macdonnell, 1982). Because the Catholic schools in B.C. were unable to secure legal recognition prior to B.C.'s entry into Confederation, the BNA support did not apply to them (Barman, 1991b). In the late 1960s the Dutch Calvinists and the Catholics joined forces to pressure the government to fund independent schools (Barman, 1991b; Suffington, 2007). They succeeded in 1977 in securing government support that was expanded in 1989 to 50 percent of annual operating costs (Barman, 1991b). It was a move that, according to Barman (1991b) successfully de-privatized the private system and instituted public control while maintaining private choice.

2. History of education in the provinces

The first schools in Ontario (Kingston in 1785 and Dundas in 1788) were private and only for boys (Phillips, 1957). Many were common schools – built by parents (Phillips, 1957). In 1807, the government, for the first time, began to provide funding for grammar (secondary) schoolteachers (Phillips, 1957). It was sometime later before grammar

(secondary) schools were widely and formally established. (A few local high schools had been opened such as the Home District School, Toronto, est. 1807 in Phillips, 1957.) The Common School Act (1850) established school areas and trustees. The act also provided for the establishment of separate (Catholic) school boards (Archives Ontario). Teacher training was established – in the form of Normal Schools – in 1857 (Archives Ontario).

Separate schools (Catholic) were also developed in the mid 1800s as well as schools for children who spoke no English, Aboriginal children and black children. (Black children began to attend white schools in urban centres at the beginning of the century but the last segregated school did not close until 1965 Martin and Macdonnell, 1984; Archives Ontario.) About half of First Nations and Aboriginal children are now educated on reserve, and half in the public system (Lam, 1990).

In British Columbia, the earliest education was provided by the Hudson's Bay Company – a school for the children of employees was established in 1849 (Phillps, 1957; Dunae, 2002). A Catholic school was opened that same year (Dunae, 2002). In the 1850s, the governor of the Province, James Douglas recommended that schools be established for the working class – by the end of the decade, several had been established throughout the province (Dunae, 2002). The first free elementary school opened in British Columbia in 1865 (Prentice and Houston, 1975). The Common School Act (1865) established a board of education and committed the government to significantly higher expenditures – which they had trouble meeting (Phillips, 1957). (The province joined Confederation in 1871.)

The next major development in the education system of British Columbia was Putnam-Weir report of 1924, a groundbreaking survey that would influence education

across Canada (Patterson, 1990). The report advocated a new kind of progressive education that would focus on informal-life experiences for younger children, and establish special schools (junior high) for students ages 12 to 15 (Patterson, 1990).

A curriculum advisory board was established in 1954 – including representatives from agriculture and labour and two years later, a college of education for teacher training was established (Dunae, 2002). Importantly, in 1979, the government separated K-12 education out for one ministry and postsecondary for another (Ministry of University, Science and Communications) (Dunae, 2002).

It's important to note, in light of the occupational background of many female cabinet ministers, that before they had the full franchise, or the right to run for political office, women in all provinces were able to vote for school trustees – and to run for the office (Phillips, 1957). B.C. has a history of activist women education ministers. In 1952, the governing Social Credit party appointed the first female Minister of Education – Tilly Jean Rolston. She was considered a considerable force in cabinet and made significant policy changes while in office. She became known for the introduction of a new education funding formula, and the introduction of "sex education" into the curriculum (Itterman, 1998). The second female Minister of Education was CCF government member, Eileen Dailly (1972-1975). During her tenure she banned corporal punishment (the first to do so in Canada), made kindergarten mandatory and ended provincial exams (Drews, 2002).

Ontario had one long-term woman minister (and one short-term) of education prior to 1995, Dr. Bette Stephenson, a Conservative, who held the portfolio from 1978 to 1985. Stephenson was by no means a feminist – she responded to calls for women's (and

other) rights with a demand for responsibility (Empire Club Speech, January 17, 1985). However, Stephenson did focus on an expansion and improvement of the education system in order to provide, "equality of opportunity" (Empire Club Speech, January 17, 1985). Notably, she was privately opposed to the extension of funding to Catholic high schools, but publicly supported her leader's decision. She later was clear in her opposition: "Public schools should be secular – and Catholics should not be separate," (Rushowy, Girard, Brown, 2007).

3. Getting on the Public Agenda

The new NDP government of 1991-96 in B.C. signaled the end of a long era of discontent between teachers and the government. The previous Social Credit government had spent years implementing fiscal cuts to the education system culminating in a massive public sector strike in 1983 (Kilian, 2005). The government had ended local school district's control, increased class sizes and taken control over teacher salaries. "But 1983 left deep scars in the education system and created a permanent estrangement between teachers and the government," (Kilian, 2005). The government attempted to turn the corner on both this relationship and the state of education in the province with the Sullivan report of 1988. The report focused on the need for an articulated mandate for education and called for a new approach to education as a supplier of social capital (Sullivan, 1988). The government implemented many of the recommendations in the report in 1989 – including recognizing home schooling and establishing a Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (Dunae, 2002).

The incoming NDP government (1991-96) promised to make education a priority. In the Speech from the Throne:

> This government's vision for the future extends well beyond its term of office. The agenda includes new measures for ensuring a healthy and secure future for our children…(Our) improvements include funding adjustments for inflation and increased enrolment, and additional funding for new computers and for school districts experiencing rapid growth. These programs will be carried out in consultation with parents, school staff and local communities, (March 17, 1992, Hansard).

By the end of the first term, several initiatives had been accomplished: revised school funding and a school meals program. But the primary initiatives in educational reform were carry-overs from the Sullivan report. One of the key issues was report cards and by 1993, the new education minister, Anita Hagen, announced a return to letter grades over anecdotal report cards and a renewed emphasis on reading, writing and mathematics (Manzer, 1994).

In Ontario up until 1998, primary responsibility for education financing was shared with the local school board and the provincial ministry (Rozanski, 2002). The Conservative government set out, even before the 1995 campaign, to reform both education and education funding in the province:

> We believe Ontario's education system is in need of system-wide reform, based on the principles of providing opportunity to students, excellence in curriculum and teachers, and accountability to parents and taxpayers…Bureaucratic barriers stand in the way of more cost-efficient methods of operation…Too many of today's (school) trustees have become full-time politicians…Ontario is the only province that still has a five-year secondary school program. Reducing this to four years will save an estimated $350 million a year, (The Common Sense Revolution, 1995).

The Conservative government had also inherited a system in the midst of reform. The previous NDP government had developed a common curriculum (ending the streaming of high school students into vocational, college bound or university preparatory courses). The NDP also began a benchmarks program – standard setting for teachers and

boards across the province (Manzer, 1994). It was controversial then and remained so through the subsequent Conservative terms.

In their first term, the government revised education funding by shifting from the mixed system to a fully-provincially funded system. They reduced the size and number of school boards and legislated that elected school trustees could no longer be full-time. (Their salaries were reduced to a cap of $5,000 Education Improvement Commission, 1997.) The changes were recommended by government-initiated reports produced by the Education Improvement Commission (The Road Ahead – Volumes I –III, 1997).

Bill 160, the Education Quality Improvement Act (1997), was the second major education initiative and it drew significant negative response. Hundreds of school boards, education associations and teachers and their unions protested in the media, at the committee stage and in labour negotiations. John Crump, for example, of the Coalition for Public Education testified:

> Bill 160 is just the latest manufactured response to that crisis and it must be seen in combination with the Fewer School Boards Act. That bill, which centralized power in the hands of the Minister of Education and his handpicked Education Improvement Commission, is now creating chaos throughout the province. This new act transfers a massive amount of power and decision-making authority up the ladder from local communities to the cabinet (Standing Committee on the Administration of Justice, October 29, 1997).

Five of the provinces largest public teachers' unions went on strike for two weeks in protest against the bill's implicit funding cuts and explicit increase in instructional days and decrease in preparation time. The teachers were legislated back to work, but the government promised to amend the legislation to better reflect their concerns. Key elements of Bill 160 were successfully challenged in court but the legal basis for

centralizing financial control over school boards remained (Gidney, 1999).

These two significant reforms were managed by male ministers, John Snobelen and David Johnson. Johnson took over the file just as the debate on Bill 160 was beginning to escalate. Media noted that Johnson was in a difficult position – told by the leader that he had to manage financial cuts to the system as well as convince them of various policy changes (Jenish, Maclean's, November 17, 1997). In the first mandate, the government tended to put male ministers on the files where significant funding cuts were to be made. Janet Ecker, the subsequent education minister, felt that that strategy changed in the second mandate:

> It's easier for women to handle a tough file, but we can sometimes appear and sound more empathetic, even if we are giving the same message. It makes stakeholders look bad if they attack too hard. In some ways, they (*the Premier's office*) knew I could handle the teachers. In education, they knew I had the skills, they knew I had the communication skills. It was so important to how our government was perceived. If we did well on this, we were ok (Interview, November 2006).

4 Policy Action

There were two major and controversial developments in Ontario during the 1999-2003 term: tax credits for private school tuition and requirements for teacher training. Both policies were managed by Janet Ecker in her role as Finance Minister and her role as Education Minister.

In spite of the protests and the strike in the first term, the government of Ontario was still committed to significant reform on the education file in its second term. According to the Speech from the Throne:

> With the benefits of school and student testing already clear, your government will move forward with the next logical step: regular testing of Ontario's teachers…Any parent whose child has had a difficult year in school knows the difference that a good teacher makes…Your government's plan includes regular testing of teachers' knowledge and skills through written and other assessment methods …decertification will result if remediation is unsuccessful (Speech from the Throne, Hansard, April 22, 1999).

Reaction to Bill 80, Stability and Excellence in Education and Bill 110, Quality in the Classroom, was heated. Bill 80 outlined mandatory five year re-certification (as recommended in the NDP's Royal Commission); an extension of all future collective agreements from one year to three to help avoid strikes; and allowing high school teachers to include extra-curricular teaching as part of their workload. The Opposition suggested that it was a way to back-pedal on labour-relations challenges of the first term (Gerrard Kennedy, Hansard, June 18, 2001). Some of the teachers unions were concerned that the bill would circumvent the Teacher's College. (See later in this chapter.)

The second initiative, the education tax credit was, according to the Ministry, "…intended to support parents who have been seeking more choice in education for their children. Some parents choose to send their children to an independent school. For many, the cost is prohibitive,"(Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2001). The tax credit was to a maximum of $700 on tuition paid to an independent school rising to $3,500 at full implementation in 2006 (Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2001).

Debate in the House was heated on the subject. Liberal, Joseph Cordiano: "What this government is doing to public education is now clear. The one great equalizer in our society, public education, is now being eliminated. It's a reversal of immense proportions, unprecedented in our country's history," (Hansard June 12, 2001). New Democratic

Party leader, Howard Hampton: “What we get, Premier, is the lengths your government is prepared to go in order to load the deck in favour of private education,” (Hansard, May 29, 2001). Petitions to the legislature objecting to the bill were submitted daily.

Public consultation on the subject was equally volatile. Over 100 groups and individuals made presentations – as well as an additional 200 written submissions (Ontario, Ministry of Finance, 2001). The debate split along predictable lines, teachers and public school advocates were against it, and small independent private schools supported it. However, in his examination of 60 years of education policy in Ontario, Gidney (1999) finds that most of the Harris government reforms had their roots in earlier initiatives and with earlier governments. Centraliztion of curriculum and boards began in the 1960s and province-wide testing had been done by the early 1990s (Gidney, 1999). The only truly radical developments were the removal of the school board’s ability to levy taxes – and to this day, school boards cannot raise taxes (Gidney, 1999).

Curriculum reform in both provinces was reflective of longer term general trends in reform across Canada – as well as other jurisdictions – namely a focus on “back to basics” and a move away from child-centred learning and a view of education as preparation for future employment (Schwartz, 1993). Notably, education rhetoric shifted in both provinces, regardless of party, and the clearly articulated purpose of an elementary and secondary education system was to prepare young people for employment – not to prepare them for citizenship or other more abstract social goods, but employment.

The British Columbia government was also committed to educational reform, but encountered much less resistance to their efforts. In the Speech from the Throne at the beginning of their second term, they outlined their plans:

> It will reflect as well British Columbia's increased investment in our schools, to keep pace with the thousands of new students entering our school system this year. And it will include my government's Guarantee for Youth: offering work experience while keeping education affordable and accessible (Speech from the Throne, June 25, 1996).

However, the second term of the NDP government was particularly politically tumultuous. From 1996-2001 there were five ministers of Education (one served twice, so there were six changes in leadership in 5 years) as compared to just 2 ministers in a four-year period in Ontario. The first minister, Moe Shiota held the post for just six months into the mandate due to allegations of interference and conflict of interest (Sheppard, 1996). The Health minister, Joy MacPhail assumed the minister's responsibilities for a month until a new minister could be found. The third minister, Paul Ramsey held the post for the longest period – over two years – but was frequently the target of recall campaigns which were a significant distraction. The fourth minister, Gordon Wilson, a former Liberal, faced calls for his resignation due to an unresolved loan. Over a slightly earlier period from 1989-96, there were six deputy ministers – rendering continuity in policy a significant challenge (Flemming, 2003).

The second term of the NDP government faced an uphill battle in education. With reduced dollars available for investment and strong critiques of the performance of the system, the government was pressed into action. The 1996 Provincial Learning Assessment of B.C. launched a scathing critique of the educational system of the province – focusing on its inability to prepare students for citizenship (Mahon, 2001).

The government responded with a back-to-basics curriculum reform which was tempered by some broader principles such as healthy lifestyle (Mahon, 2001). In 1997, the Provincial Auditor found that the ministry was not adequately measuring the objectives it set out to achieve – namely the ministry reported on how well programs were delivered, not whether the students were learning more (Beatty, 1997). This, as well as continued pressure from the BCTF to increase funding in schools and a Simon Fraser University report later that fall on falling grades of B.C. students, kept the education agenda high on the government's priority list.

One of the early initiatives of the government was to increase capital spending for 11 schools – notably for employment:

> We know that education is the key for getting ahead, for securing meaningful and well-paying employment. Education is also key to our society as a whole in this ever-changing world economy, in this information and computer world. This government not only recognizes that, it recognizes the need for all young people to secure a good education no matter what their sex or background or financial status is. (Tim Stevenson, NDP Member of the Legislative Assembly, Hansard April 8, 1997).

The new spending was welcomed by school boards and the BCTF, but quickly became controversial. The B.C. Teachers Federation supported the move, but underlined that it would do little to address the overall classroom shortage and high teacher-student ratio (The Province, 1997). (All eleven projects were in NDP ridings – and 8 in cabinet members constituencies Smyth, 1997.) The opposition was vocal in its concern about the projects solely landing in NDP ridings.

The second major policy initiative was to legislate a phased-in reduction of classroom size. The B.C. Teachers Federation negotiated an agreement with the province of British Columbia to hire 1,200 new teachers over the following three years; to reduce

the class size in kindergarten-to-grade 3 and the government agreed to fund this initiative. According to Moe Shiota, then Minister of Education, "These are the formative years in which students are in school and require a particularly high level of care and attention," (Hansard, April 21, 1998). Parents raised concern with the plan citing its significant fiscal cost, lack of flexibility and dramatic increase in split classes (B.C. Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils, Issues Bulletin, December 2001).

Safety in schools was an issue throughout the mandate – though Minister Joy MacPhail was not convinced of its urgency. As in previous chapters' analysis of policy development, external crises drove change (Kingdon, 2003). In 2001 the Teacher's Federation called for mandatory background checks on new students – based on concerns after school shootings in the U.S. and Alberta (Steffenhagen, 2001). The Ministry of Education worked with the Attorney General and the Ministry of Women's Equality to develop a broad approach to Safe Schools (Mahon, 2001). The result was a Safe Schools kit in every school that provided resource materials and best practices ideas (Mahon, 2001).

Finally, as in Ontario, labour relations were also a challenge. In March of 2000, the school support workers went on strike for a week over issues of job security and pay hikes. Teachers refused to cross the picket lines and 44 of the province's 60 school boards closed schools (Canadian Press, 2000). Pressured by hundreds of calls from parents, the government legislated the strikers back to work to limit the number of lost school days (Lunman and Armstrong, 2000). The Liberal opposition urged them to act too: "Today there are 400,000 children who cannot go to school because of a labour dispute. Under the NDP, children have lost over three million days of learning in school

because of labour disputes," (Gordon Campbell, Leader of the Opposition, Hansard, March 27, 2000). For the NDP government with its traditional support from and roots in the labour movement, the back-to-work legislation was a difficult decision: "There is a balance to be struck between the rights of children and families to have certainty around education and the right to collective bargaining," Premier Ujal Dosanjh (Lunman and Armstrong, 2000 A9). The voice of and for women on education during this period was not women ministers in the house, but the female leadership of the British Columbia Teacher's federation as discussed below.

5. Expenditures

Throughout the 1960s to the end of the 1980s education spending in Canada increased significantly (Mahon, 2001). However, across the country, even in the provinces that spend the most on education (Quebec, B.C. and Ontario in that order) education budgets were reigned in by broader trends in fiscal restraint – particularly, the aforementioned reduction in CAP funding (Mahon, 2001; Levin, 2005). B.C. however, did increase spending during the NDP government, but enrolment also increased significantly (due to immigration) so teacher-student ratios remained high (Allen, 1999).

British Columbia spends proportionally somewhat more money on its primary and secondary education than does Ontario – it also spends a higher percentage of its total budget on education than Ontario. With over double the population of school-aged children (5-14) – some 1,560,500 to 770,690 in 2001 – Ontario spends less than double of what British Columbia spends (Statistics Canada, Census 2001). Adjusted for inflation, per capita spending on students in Ontario declined by nearly 12 percent from 1994 to 2000 (Levin, 2005).

The source of the funding has changed over the years. In B.C. the province uploaded education taxation – and then, naturally, also uploaded the funding of education from the municipal government to the provincial government in 1981-82 (Lam, 1990). Ontario took over the full funding of public education in 2003 removing the taxation responsibility from municipalities but the previous provincial government had downloaded the full cost of welfare and public housing to municipalities.

TABLE 13: Ontario Total School Board Operating Expenditures

Education (Primary and Secondary)

Fiscal Year	**1999-2000**	**2000-2001**	**2001-2002**	**2002-2003**
School board Operating (billions)	$9.6	$7.7	$7.9	$8.7
Percentage of Entire Government Expenditures	15.5	12.4	12.5	13.3

"The program provides policy and program direction and financial support to elementary and secondary schools and agencies in order to foster and sustain a high-quality education system for all students in the province – no matter where they live."

TABLE 14: British Columbia Total Education Expenditures

Primary and Secondary Education

Fiscal Year	**1997-1998**	**1998-1999**	**1999-2000**	**2000-2001**
Total Program Expenditure (billions)	$4.1	$4.2	$4.2	$4.4
Percentage of Entire Government Expenditures	17.1	17.1	16.8	16.8

The budget provides for: "overall policy development for the ministry, management of funding for public and independent school systems, other educational initiatives carried on in the province and administrative and support services. Major programs and activities include(ing): Minister's Office… Management Services..(and) K-12 Education Programs." (Estimates, 2000)

Sources: Ontario Ministry of Finance, Public Accounts of Ontario, Schedules, Ministry Statements and Details of Expenditure 1999-00, 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03.
British Columbia Ministry of Finance, Public Accounts, Consolidated Revenue Fund Supplementary Schedules, and Estimates 1997-98, 1998-99, 1999-00, 2000-01.
Calculations of percentages mine.

6. Women's Movement Involvement

Interestingly, for an issue of historical interest and engagement for women – and an area of significant dominance of female workers as well as a ministry frequently led by women – education seems not to have galvanized a response from the women's movement – or certainly did not in the years focused on here.

An exception to this generalization is the work of several scholars (Briskin 2006; Briskin and McDermott, 1993) who note the gendering of the labour movement and the role that public sector militancy – particularly among education and heath care workers – has revitalized and fundamentally altered the labour movement (Briskin, 2006). These scholars rightly consider that the female-dominated teacher's unions, had a significant role to play in the development of policy – to be discussed shortly.

Gaskell and Taylor (2003) provide a key answer to this question of the overall silence of the women's movement in the late 1990s – both in Ontario and in British Columbia. In their study, which explores the varied links between the movement and public policy from the 1970s to the late 1990s in Australian and Canadian provinces, finds that from the successes of the 70s in changing curriculum, raising awareness had fallen away to overall government (and therefore, teacher unions) focus on fiscal restraint (Gaskell and Taylor, 2003). They found that in Ontario, feminist educational reform had a number of sources namely: women's teachers unions, women in the ministry of

education, decentralized and reform-minded school boards, and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. The sources had impact, they argue, but were unstable and short lived (Gaskell and Taylor, 2003). The Conservative government, they noted, amalgamated boards, reducing their impact, and the women's teachers unions amalgamated with men to improve their political impact in an atmosphere of cutbacks (Gaskell and Taylor, 2003).

In B.C., they note that the NDP government had appointed a women's advisor to the Ministry of Education in their first term. The advisor, in turn, established a gender-equity advisory committee composed of superintendents, principals, trustees, teachers and faculties of education (Gaskell and Taylor, 2003). The committee provided grants for gender equity projects and conferences, but was ultimately disbanded in 1994. The BCTF also had a women's committee, but it disbanded in 1997 (Gaskell and Taylor, 2003). It had considerable success in its brief tenure preparing classroom tools, sponsoring workshops and encouraging status of women activities across the country (Coulter and Wenersson, 1999).

8. Other group involvement

It would be difficult to overestimate the involvement and the opposition to the government's education agenda by the teacher's unions – particularly the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF). The Federation was founded in 1919 and has some 50,000 members (OSSTF, 2001). The OSSTF has historically been the most militant of the province's five teachers' organizations – they have refused to implement ministry plans they disagreed with (Lam, 1990). In the late 1980s, for example, the OSSTF was "obsessed" with the bill to extend separate school funding to

secondary schools (Lam, 1990).

The first term of the Conservative government was not a good one for the teacher's unions. In 1997, teachers staged a two-week illegal strike by walking off the job in protest of the Harris government's Bill 160 (Gollom, 2000). In the second term, the OSSTF objected to the private school tax credit: "The government's tax credit for private school supporters will further cripple public education in Ontario. If 15 percent of parents switch their children to private schools over the next few years, the public school system will lose a further $2.1 billion in per pupil revenue," (Earl Manners, President, OSSTF, News Release, 25 October, 2001 "Sheep's Clothing Removed"). A multi-faith group, comprised of high profile people in a wide variety of religious communities, was created to publicly oppose the plan. They argued both that it would take funding away from a strained public system, but also that religious groups were being used to market the proposal (Mackie, 2001). School boards also objected. The Ontario Association of School Boards called the policy the biggest change in education policy history – and that the effects would not be felt until after full implementation (Fine, 2001b).

Teacher training requirements also inspired a reaction – but a mixed one. The Ontario College of Teachers opined that the new requirements would provide formal acknowledgement of what is already taking place (Fine, 2001a). The OSSTF objected primarily on the grounds that the test had been developed by a private U.S. company: "The Minister's announcement today opens the door to an increased politicization of education in Ontario. The Minister is bypassing the College of Teachers, which the government set up, and, which has a mandate to develop professional standards for teachers," (OSSTF, June 2001).

In British Columbia, the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF) had a long combative history with the Social Credit government (Lam, 1990). In 1987, the government had made it illegal for principals or vice-principals to be members of the federation. In 1986, the BCTF moved from their traditional voting en masse strategies to becoming candidates – in fact teachers were the largest single occupation group seeking office in 1986 (Lam, 1990).

In the second term of the NDP government, the BCTF were initially relieved that no cuts to education funding were made. They did however raise concerns that flat-lining the budget would not accommodate increases due to inflation (BCTF, 1997a). Later that year, however, they increased the pressure and the level of their concern with an analysis of education funding showing that when inflation is taken into account, there was a seven percent decline in real per-pupil operating funds of per student since 1990-91 (BCTF, 1997b).

On the government's second initiative of reducing class sizes, BCTF was pleased with the commitment and with the plan to hire more teachers but noted that their only concern was the lack of pay raises for teachers (BCTF, 1998). The next year of the mandate saw good relations between the government and the teachers. The BCTF did raise a number of social justice issues with the government – including calling upon them and their colleagues in Ottawa – to fulfill their promise to eliminate child poverty (BCTF, 1999).

Relations cooled however, with the CUPE strike in 2000 and the legislation to send workers back to the job. The BCTF President noted "This is an attack on free collective bargaining. It's a sad day when any government uses legislation to intrude

into the bargaining process. The government still has not addressed the source of the problem, which is a dysfunctional bargaining system and a dysfunctional employers' organization," (BCTF, 2000).

8. Cabinet Women's Role

Of all the policy areas that were discussed with the women cabinet ministers, education was the area that all spoke of most positively, most articulately and in the most detail. They all remembered specific education accomplishments of their government whether they had a hands-on role as minister or not. They all spoke of raising issues related to education at the cabinet table, again regardless of whether they held the portfolio or not.

I suggest that this is attributable to their long history in the education system. Of the 11 B.C. women who served in cabinet, seven had educational backgrounds. Three of them were former schoolteachers, three were school trustees and six had undergraduate degrees in education. In Ontario, of the six women who served in cabinet, three were former schoolteachers and three were former school trustees.

TABLE 15: Education Experience of Women Ministers

B.C.	**School teacher**	**School Trustee**	**B. Ed**
Lois Boone	x	x	x
Gretchen Mann-Brewin		x	
Evelyn Gilespie			x
Penny Priddy		x	
Joan Sawicki			x
Sue Hammel	x	x	x
Cathy McGregor	x		x
Ontario			
Elizabeth Witmer	x	x	x
Dianne Cunningham	x		x
Brenda Elliott	x	x	
Tina Molinari		x	

Almost every woman interviewed spoke about education. The two women who had served as ministers of education, naturally had more to say. Janet Ecker of Ontario talked about the challenges that faced her managing: "People stood there screaming obscenities at me and I knew all I had to do was keep my cool. It was a big challenge of the job. Part of it is that you know they are trying to make you lose your cool," (Interview, November 2006).

Penny Priddy of B.C. served as Education minister for just six months, but spoke often on the subject throughout her legislative career:

> When I was involved in my children's school groups as a PAC or parent advisory council member, then as a trustee and chairing the school board, and then as a candidate and an MLA, the issues that we hear(d) about..(were) health, K-to-12

> education and post-secondary education… Most of my paid and unpaid life has been spent working with children, particularly very young children. One of the things that nobody – I really do think nobody – would argue with is that the earlier we can see children and give them the support and services they need and support their families, the less of that kind of work we might have to do later on (April 13, 2000, Hansard).

And similar to many of her colleagues, Priddy referred to her history in teaching and education. Former schoolteacher and cabinet minister, Cathy McGregor said, "As a former teacher, I know full well that that is a priority not just for teachers but for families in communities. We...put our resources in the place where they provide direct services for children," (Hansard April 14, 1997).

Other cabinet ministers without involvement in education spoke up about it both in interviews and in the House. According to Ontario MPP Elizabeth Witmer, "We actually did some really good work at education as well…We started the evaluation of students and the reason for that was you have to know how well you are doing. … I guess having been a chair of a school board and a teacher, I was very focused on the students who needed help," (Interview, May 2006). According to former B.C. MLA Lois Boone:

> I'm particularly pleased with the work we did in the postsecondary level …We opened up new universities throughout the province; increased the number of seats at all institutions; and implemented a tuition freeze to keep education affordable…We were also hit with huge needs in schools. The lower mainland was growing and there was a massive need for new schools to be built. This we did. We also implemented a reduction in class size which was legislated (Interview, May 2007).

For Tina Molinari in Ontario, private school funding was a key accomplishment. As a former chairwoman of a Catholic school board, she felt that she had significant input on the discussion: "I was proud of private school tax credits….I liked the fact that the government made promises and kept them even though I am skeptical about politics," (Interview February, 2007). Even though the B.C. women came at the education agenda

with a different set of political values than the Ontario women, they were equally enthusiastic about their government's accomplishments: "Education is a fundamental; it's fundamental to a free and democratic society. It's clear that when a child takes their first step into the public education system, that is their first meeting place with other future citizens. It's a meeting place that prepares its citizens in both civic democracy as well as social and economic democracy," said Joan Smallwood (Hansard, November 9, 1998). Sue Hammel, B.C. MLA said, "We believe every child deserves a quality education, regardless of their parents' income. Education is the great equalizer for all our people as well as for new immigrants who are establishing themselves here," (Hansard, May 3, 1999).

Education was not without controversy inside cabinet either, particularly in Ontario. On the subject of private school tax credits, Janet Ecker acknowledged the issue: "Of course this is a controversial move. I haven't met a change in education in my lifetime put forward by any government that wasn't met with controversy…but we have the courage to make changes," (Benzie, 2001b). A number of media reports noted that the minister herself opposed the plan – though she did not allude to as much in interview (Benzie, 2001a). In a later conversation with the Globe and Mail, the minister conceded that there was both caucus and cabinet division over the issue of private school funding: "I don't think I could name an issue in education or other priority areas where there hasn't been different views amongst the caucus or cabinet," (Mackie, 2001).

Conclusion

This chapter has underlined some of the key themes of this thesis. First of all, in spite of the breadth of women cabinet minister's experience in education and their

passion for the issue, they were not always given leadership roles in education. The key female leaders were in the teacher's unions – and they were vocal and involved at every turn. However, they too had adopted the new ways of talking about education and employment, even though at the same time they advocated for non-sexist materials in the classrooms. Certainly on curriculum issues, regardless of party, the right-wing turn had already been made in education policy prior to either government's arrival (Clark, 2002; Laycock, 2005). Both governments continued the trend to consider education primarily as a means to employment. This chapter has also underscored the role of the leader (Premier) in setting policy strategy (White, 2006; Savoie, 1999). On a number of occasions with Ontario ministers in particular (Stephenson and Ecker), the women's personal positions on an issue were overridden by the Premier's Office and they were compelled to defend positions they did not believe in.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The cases of Ontario and British Columbia were chosen for this study so that their similarities and differences could highlight the central question: Does it make a difference to have women at the cabinet table? And, what role do party and critical mass play on that impact? Finally, what can the examination of these two cases tell us about the policy process and the meaning of representation.

In order to answer these central questions, I have looked in depth here at politics of policy formation (Mazur 2002) and where the policy process allows for an active promotion of women's status and strikes down gender hierarchies. I have paid attention to women's movements where they have had a role and an impact on the process and the outcome. But the focus on elected women raises questions about substantive representation. Can women promote feminism as policy actors? Does the mere presence of women lead to women-friendly policies?

The first hypothesis tested was: Women representatives, regardless of political orientation, are substantive representatives. The findings confirm this. According to Williams (1996 106), "The representative who is capable of acting as an advocate for women, must have an understanding of the ways in which the lives of their constituents are shaped by the privileges of men." Almost all the women spoke at some point in the interview about women constituents and the particular challenges they faced. The women, regardless of party, perceive themselves as having an impact, as being able to

demonstrably change the direction of policy. Though Dodson cautions against reading too much into that fact that legislators may sound like feminists, they were able to give examples of how they implemented what they saw as their substantive role (Dodson, 2006). One former minister explained, "I just want you to know how different that decision would have been if I hadn't been at that table." "Having women in the house does make a difference. I think we provide a more cooperative method of working. It seems to me that we work harder at reaching a compromise…The same goes for cabinet," said another. To be clear, very few identified explicit differences in opinion that occurred along gender lines at the cabinet table. So again, regardless of party, they almost universally declared party solidarity. At the same time though, they acknowledged that their distinct impact was made on public policy decision-making by bringing their unique female perspective to the table (which led to their thoughts on representation to be discussed below).

So the answer is to whether they have an impact is "yes". On domestic violence – to varying degrees – their voices carried more weight on the issue. On social welfare – they brought a deeper understanding of the challenges that face women in poverty to the table. In education – their overwhelming experience in the education sector prior to politics ensured that they had confident and well-argued opinions on education issues. But all the women ministers' positive impacts are also shaped by the participation of outside groups (such as the women's movements and the teachers' unions) and the confines of the ability to act (such as political party as well as broader social and political trends). As others have found, their impact is muted – as Carroll (2002) notes: "changes in policy making that result from women's representation of women's interests are not

always unidirectional, straightforward or uncomplicated."

Representation theory suggests a greater divide between descriptive and substantive representation, but this research shows that the difference between them is not so vast. Descriptive representation should not be devalued. The women ministers clearly value their role as descriptive representatives and consider descriptive representation to be relevant. In a study on nomination rules in Ontario (Byrne, 2008), I talked to party candidate recruiters to better understand how they found and encouraged women candidates. The recruiters were clear that the more women ran, the more would run.

In addition to their roles as substantive representatives for women, the cabinet ministers also saw themselves as having representative responsibilities beyond the boundaries of their electoral districts. One minister noted: "As I was the only New Democrat elected from the Northern Interior I found myself standing up for the north and rural communities. As I came from a union background I was also standing up for unionized worker and workers in general." Another added that while her main focus was to represent here riding, "Over time, I became known as a voice for farmers, chiropractors, universities and others."

There was no question though, that the women noted specific gender divides on policy issues. "There were rural men when I was there who didn't even believe there should be child care." In the late 1990s the federal government worked with the provinces to provide a child benefit for welfare and working poor families. One minister noted: "There was some gender divide. It wasn't meant to be a welfare top up. The women tended to see the outcome, the benefit as worth the risk, but the men less so."

Another minister echoed her colleague's point of view: "The child welfare piece was another one that was on our agenda. It didn't have a lot of broad appeal – it was not a school, a road or hospital. Women helped on that."

They also noted that they, as women, had a particular style that was distinct from their male colleagues: "Women don't need a legacy," said one, "and I don't live in a man's world. I don't care what happens on the 13th hole."

At the same time, while they were naturally proud of the contributions they made, there was a gap between their perceptions and the actual result of their leadership. One minister pointed out: "When I arrived, the (women's) directorate was off in some distant office… I moved them right into the middle of the government buildings." That change was a symbolic one though, as the funding to the Directorate was cut and its mandate significantly shifted to conform to the financial and political priorities of the government. In B.C., one minister noted: "We did try to change welfare by taking dollars away for employable individuals… I'm not sure that this was particularly successful, but we did see our numbers on the welfare roles drop." While the welfare rolls did decline, there was a corresponding significant rise in the use of food banks, a rise in homelessness and a rise in fraud. One study (Rice and Prince, 2000) noted that there were no food banks in Canada in the early 1980s, but by the early 2000s, there were over 2100 food banks across the country. Welfare roles decreased in both provinces so reform was considered a "victory"; however, not long after the economy began to pick up in both provinces, and unemployment went down so there was a somewhat reduced need. Women ministers perceived a greater, more positive impact than was borne out in policy implementation.

Critical Mass

The second hypothesis conjectured that the greater the number of women at the cabinet table, the more responsive the government to women's issues. First of all, it is important to note that the whole question of whether women are different and behave differently in politics relies on an analysis of government, politics and the machinery of the state as primarily male institutions. This means that there are male-defined ways and traditions of practicing politics, developing policy and structuring the institutions of government that are the standard from which the female participant is "different". Considerable academic focus has gone into this assertion and subsequent analysis (Gilligan, 1982; Welch, 1985 etc.). What underlies this work and the data collected here is that all of the women, regardless of political stripe, saw themselves as unique actors – they understand themselves to be different – distinguished by their gender and acknowledge their own view of themselves as new players on a male-built stage. "Women approach politics differently – not necessarily better – but differently," said one former minister. Another: "Women approach issues differently" A third: "The approach that women have on the issues is different than the approach men have."

While there is a long-standing discussion as to the level of critical mass needed to affect a change in decision-making culture – from 15 percent (Arscott and Trimble, 1997) to 30 percent (Dahlerup, 1988) – the finding here is that a lower level may suffice. First of all, the women in the Ontario government cabinet – at 20 percent for much of the term – saw themselves as constituting critical mass. Said one former minister: "We had almost that 30 percent in cabinet and we were there because of true ability. We did have a genuine impact and were a strong or stronger presence than many of the men. In our last

cabinet, all the top portfolios were held by women except health." They did however, all think that critical mass was relevant: "There does need to be critical mass, because you need that number… With one woman in the room you feel like you are walking on eggshells, but when there are more women in the room you are all in it together." Only one minister thought that there should be more women at the table: "I think it would have made a difference to have more women at the table. I think some of the outcomes would have been different. We bring a different life experience and that would have resulted in different outcomes." As other studies have found, there was no direct correlation between the percentage of women in cabinet and the passage of legislation beneficial to women as a group (Childs and Krook, 2006; Grey, 2006; Tremblay, 2006). However, the fact that the Conservative women thought they had critical mass, indicates that the 30 percent level may not be as crucial as previously assumed.

The findings of this thesis make a contribution to the recent discussion in the 2006 issue of Politics and Gender which included work a number of leading scholars on the issue of critical mass. The studies described in that issue looked at women legislators in New Zealand and in United States state legislatures and found a similar lack of connection between increasing numbers of women and women-positive legislative outcome. Grey (2006), Tremblay (2006) and Childs and Krook (2006) go so far as to recommend that feminists working toward increasing the proportion of elected women "give up" on critical mass. The evidence from my study contributes to that discussion by confirming that in Ontario and British Columbia, at least, there is no magical critical mass number, and even when you do see 30%, there is no clear and direct correlation to public policy outcomes for women.

One of the practical outcomes of this work is the advice to advocates of electing more women to move beyond the critical mass argument. Setting a goal or a yardstick by which measure progress can be measured has tremendous appeal – hence the longevity of the critical mass discussion in spite of mounting academic evidence against it. In Ontario in 2006-07, Equal Voice lobbied the three parties to convince them to increase the number of women they elected. Two of the three parties set numerical goals. The NDP had previously set a goal of 50 percent of candidates to be women. They met that goal, but because of their small numbers in the Legislature, they did not elect any more women. The Liberals, who won, promised 50 percent of the seats they did not hold. They met their goal, but because of the power of incumbency, only elected one additional woman. The Conservatives promised that one third of their candidates would be women. They didn't meet that goal. So while the numerical goal has its advantages in that it highlights the difference between women's descriptive representation and their actual representation in the Legislature, in this one case, raising the number of women running had only modest impact on the number of women who eventually won. As the province inches toward the 30 percent level of women representatives, it seems unlikely that a transformation will take place once that number achieve office. Thomas (1994) in her examination of women legislators in the United States did not expect women to create widespread change. The number of women was simply insufficient to corral the kind of broad, multi-partisan coalition required for major change in either the procedure or process of politics. So the critical mass may required for substantial change may, in fact, be much higher.

Several of the former ministers pointed out that more women in the House/the legislature would have a positive impact – "I think it would make the House more civilized if there were more women there," said one. "Having women in the House does make a difference," said another. In 2007, the federal Liberal Women's Caucus issued "The Pink Book: A Policy Framework for Canada's Future," which outlined policy recommendations on poverty, Aboriginal women, housing, and a call to raise Social Transfer payments (Liberal Women's Caucus, 2007). According to a media report, while the paper was presented to the House of Commons, the Prime Minister occupied himself by reading the newspaper (Taber, 2007).

Secondly, while it was clear that the women changed the shape of policy (whether holding the portfolio at issue or not), I found no instance of increased impact based on the number of women around the table. In fact, because cabinet shuffles were more frequent in B.C., the high point of 46 percent was not maintained for long – though the proportion always exceeded 35 percent – but the shuffles themselves denied some women (and some male ministers) the ability to deepen their command of a portfolio as would naturally occur over time. So for cabinets, in provincial governments, it seems safe, in terms of ensuring significant female voice at the cabinet table, to look for a minimum level of 20 percent – and note that other factors (such as political party) have a much greater effect on creation of the feminist state.

In this review of provincial policy over time, single women members seem to have had the largest impact on public policy. Judy LaMarsh helped instigate the Royal Commission on the Status of Women; Mary Ellen Smith broke ground in social welfare in B.C.; Tilly Rolston and Eileen Daly, early education ministers in B.C. had a significant

impact on education in that province. Matland (1993 746) in his study of early women in Norway political office as "giants among men." These women may have been better able to innovate because at the time, they were less constrained by party discipline (Party discipline has grown in intensity over time in Canadian political systems, Carty, 2000.)

Connected to both the issue of party and of critical mass is party leadership. In a Westminster parliamentary system, the premier holds a significant amount of power. Not only does the premier decide who is in the cabinet, he (rarely she) and his/her office determines the general policy direction of government – and can halt a policy at almost any stage of development. Walter Young noted in 1983, "The provincial government is the premier's government…the extent of his authority is significantly greater than that of his federal counterpart (As cited in Morley, 1996). "The premier and the cabinet are the heart of Ontario government, their power is staggering, they are key players in Ontario party politics, well-known public figures and they set the overall direction of policy," (Lareto and White, 1997). According to Morton (1997), the cabinet is the expression of the first minister. The premier also chairs cabinet, the crucial Planning and Priorities committee of cabinet, has capacity to "sum up" meetings and therefore make decisions on behalf of cabinet (Lareto and White, 1997). The case is no different in B.C. though through history the premiers have been unprotected by their power from the public sentiment and have traditionally been party leaders, first and foremost (Morely, 1996).

One former minister noted: "The Premier has to have confidence in you." Another: "Because both my Premiers were men, it was difficult to be close to them. One of my premiers urged me to take golf lessons." A third said that one of her premiers' "…was a strong advocate for women. He advocated for me." Several noted the

importance of convincing the Premier – and his powerful un-elected staff – of the merits of a particular policy long before it reached the cabinet table. In fact, without central support for a policy, many said, it would be unlikely for it to proceed. The challenge was further exacerbated in B.C. as there were four premiers during the 1996-2001 time period.

Leaders often overrode the policy preferences of their women ministers. Premier Mike Harris was committed to private school tax credits, Education Minister Janet Ecker was not. Education Minister Bette Stephenson did not agree with Premier Davis' plan to extend funding to Catholic secondary schools, but she went ahead and implemented the policy.

Political Party

In 1992, the women of the U.S. Congress held a press conference to present a bipartisan women's agenda (Dodson, 2006). This would be unheard of in Canada. Many of the women talked about friendships they had – and continue to have – with women across the floor (from different parties) and the support they found on some rare issues, but several others also noted things such as: "I naively tried to work with them once and was betrayed." The closest trans-party affiliation between women is seen in general moral support for the burden of office holding, sometimes in committee hearings and rarely in the House. If cross-party female collaboration did occur, it was over Private Member's bills – legislation that is introduced by an individual member (not the Speaker or a cabinet minister). (Without the guaranteed support of cabinet and government, private members bills rarely become law.)

Some time ago, in *Toeing the Line*, Bashevkin (1993) argued that when it comes to political parties, the higher you go, the fewer women you find. In Canada, certainly, party is king and elected women's primary role is to work with, not against her party policy. There is no doubt that the women of the B.C. and Ontario cabinets understood that lesson loud and clear. Even when there was clear (and leaked) disagreement on policy issues, cabinet had no choice but to present a unified front. Party, as we look to it here, has a clear impact on the sheer number of women nominated, elected and sitting in cabinet. Namely, the more left wing the party in Canada, the more women you'll find in it. This is a long-standing finding from other literature on Canadian women in politics – Brodie, 1994; Collier, 1997; and Arscott and Trimble, 1997 to name a few. (Studies from other countries have found a much less compelling correlation Diaz, 2005.)

The third hypothesis states that the more left wing the party in power, the more likely it is to implement women-centred policies. So did party ideology serve to explain policy outcomes here? Yes. The NDP had a more feminist approach to domestic violence than the Conservatives – and the result was a more progressive policy. The reformation of welfare in NDP B.C. was more cognizant of gender differences – and less punitive – than the reformation that took place in Conservative Ontario. The approach to education was somewhat distinct – with the Conservatives looking to teacher training to improve test scores while the NDP looked to reducing classroom sizes – but both approaches led to conflict with the teachers' unions.

Thus, yes, women cabinet ministers make a difference, but party has a significant impact on their capacity to act as does the current tenor of political discourse. Dodson refers to these as extra-institutional environmental forces (Dodson, 2006 18). Van Loon

and Whittington call it the external environment (Van Loon and Whittington, 1996). Leslie (1987) describes it as national policy where the economy and broad changes in ideological background shift. For example, Leslie (1987) describes the Canadian federal accommodation of the Progressives and broad acceptance of the welfare state as the national policy of the 1920s and 1930s. The national policy of the 1960s and 1970s was to expand the role of government, he argues. The era of neo-conservatism from the late 1980s to the 2000s, I contend, to expand on Leslie's analysis, was the national policy that helped to shape the activity of provincial governments. The Paul Martin (federal Minister of Finance) budget of 1995 was a clear articulation of this new era of restraint. The focus was on the principles of cutting spending and "frugality" and so, spending on social programs was cut by 18 percent (Canada, 1995).

As Dodson (2006) and Swers (2002) point out, these external forces and environments can and do have a significant impact on the ability of women to act as substantive representatives. If everyone from the right wing to the moderate left is poor-bashing, then elected women, regardless of political stripe, who are dependent on public favour for employment are less likely to alienate their colleagues or constituents by going against the grain.

This conclusion is confirmed by other sources. "In addition to party policy, political agendas are influenced to a much greater extent by external political pressures, changing circumstances, unexpected events and crises," (Levin, 2005). A former deputy minister from Manitoba, current deputy minister of Education in Ontario, and academic Ben Levin writes from extensive personal experience about the policy process: "A single untoward event can undermine a system that had been working reasonably well," (Levin,

2005) – as does Kingdon (2003). This contributes to the particular challenge of decision-making "there is never enough time to think about issues in sufficient depth," (Interview, May 2006).

Attending to issues is rendered more complex by the inability of a government to focus beyond a few issues. A former chief of staff to a prime minister noted that a government can only manage four or five issues in a single term of office (Axworthy, 1992; Levin, 2005). This is certainly the case in the provincial governments studied here. Each was focused on the top issues of the day – and narrowly defined women's issues (pay equity, domestic violence) were rarely at the top of that list.

Policy process

A multi-policy examination reveals patterns in how policies come to the forefront of the political agenda – and stay there. It was clear that education in both provinces was seen as a key issue both for voters with children and for the province's long-term economic health. It was a key component of each party's election platform. Social welfare reform came and stayed on the agenda due to the declining economic health in both provinces and the resultant rise in the number of people on welfare. When, at the same time, governments are also struggling with managing their own finances – reducing rates and eligibility can be popular with the public. Other policy areas, such as domestic violence, required a perfect storm of events to see action. The foundation of policy change happened outside the arena of elected politics arena and was instigated by women, women's groups and women's shelters, then supported by women politicians – and, importantly, by male politicians – particularly in light of highly-publicized spousal murders. Others have come to similar conclusions. Amy Mazur argues (2002) that

policies that achieve the highest level of feminist activity demonstrate what could be called the presence of strategic partnership (Halsaa, 1998) or a "triangle of empowerment" (Vargas and Wieringa, 1998) which includes women in political office, women in the movement, and women in policy offices. This perfect storm, or triangle of empowerment, happened in B.C., but not in Ontario where relations with the women's movement on this issue were limited and confrontational – and domestic violence was an issue where the male leadership of the party stepped in to steer.

When reviewing the overall pattern of policy evolution in the two provinces, what I found was that women cabinet ministers in similar provinces facing similar challenges resulted in policies with similar impact – even though the parties they belonged to were at opposite ends of the political spectrum. As Burt and Lorenzin noted in their study of the earlier NDP government in Ontario, the progressive changes that were made were helpful, but ultimately quite incremental, and even in what could be construed as an ideal situation for women in politics (party with feminist principles and critical mass in cabinet) the benefits to most women were minimal (in Arscott and Trimble, 1997).

This study finds that party remains important and the women's loyalty to their respective parties was very strong. The way women ministers spoke about policy was very much in within the ideological framework of their party's approach to policy. The surprising finding of similar ultimate policy outcomes, was not necessarily confined to the women in cabinet, but to their colleagues as well. This led me to search for a broader explanation to the question of how similar policy outcomes could be produced by provinces led by diverse political parties.

The fourth hypothesis suggested that there were other factors – such as broad national policy – that could significantly turn attention away from women's issues, regardless of how substantive the women representatives were, and how left-wing the party was. For example, on the issue of social welfare, both provinces were facing annual increases in the number of people on social welfare, rising costs of providing support to that number and reduced federal payments in support of welfare (the aforementioned CAP funding from Ottawa). Both provinces were also facing increased unemployment, reduced support for the recently unemployed from the federal government (the Unemployment Insurance program was significantly scaled back in 1996 – resulting in significant surpluses for the federal government), and slowing economies. The policy result in both provinces was to tighten the eligibility requirements and to significantly re-think the design of the program – with the goal of moving the maximum number of people off social support and a clearer distinction being drawn between the deserving (ill or disabled people) and undeserving (all others). (The trend to distinguish between deserving and undeserving poor as well as the inherent moral and policy problems the approach creates have been articulated by many including Katz, 1989 and Gans, 1995.)

The second example of parallel responses is education (chapter 5) where both governments faced significant concerns about declining test scores and crumbling infrastructure. Again, the policy outcome was similar: restructure learning standards – and in both provinces, their approaches led to strikes and conflicts with the teachers' unions. Finally, on the issue of domestic violence (chapter 3) both provincial governments were inspired to act by high-profile cases of spousal murder. While B.C. invested more money in supportive housing and Ontario less (their focus was on

employment programs for women), both provinces also made toughening criminal prosecution of domestic violence a key priority.

Of course, there were key differences to the approaches and to the policies as has been described in earlier chapters – many of these differences can be attributed to the pull of party and the importance of women at the cabinet table to shape the discussion. The fourth hypothesis is confirmed – larger forces can shape the agenda. However, when looking for broader patterns or understandings from the close examination of policies in these two governments, I was led to what I call fiscal feminism.

Fiscal Feminism

The importance of available funds to support issues of relevance to women cannot be underestimated. In fact, there is a distinct drop off the policy agenda of women's issues once governments face fiscal challenges. In Ontario during the election of 1999, the Conservatives promised to reduce government spending by one percent in each portfolio save for health and education (Canada NewsWire, 1999). In B.C. in 1996 the province was facing an economic (and employment slowdown) the government ran on their budget platform of a modest tax reduction, tuition freezes while reducing the deficit (Budget speech, 1995-96).

Fiscal feminism is what occurs when the realities of limited or decreasing government revenues refocuses the priorities of government and the women who help run it – and eventually the women's movement – away from the broader objectives of second or even third wave feminism – to a shorter, tighter, fiscally-justified list of women-positive policy objectives. The trend toward fiscal feminism was instigated in Canada

with the scaling back of the funding of social programs (CAP) – the impact of which was demonstrated clearly in both B.C. and Ontario with reduced federal support for welfare. Fiscal feminism is what remains at the end of the day after a significant scale-back of the funding ability of government occurs. It involves a re-framing of feminist issues and public policy in the light of fiscal constraints. Policies can no longer be justified as addressing equity but must include a fiscal rationale. In provinces where there had previously been ground-breaking advances in equity policies (pay equity, day care) and in approaches (Gender Lense Framework in B.C.), the late 1990s and early 2000s saw a retrenchment and new focus on a few smaller policies which were financially justifiable – or explainable in an economic context.

Fiscal feminism is a term to describe the response of women political activists both within the political system (legislators and civil servants) and outside of it (women's movement activists). It is a term designed to characterize the current state of the practical agenda of women's issues.

The policy priorities in a state (or stage) of fiscal feminism are: Jobs for women (B.C. had a number of initiatives, and JobSkills for Women in Ontario) and support for domestic violence with a focus on helping establish financial independence (through housing in B.C. and job training in Ontario). It is a new lens through which feminist policy gets tested.

Sandra Burt's survey of women's groups across Canada in 1993 noted that financial issues were crucially important to women (Burt, 1995). On Burt's 10-point summary list of women's issues, two of them are explicitly economic: the first on the list

is “improving the economic status of women”, and the next is “advancing the status of women in unionized jobs” (Burt, 1995 48). Nowhere on the list does social welfare appear. The key policy areas currently articulated by the National Action Committee on the Status of Women Canada include “women and the economy” but not social welfare. The list of issues NAC struggles for includes: “full participation of women in governance and democratic control of international financial institutions” (www.nac-cca.ca/about). The eradication of poverty and the elimination of violence are also mentioned as a focus of struggle, but the prominence of economic issues is noteworthy. The aforementioned “Pink Book”, the federal Liberal Women’s Caucus policy framework, focuses its attention on the achievement of economic equity. The policy framework was guided by two principles: “addressing the need for equality and improving the economic status of women,” (Liberal Women’s Caucus, 2006 8).

Fiscal feminism helps to describe how the list of the issues important to the women’s movement and women in politics has become curtailed and re-focused on issues of economic equality. It serves as shorthand for understanding the new priorities of the women’s movement – and the related priorities of women legislators.

The state of fiscal feminism in Canada helps to explain a number of questions: One, why is critical mass less relevant? Two, why do women in different political parties respond in similar ways to public policy issues? Three, why did the women’s movement whither away on key issues such as welfare reform?

Fiscal feminism is another way of describing, or deepening the understanding of what others have also identified. For example, in her examination of the pay equity policy

process in Ontario of the late 1980s and 1990s. Findlay suggests that there is an institutionalization of feminism that has taken place over time. It, in effect has placed the primary feminist analysis of "how can this policy improve the lives of women?" to "what is the most reasonable, practical option given that we have to work with unions, employers and government?" (Findlay, 1997). Teghtsoonian (2005) in her examination of women's policy agencies in Canada and Australia finds that there was a trend toward business-ization or corporatization of government during the mid to late 1990s in the NDP government of B.C. (The government introduced what Teghtsoonian calls "neo-liberal" approaches to the management of government such as business plans and results-based planning.) If the left-wing NDP was leading this charge in B.C., it is certainly makes sense that Conservative governments would follow suit. The trend was noted in the Ontario NDP government that preceded the Conservative one as early as 1993 when Ehring and Roberts (2004) noted the "overriding economic pragmatism" and comfort with "American-style neo-liberalism".

These other findings, together with my own, help substantiate the characterization of women in cabinets in B.C. and Ontario as fiscal feminists. Consider the following quotes:

a) "I believe that there are many issues of concern to women that all governments need to address. The most important one is economic equality."

b) "One of the issues that was important for me has always been the issue of child care. As a mother myself that there is nothing more important to a female than not being able to find someone to take care of your child… I think the other thing is that making sure that women were equally compensated for the job, and also that women had equal opportunity for advancement."

Both are former cabinet ministers, but it isn't easy to tell which woman is from the right wing party and which is from the left. (The second quote is from a Conservative.)

What I have named fiscal feminism could also be explained as a natural shift from being a party of opposition to becoming a party of government. The consequent needs and realities of governing and managing a budget necessarily, and often, get in the way of implementing the party's campaign promises (Cross, 2004; Carty, Erickson and Blake, 1992). It is also related to what Mark Smith (2007) calls the "right talk" or the recasting of political discussions to lead with economic considerations. (Smith's book focuses exclusively on U.S. politics, but a parallel story could be told in Canada.) Fiscal feminism is a pared-down feminist agenda that reflects broader social and political trends. It focuses not on policies designed to reduce or change women's role in society but instead on equity policies that increase women's potential for earning.

Fiscal feminism is a natural outcome of the broad national policy developments, the specific cuts to women's program funding and the changing nature of the women's movement in Canada. As has been described earlier in this thesis, the broad focus of the Mulroney and Chrétien federal governments was reducing the size and cost of government. As government cuts were implemented across departments, Status of Women Canada, and the umbrella group it sustained, the National Advisory Council on the Status of Women endured significant budget cuts through the 1990s. In 1995, the Council on the Status of Women was abolished by the Liberal government in order to reduce expenditures (Sawer, 1996). So, at the same time that the federal government was instituting broad cuts to social program funding across the country (with the severe implications that have been discussed earlier), the government also dealt a serious blow

to women's movement advocacy (which until that point had received crucial funding from the federal government). Feminist organizations had no choice but to curtail their agendas because their funding was reduced.

Fiscal feminism is also a reasonable response for women politicians to have when grappling with the various policy pressures of government. When faced with a tsunami of broad national policy and public opinion in favour of reducing the size of government deficits, it makes sense to conform what might be feminist substantive representation to the realities of contemporary politics.

Subsequent to the tenure of both the B.C. and Ontario governments, the sole women's policy to appear on the federal or provincial policy agenda has been child care. Where child care was once discussed as an important feminist policy, it has been re-packaged and re-focused as an issue of economic equality to conform to the minimalist economic requirements of fiscal feminism. Martha Friendly who has written extensively on child care in Canada noted in 2001: "Child care as a women's issue has all but vanished from the public agenda to be replaced by children's issues - child poverty, "early childhood development", "readiness to learn", and "understanding the early years" (Friendly, 2005). According to a federal Liberal election press release for example (December 6, 2007), a new child care program would mean that: "child care spaces will be made an eligible area of investment when the government renews pertinent infrastructure programs, such as the strategic infrastructure fund and the municipal rural infrastructure fund," (Liberal Party of Canada, 2005). Until there is a significant shift in national policy away from fiscal conservatism, fiscal feminism will remain the most reasonable public policy approach for women politicians and activists.

Representation theory

The clear line between women representatives and substantive representation has yet to be drawn – meaning that there is no broad consensus on whether or not women representatives have significant policy impact in favour of women's interests (Dodson, 2006). Nor is there a clear definition of what substantive representation might mean (Dodson, 2006). Does it mean that women representatives can drive incremental change that improves equality between genders? Or does it mean that women would change the institutions of politics to a new, feminist model? I hope this study has helped to clarify what substantive representation looks like in Canadian provinces. I think it is clear that to some extent, these women see themselves as being substantive representatives, and even the few who don't, talk about how they have acted to improve policy outcomes for women.

For the purposes of this study, I have found that the women were acting as substantive representatives (representation *for* women) – they are, of course, descriptive representatives. I make this assertion on two grounds that they see themselves as such and that they act in such a way that demonstrates that they do consider, and care about the particular impact of policy on women as a group.

In their own words, most all of the women, again regardless of party, thought that they had a particular responsibility to represent women: "As a woman, of course I represented issues of concern to women." Another added: " I had a couple of experiences in my career where I was the first woman. I think, why not? It's a democracy, it's supposed to be representative."

However, two women, both Conservative, did not consider that they had any particular responsibilities to represent women: “I don't believe that at the time I considered myself a champion or representative of any particular group.” Another noted: “I can’t say that I had any particular responsibility to women.”

Certainly, again, as Dodson (2006) points out there are key problems with self-identification. Do the Conservative women of Ontario get to be substantive representatives if they a) say they are, and b) note their own contribution to changing the direction of policy but end up with policies in direct, even hostile, opposition from the women’s movement?

I take a pragmatic approach here, and argue that precisely because it is difficult to nail down what a feminist agenda would look like if all other conditions (such as political party, popularity of an issue, cost of a policy) were eliminated, that in the legislative and political system as it currently stands, incremental change is as substantive as you can get. Incremental changes can also be substantive in nature and chip away at the state (Gelb and Palley, 1996). It may not have felt like it to the single mother on welfare when rates were rolled back in Ontario, but if the impact of rolling back was mitigated by the women at the cabinet table (as they contended) it could have been much worse.

Thomas contributes to the discussion of the meaning of substantive representation by contending, first and foremost, that radical change is not possible given the number of women representatives (Thomas, 1994). Then, Thomas finds that women’s impact on public policy goes beyond introducing new issues to the legislative agenda: what women do, in fact, is consider the implication of issues such as transportation on family life (Thomas, 1994 18). Women respond to issues on a contextual basis (Thomas, 1994) and

that is exactly what I found in Ontario and B.C. Women attributed the difference they made in public policy to their unique, family/woman-centred perspective on policy propositions – regardless of whether or not those policies fell under the broad umbrella of interests that more profoundly impacted women. For example, one cabinet minister stated: "I do think in the process it makes a difference. Male politicians tend to focus on a very clear, black-and-white long-term goal, to the exclusion of collateral issues, collateral damage. Women tend to be more focused on how you got there."

Arnold (1990) argues that women command a particular authority on issues such as education and become the source for leadership for their male colleagues on these issues. As one minister noted: "Women knew more about welfare – they didn't care more, but they knew more. They were more comfortable discussing social and education issues: We're more strident on those types of issues." This demonstrates a more subtle kind of substantive representation that doesn't create new issues or introduce new policy, but that acts as an authoritative voice on issues that are of concern to many women.

After all, there is no particular gender mandate (Dodson, 2006). The gender gap is about women voting for more left-of-centre parties, not for women (Gelb and Palley, 1996; Erickson and O'Neill, 2002). Women are not elected solely by women for women, they are, certainly in Canadian provinces, elected to represent particular jurisdictions or geographic areas (Phillips, 1991). Voter surveys do not find significant gender differences in attitudes on feminist issues such as access to abortion and women's equality in the workplace (Arnold, 1990). So there is some question as to the legitimacy of substantive representation – it doesn't fit with the framework of representative democracy (Phillips, 1991). There is also no consensus on the meaning of substantive

representation as discussed earlier in the challenges of articulating a precise definition of women's issues (Dodson, 2006). However, there is strong evidence, confirmed by this thesis, that women do see themselves as substantive representatives. As one minister pointed out: "Women approach politics differently – not necessarily better – but differently. In politics, you need both… If you get both perspectives on the table, you get better government decisions." Women officeholders are overwhelmingly willing to see women as a crucial, important and distinct part of their constituencies (Riengold, 1992; Dodson, 2006).

So, what this leads to is an assertion or clarification of the definition of substantive representation. Gendered substantive representation, as Young (1991) points out, must transcend interest – women are not a monolithic group. So a substantive representative has to see herself as one and act accordingly – even though her actions may conflict with other organizations of women. As Thomas suggests, women legislators have a strong desire for policy as well as procedural change, but they are strategically operationalizing their ambitious goals over a longer time frame (Thomas, 1994). Arnold (1990) notes that representatives (male and female) do not use their scarce political capital on potentially controversial issues. These scholars see women legislators as doing what is possible substantively within the constraints and barriers of the system in which they work. At the same time, this thesis underlines the ability of the state to act in the interest of women when there are more women running it. Is the policy result with women at the table what a team of randomly selected feminists would come up with? No, but it is a result that is more democratic – and more representative of the views of the population as a whole – when there are women at the table. And this conclusion crosses jurisdictional, political,

and critical mass lines. There is no question, as Phillips points out, that there is a basic justice problem when institutions are segregated by sex – consistent under-representation is evidence that something is wrong (Phillips, 1991 63)

Substantive representation in real not theoretical legislatures cannot possibly mean the implementation of a previously articulated litany of feminist policy preferences. What it can mean is that women's issues, in at least some of their diversity, can be considered in every policy decision. What it means is that women substantive representatives do act as if they have a particular responsibility – not a singular responsibility, but a particular responsibility to represent women's issues as they understand them, among their many other responsibilities (such representing their constituency or teachers, or farmers or others sharing policy perspectives.)

At the same time, I argue that descriptive representation has a richer meaning than being a simple mirror of gender divisions in society. The presence of women in legislatures in growing numbers, regardless of their policy actions, means that they are legitimate players in the political system – they are no longer marginalized (Thomas, 1994). And the relevance of this is that it sends a signal to the next generation of women that their gender is no barrier to public service (Thomas, 1994). The result of increasing proportion of women in legislatures is the airing of a greater diversity of ideas (even within the constraints of party discipline) and a stronger democracy. So women are neither strict substantive representatives (as such a thing is not possible) nor are they merely descriptive representatives, they are somewhere in between. However, by virtue of their presence they advance the status of women in the political system, and by virtue of their contribution to policy discussions, they increase the profile of the concerns of

women.

Implications for further research

As others have found, the focus on the cabinet is crucial to the understanding of the policy process. It is unfortunate that in the Canadian parliamentary system the conventions of cabinet secrecy prevent scholarly investigation for 20 years. In fact, even when a government changes political hands the cabinet records of the previous government are unavailable to them – and ministry employees are under strict orders not to pass on any cabinet documents (Archives Ontario). (They may obtain information about previous decisions "when required to support the continuity and efficiency of government without revealing the options and discussions…" Archives Ontario). Youngman (1998) argues that the fact that cabinet records are outside the reach of traditional research poses significant challenges to understanding the process – and women's effect on it.

Measuring impact will always be a challenge in this field both because of the malleability of the concept of women's issues but also because of the domination of the party system in parliamentary systems. It is easier for example, for Catalyst to find that there is a "very strong" correlation between women on corporate boards and return on equity, return on sales and return on invested capital. (The Catalyst study was based on 520 companies in the Fortune 500 and looked at four-year average returns Catalyst, 2007). Political research relies on policy outcomes – harder to measure as the implementation plays out over a much longer period of time than financial returns to a corporation and requires a much more complex analysis than simple counting.

The technique of study used here – process tracing – of describing the evolution

of a policy in order to help explain the causes of decisions and outcomes (Mazur, 2002) – is a major task but critical to understanding the framework of the discussion at the cabinet table (in the small picture) and in the wider policy forum (academia, media, political parties, stakeholders, the public). It is hardly a new method, but is clearly an approach that helps further the understanding of public policy, the process and the actors.

This study has also underlined the importance of interviewing political actors after they have left government. The difference between what comprises the public record during office (Hansard, media reports, government media releases, public speeches) and personal interviews and e-mail correspondence is striking. In almost all cases, the women were more willing to reveal differences at the cabinet table, even if none went as far as to be explicitly critical of their colleagues or the outcome. That said, there is no question that they are cautious and ever political, even when talking about past decisions and policies. Certainly the few women who I knew outside of the parameters of this study were more forthcoming – and when the tape recorder was off, even more so. For each, the experience of being in power left an indelible emotional mark. Several former ministers cried during interviews when talking about what it meant to them to hold office. Tracking down former members was challenging, particularly in B.C., but almost all of those who were contacted were happy to participate and noted that they appreciated the relevance of academic focus on women in politics.

This research is important for a number of reasons. It found that looking at the actions and activity of women cabinet ministers through analysis of public policy was a useful means to discover more about the policy process as well as how women can play a part in it. Secondly, a comparative analysis of policy across two jurisdictions helps to

peel away the partisan rhetoric that surrounds much of the public record of policy (media, Hansard and even interviews). Thirdly, this work contributes to shining the light on the black box in Canadian policy making – the records of cabinet – that is both a service to the academic understanding of the process and the actors but also to the public who vote and provide the tax dollars that fund the work and provide its legitimacy.

There were also several clear challenges to this qualitative study. First of all, the size of the sample renders many of the conclusions tenuous at best. There is no denying that the number chosen to participate here was small – but necessarily so as there are so few women in political office, and even fewer who are called to the higher rankings. (There was also the challenge of finding all the former politicians long after they had left office. All but two who were contacted were willing to participate – but 3 were never reached.) There were also the aforementioned cabinet records that remain unavailable for 20 years. Even though this study takes place in a relatively recent period (1996-2003), the time period prior to 2000 or so is less likely to have all documents available electronically. So there are gaps in records as some paper records are still in the process of being transferred to an electronic resource. Also, the current government standard of creating all documents electronically and posting all public records is a recent one. If searches focus on more recent years (2002 on, for example), electronic research into government records is easier.

There are new questions that this study raises that I hope will inspire further work. Do feminist policies have feminist results? I have focused primarily on the intentions and first outcomes of women's efforts – but what about the implementation phase and beyond? How have these policies made a difference? Have they accomplished what they

were designed to do? There is also the issue of unintended consequences – the unplanned and unconsidered result of the application of a new way of doing things (Dye, 1984). The unintended research finding here for example, was the importance of the commission or third party study as a political tool in the policy process. When following the history of a policy over time, it became clear that all three policy areas were at some time driven forward by government-created commissions. The commission is an understudied player in the Canadian political process. Governing parties call them to conduct deeper analysis and public consultations on key issues. Even though the commission members are appointed by government and the staff are generally culled/seconded from the bureaucracy, they have a reputation of third-party objectivity. The key political advantage to calling one is to delay policy action while appearing to take action. Cobb and Ross (1997) might fairly characterize this as a symbolic strategy of agenda-setting to help co-opt interest groups. Commissions also help protect elected government members from having to listen to and respond to interest group concerns. Commission reports are often acted upon – and always released with fanfare to the public – but they have so far eluded cross-policy academic examination.

As is true for other feminist's comparative policy work, this project has two aims: to contribute to the theoretical discussion of substantive and descriptive representation and to help politicians, policy makers and movements better understand the policy process and how important it is to pay attention to the broader forces that shape the policy discussion. That said, my recommendation, based on the understandings gleaned from this research, is that the focus of the women's movement – and politicians keen to advance the economic, social and physical well-being of women – should be to include

positive economic arguments with all suggestions for equity-improving policy change. The era of major reform is still ahead.

Appendix I

Questions for Former Cabinet Ministers

Introductory

What made you decide to run for office?
Did the party encourage you to run?
Were there specific policy areas that the party had focused on that appealed to you?
What issues did you care about the most?

Representation

Did you see yourself as representing certain groups within or outside your riding? Such as women, farmers, ethnic groups etc.
Do you feel that *women as a group* have particular concerns which government should address? Such as child care, abortion, or social housing?
Were there any women's issues that you wanted to support, but felt you couldn't due to other pressures?
In your experience, do you think that it makes a difference having women in the House? How?
Do you think it makes a difference having women in Cabinet? How? (If no to both, move to Policy Process)
You've heard of the concept of "critical mass" as applied to women in government and on boards – that it is not until the group is over 30 percent women that you see a real difference in how an organization works. Do you think that there needs to be a certain percentage of women in government or in Cabinet to really have an impact?
Did your party have a women's caucus?
Were there ever issues upon which there was disagreement along gender lines in Cabinet?

Policy Process

What were the issues that your government dealt with that you are most proud of?
What do you think was the legislation of your government that had the greatest impact on women?
What issue or legislation that you led are you most proud of?
Focusing on that legislation/issue, what do you think are the most important elements of getting a policy passed? Eg. Is it public pressure, government determination, interest group action?
What was the most difficult part of getting your legislation passed?
Did you have any difficulty getting support for it in Cabinet?
On your legislation, did you find it necessary to take the time to influence your colleagues outside of meetings?

Did you find that the other women (in Cabinet/caucus) were more or less supportive of your legislation?
Did you do external consultations on your legislation?
Did you meet with women's groups – or did they ask to meet with you on this legislation?
Were key bureaucrats helpful to you in developing the legislation?
Were there specific women in your ministry who made a difference in the development of the legislation?
If you had to identify one factor that made the most difference, what would it be? What should your successors know about the public policy process?
Were there issues on which you found some support from women in other parties?

General

Do you think women are treated differently in politics than men?
Are there any problems specific to women in politics?

Appendix II

Interviews

Lois Boone
Dianne Cunningham
Sandra Clifford
William Davis
Kim Donaldson
Janet Ecker
Brenda Elliott
Tina Mollinari
Marilyn Mirabelli
Patrick Nelson
Sandra Scarth
Elizabeth Witmer

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