CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

As a woman I have a country; as a woman I cannot divest myself of that country merely by condemning its government or by saying three times 'As a woman my country is the whole world' ... I need to understand how a place on the map is also a place in history within which ... I am created and trying to create (Rich 1986: 212).

1.1 The Research Question

As feminists throughout Canada prepare for the challenges of the new millenium, critical decisions about how best to maximize their political resources to achieve women's equality are being made within a "painful period of 'restructuring' -- a period of change as fundamental to our political development as the creation of the Keynesian welfare state or, indeed, of Confederation itself" (Brodie 1995: 10). Although women-centred analyses of government downsizing, constitutional reform, foreign policy and environmental issues effectively have begun to inject feminist perspectives into virtually all major policy debates on the Canadian political agenda,¹ women's movements largely remain marginalized from mainstream politics. The political environment in which women's movements currently organize is marked by erosions in the welfare state and the dismantling of individual and regional redistributive policies, cuts justified by governments zealously embracing neo-liberal philosophies. With the federal state increasingly unable to stem the growing social, economic and political disparities exacerbated by globalizing trends, pressures to decentralize Canadian federalism mount.

In such a context, evaluation of the character of feminist activism at the subnational level appears timely. While political scientist Daniel Latouche has quipped that every ten years or so, Canadian political science

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**Experience, Opportunity and the Politics of Place:
A Comparative Analysis of Provincial and Territorial Women's
Movements in Canada**

by

L. Pauline Rankin B.A. (Hons.), M.A.

**A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of**

Doctor of Philosophy

**Department of Political Science
Carleton University**

**Ottawa, Ontario
August 2, 1996**

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**EXPERIENCE, OPPORTUNITY AND THE POLITICS OF PLACE:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL
WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS IN CANADA**

submitted by

L. Pauline Rankin, B.A. Hons., M.A.

in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Chair, Department of Political Science

Thesis Supervisor

External Examiner

Carleton University
September 13, 1996

Abstract

This thesis examines the issues, organizational structures and strategic action of contemporary women's movements in four subnational Canadian contexts. Through a comparative, case study analysis of women's movements in Newfoundland, Ontario, Alberta and the Northwest Territories in the post-1970 period, the dissertation tests the hypothesis that significant variations exist among women's movements in subnational settings. Meshing theoretical insights from feminist political science with political and feminist geography, a women-centred framework is employed to explore the extent to which space and place influence women's movements active at the provincial and territorial level.

The thesis is organized around the concept of "representational projects." Two sets of comparisons are advanced. Representational projects vis-à-vis the subnational state are analyzed with specific attention to the electoral, bureaucratic and lobbying initiatives undertaken by women's movements. Struggles around the politics of difference and diversity are also investigated through a comparison of the representational projects mounted by women's movements around issues of sexual orientation and race.

Relying on extensive interview data, the thesis argues that the idea of a homogeneous "English-Canadian women's movement" is misleading and obscures the diversity of women's movements in subnational contexts. Women's movements are found to be affected significantly by prior experiences with the state, the political opportunities they both confront and create, and the particularities of the locales and jurisdictions in which they organize. The evidence supports the reintroduction of location as a critical variable in movement analyses. A series of testable hypotheses is advanced to account for variations among women's movements active in subnational settings.

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I have been privileged in my graduate career to have worked under the supervision of Professor Jill Vickers who continues to be a source of immeasurable support and intellectual inspiration. My deepest gratitude to Jill for her guidance and the generosity with which she shared her knowledge, expertise and friendship. My sincerest thanks also to Professor Miriam Smith who has encouraged and validated my work in many ways and to Professor Jane Jenson who fostered my interest in comparative politics and questions of representation and provided invaluable assistance in the conceptualization of this thesis. Special thanks are due Professor Susan D. Phillips who joined my thesis committee at a very late stage of the process and offered vital critiques under significant time constraints. Thanks also to Professor Sharon Sutherland who rekindled my interest in methodological issues. Jane Arscott, Ellen Balka and Susan Jackel graciously shared their insights about women and politics and offered many helpful suggestions that greatly aided my research.

I have benefitted significantly from my association with the SSHRC-funded New Politics Project which facilitated many of the interviews on which this research is based. I am also grateful to Michael Dawber for his research assistance, his valiant (although unsuccessful) efforts to convince me that writing is an enjoyable process and his enthusiasm for provincial politics. Most importantly, I am deeply indebted to the women who consented to be interviewed for this thesis and who shared their experiences of activism with me. Their tireless efforts for social change deserve recognition and I trust this dissertation communicates my respect for their endeavours.

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settings outside of Québec to test the validity of the stereotype of "English-Canadian" feminism as homogeneously oriented towards federal politics and unaffected by space and place.

Sylvia Bashevkin proposes that comparative work on women's movements requires "a conscious turn" toward "a focus on what women's movements and their allies obtain in a variety of political environments" (1994: 276). Bashevkin believes that the impact of feminism across contexts can be measured most accurately through a comparison of public policy outputs which affect women's lives positively. Such evaluation of the relative "success" levels of the individual movements, however, is beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, I argue that the choices made by movements are always constrained and "good" strategies may not be possible to the same degree in every context. This dissertation concentrates, therefore, on delineating the choices made by feminists in particular political environments and offering explanations for the patterns uncovered in each case.

1.4 The Methodological Approach

The approach of this thesis may be described as an example of comparative feminist political science. Because of the many variables necessarily involved in the analysis, a most similar systems design is inappropriate for this type of project.⁷ Instead, a case study methodology has been selected to allow for a sampling of women's movements across the country. I use a "thick" comparative study of several cases which is most appropriate for tackling questions of "big structures, large processes and huge comparisons" (Tilly 1984) and testing the significance of several independent factors that may account for differences among the movements under

List of Abbreviations

AACWI	Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues
AFWUF	Alberta Federation of Women United for Families
ASWAC	Alberta Status of Women Action Committee
CACSW	Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women
CHAN	Community Homophile Association of Newfoundland
CLGRO	Coalition of Lesbian and Gay Rights in Ontario
CRIAW	Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women
IRPA	Individual Rights Protection Act
ITC	Inuit Tapirisat of Canada
LOOT	Lesbian Organization of Toronto
MWONL	Multicultural Women's Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador
NAC	National Action Committee on the Status of Women
NWTNWA	Northwest Territories Native Women's Association
OACWI	Ontario Advisory Council on Women's Issues
OCSW	Ontario Committee on the Status of Women
OFW	Ontario Federation of Women
OWAC	Ontario Women's Action Coalition
OWD	Ontario Women's Directorate
PACSW	Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women Newfoundland and Labrador
RCSW	Royal Commission on the Status of Women
SWAC	Status of Women Action Committee (Calgary)
WPA	Women for Political Action
WPO	Women's Policy Office (Newfoundland and Labrador)
WWIW	Women Working with Immigrant Women (Toronto)
WWWIV	Windsor Women Working with Immigrant Women

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

As a woman I have a country; as a woman I cannot divest myself of that country merely by condemning its government or by saying three times 'As a woman my country is the whole world' ... I need to understand how a place on the map is also a place in history within which ... I am created and trying to create (Rich 1986: 212).

1.1 The Research Question

As feminists throughout Canada prepare for the challenges of the new millenium, critical decisions about how best to maximize their political resources to achieve women's equality are being made within a "painful period of 'restructuring' -- a period of change as fundamental to our political development as the creation of the Keynesian welfare state or, indeed, of Confederation itself" (Brodie 1995: 10). Although women-centred analyses of government downsizing, constitutional reform, foreign policy and environmental issues effectively have begun to inject feminist perspectives into virtually all major policy debates on the Canadian political agenda,¹ women's movements largely remain marginalized from mainstream politics. The political environment in which women's movements currently organize is marked by erosions in the welfare state and the dismantling of individual and regional redistributive policies, cuts justified by governments zealously embracing neo-liberal philosophies. With the federal state increasingly unable to stem the growing social, economic and political disparities exacerbated by globalizing trends, pressures to decentralize Canadian federalism mount.

In such a context, evaluation of the character of feminist activism at the subnational level appears timely. While political scientist Daniel Latouche has quipped that every ten years or so, Canadian political science

rediscovers provincial politics,² the growing interest in understanding women's relationships to provincial and territorial politics is grounded in more than cyclical academic trends. The division of powers in Canada's federal system assigns responsibility for local politics, so important to women's activism, to the purview of provincial and territorial states. The reality of feminist organizing in this country is that women daily confront a fractured political system that entrenches territorially-organized interests and divides jurisdictional powers among orders of government, into often complex and cumbersome arrangements. Subnational states with specific histories and distinct political, economic and social profiles present unique challenges to women's movements, particularly with respect to the coordination of feminist activism on a pan-Canadian basis.³ As I will demonstrate, the commitment to a reformist agenda pursued through the state that characterizes the federally-focused women's movement is not always replicated at the provincial and territorial level, making cross-jurisdictional campaigns around issues falling within the responsibility of subnational legislatures frequently difficult.

The extent and impact of these divergent contexts on women's movements in Canada is both understudied and undertheorized. While analyzing the different relationships of francophone and anglophone women to the Canadian state indeed has been pivotal to the maintenance of a tenuous dialogue between anglophone and francophone feminists, significantly less attention has been afforded to analyzing the diverse character of feminist activism and its relationship to subnational states, other than Québec. Historically, the fundamental difference in feminist organizing between francophone Québec and other provinces and territories has been the prioritizing of provincial politics as the focal point for franco-Québec feminist

energies. Efforts to capture the distinction between Quebec and the awkwardly-termed “Rest of Canada” has underestimated the notable variations in women’s movements outside Quebec. Existing scholarship on “English-Canadian feminism”⁴ reflects the movement’s federal orientation and the institutionalization of women’s movements within and vis-à-vis the federal state (Vickers 1988; Phillips 1990). I document in this thesis, however, that feminist organizing within “English Canada” varies across space in terms of issue priorities, organizational vehicles and patterns of strategic action

In an influential study of contemporary feminist organizing, Adamson, Briskin and McPhail conceptualize the Canadian women’s movement as exhibiting a “shifting, amoeba-like character” that is “politically, ideologically and strategically diverse” (1988: 7). Although acknowledging that their research uncovered a surprising degree of commonality among feminists across a wide range of topics, they observe, however, that “generally the women’s movement in Calgary is quite unlike its counterpart in Vancouver, Halifax or Thunder Bay” (7). While Adamson et. al. posit that women’s activism mirrors the priorities, politics, organizations and ideologies of the contexts within which they exist, these observations about differences among movements in different places are offered without elaboration of the specificities of these variations or theorization of their cause.

Inattention to identifying and comparing diversity in feminist organizing across locations or to developing explanatory frameworks which consider questions of location is consistent with much of contemporary feminism’s general disinterest in spatially-based differences. The homogeneous vision of women’s global oppression popularized in influential U.S. feminist texts of the 1960s and 1970s (Friedan 1963; Morgan

1970) assumed that women shared a common political agenda, contributing to a lack of theorizing about the impact of location. The past decade of feminist scholarship, however, has witnessed a barrage of incisive critiques of 'universal sisterhood' from various quarters that have exposed the serious implications of theorizing women as a singular group. Yet, in contemporary debates over pluralism within women's movements, matters of space and place frequently are overlooked as the theoretical spotlight remains squarely trained on differences derived from aspects of identities such as race and class.

International comparisons of women's movements, however, demonstrate that location does matter. Work by Briskin (1990), Eisenstein (1991), Kaplan (1992), Nelson and Chowdhury (1994) and Bashevkin (1994) all evidence the significant diversity of women's movements cross-nationally. Kaplan's (1992) exhaustive treatment of feminist organizing in Western European countries attests further to the importance of incorporating intra-state research into movement analyses. As she argues, "[e]ven the supposed homogeneity within nations is in many cases a myth" because "values and practices in everyday life may not apply beyond one valley, one mountain range, one district or dialect group" (1992: xxi). In a similar vein, Judith Hellman's (1987) comparison of feminism in five Italian cities illustrates how locale, even within a single country, can shape the strategies and struggles of women's movements.

It is not just the current crises animating contemporary Canadian politics or the examples of international literature on women's movements, however, that justify a refocusing on spatially-defined differences within feminism in Canada. Because issues of space and place have figured prominently throughout the history of women's organizing, I argue that movement comparisons across space and place are of critical importance,

particularly in the Canadian context. As I will document in subsequent chapters, differences in priorities, organizational vehicles and strategies across space and place have important repercussions for pan-Canadian feminist activism and therefore demand careful comparison and evaluation. Mapping and assessing the impact of such diversity on feminism in Canada is a pressing need as women's movements seek to expand and institutionalize their agendas in an increasingly hostile political climate. Janine Brodie suggests that the current political reality "invites the women's movement to engage in new strategic thinking about the very meaning of the public and about the political goals of a potential 'third wave' of Canadian feminism" (1995: 11). In this thesis, I argue that such future strategizing around women's equality agendas must be preceded by a delineation of the complexity of women's movements across Canada and an analysis of the extent to which the location of feminist organizing can facilitate or impede such activism.

1.2 A Theoretical Framework

In this thesis I draw on literature from comparative politics, movement theory, feminist political science and Canadian provincial politics, as well as radical, political and feminist geography. My primary theoretical goal is to contribute to conceptual tools currently employed to understand movement politics. In particular, I maintain that existing analyses of contemporary Canadian movements which rely predominantly on U.S. (resource mobilization) and European (collective-identity) theoretical frameworks, or hybrids of these two schools, are limited in their capacity to account both for the patterns of women's movements and the specific character of movement politics indigenous to Canada. I reject the uncritical application of imported movement theory and make a case for grounded

theory based on women's lived experiences and reflective of Canadian realities.⁵

In constructing a comparative framework, I have heeded the recent warning from political scientist James C. Scott who cautions comparativists that

[i]f half of your reading is not outside the confines of political science, you are risking extinction along with the rest of the subspecies. Most of the notable innovations in the discipline have come in the form of insights, perspectives, concepts, and paradigms originating elsewhere ... We would do well to emulate the hybrid vigor of the plant and animal breeding world (as quoted in Kohli 1995: 37).

My own contribution to the theoretical "cross-fertilization" Scott advocates is to consult the work of radical, feminist and political geographers such as Doreen Massey (1992), John Agnew (1987), Audrey Kobayashi (1994), Elspeth Probyn (1990) and Geraldine Pratt and Susan Hanson (1994) for guidance in designing a framework capable of "spatializing" women's movements through an analysis of how the "where" of movement politics has influenced the issues, organizational structures and strategic practice of feminism across Canada. The approach I have chosen employs the concept of location -- defined geographically, politically and socially -- to concretize feminist activism. I posit that movements have a specific relationship to space and place and that analysis of the settings in which political action occurs is integral in accounting for how movements pursue their goals. As Kobayashi et. al state:

An understanding of the sites at which patriarchal practices are enacted requires not only that context be treated as a background, but also that the siting and situating of such practices recognize the constitutive role of the place itself as inseparable from social outcomes... [T]he

recognition that conditions differ from place to place provides us with a more powerful means of understanding differences among women (1994: xxix).

My second theoretical goal in this research is to develop a women-centred comparative framework that can capture the complexity of women's relationships to politics. In Chapter Two, I demonstrate the need to assemble theoretical and methodological approaches that reflect both the diversity of women's state-centred and anti-state activism as well as the differences among women involved in movement politics. I am guided in this task by Theda Skocpol's advice to scholars of comparative politics that "it is not necessary to get hung up on grand model building and purely deductive theorizing, on the one hand, or on producing interpretively rich narratives of particular times and places, on the other" (as quoted in Kohli 1995: 45). Rather, I attempt to chart what Skocpol terms a "middle way" that involves identifying the various paths of women's activism at the subnational level and employing theoretical insights from feminist political science and feminist geography in order to generate hypotheses about the relationship between movement organizing and its locational base.

1.3 Parameters of the Thesis

This dissertation is organized to test the hypothesis that significant variations exist in the character of feminist activism across space among and within provincial and territorial contexts. The central project is to identify the extent to which women's movements diverge across subnational settings and to account for the differences identified. To pursue this agenda, I have selected a case study format to examine comparatively the organizational grid, priorities and strategic choices of women's movements in Newfoundland,

Ontario, Alberta and the Northwest Territories, concentrating on the period between 1970 and 1995.

My research design is inspired by Susan Phillips who suggests that “a comprehensive analysis of a social movement must consider ... the movement, the organization and the group-government interaction” (1990: 334). Ideally, a comprehensive study of subnational movements would compare women’s movements Canada-wide using Phillips’s observation to guide an exhaustive study of individual organizations, the role of feminist coalitions, the relationship between state actors and women’s movements and the impact of movement organizing on public policy decisions. Instead, I undertake a more modest task which represents a preliminary step in such a large-scale project. The thesis maps and then compares what I term two “representational projects” of women’s movements -- the projects of achieving change through the state and the projects of addressing diversity issues within women’s movements. The first half of the study focuses on the relationships between women’s movements and their subnational states with a particular emphasis on how the movements attempt to influence state decision-making vis-à-vis women. This examination is limited to movements and their involvement in electoral and legislative politics, state machinery for women and state-oriented lobbying.

In the second half of the thesis, the analysis considers how movements in different subnational contexts are responding to current internal challenges around a “politics of difference” which may or may not be manifested through state-oriented activity. I explore how what Yeatman terms a “politics of contestation in respect of dominant and marginalized voices within feminism” (1993: 229) has unfolded in women’s movements in Canada. Here the discussion centres on comparing the experience of

women's movements across and within jurisdictions in strategizing around two sets of diversity issues, specifically sexual orientation and race. In the treatment of both sets of representational projects, my aim is to determine the extent to which differences in these projects can be explained by reference to the contexts in which the activism occurs; that is, the extent to which place, and women's experiences and opportunities within particular places, combine to influence the choices movements make in pursuing their agendas.

The four cases are drawn from the traditional regions of Canada and afford many opportunities to interrogate a number of independent variables. Accounting for differences in the patterns of activism across space requires discussion of factors including the political economy of the province/territory, the nature and, in the case of the NWT, the absence, of party politics, size and demographics of the individual settings, and women's past experiences of interaction between their movements and their subnational states. The selection of Newfoundland as the Atlantic case allows for an analysis of a women's movement based within a relatively small, largely homogeneous population that historically has displayed a strong sense of localism, isolationism and insularity from the rest of Canada (Dyck 1996). Here a vibrant feminist movement has grown within a precarious resource-based economy in which economic instability remains the norm. Feminists have faced a party system with few ideological divisions between the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives but with a weak social democratic presence. Integral to the development of feminist practice throughout the province has been the pervasive influence of religion. The absence of a provincial umbrella organization for women and, until recently, a dismal record of electing women to the provincial legislature has meant that feminist

organizing has registered a significant interest in women's representation through provincial status of women machinery.

The post-1970 women's movement in Ontario, by contrast, has dominated feminist activism in Canada outside Québec. It emerged in a political, economic and social setting very different from that of Newfoundland. Ontario women have enjoyed considerable electoral success within provincial politics and in recent decades have worked within a three-party system. Proximity to Ottawa has mitigated against the development of a strong provincial consciousness among Ontarians and this trend is replicated within much of the Ontario movement. Nonetheless, regionalism is evident with higher unemployment and lower per capita incomes characteristic of northern Ontario contributing to ongoing antagonisms towards the more affluent south. This cleavage has produced a distinct northern Ontario women's movement keenly interested in provincial politics while southern Ontario feminists have concentrated more heavily on federal politics. The growing multicultural/multiracial character of Ontario's population has translated into significant diversity challenges within feminist organizations, particularly within the Toronto women's movement.

The contemporary women's movement in Alberta developed in a political climate marked by the one-party dominance of the Progressive Conservatives, with, more recently, the influence of the Reform Party of Canada (RPC). Feminist organizing in the post-1970 period coincided with an aggressive province-building strategy on the part of provincial elites, producing a legacy of often bitter conflict in federal-provincial relations which continues to the present day. Alberta feminists built their contemporary movement in a period of enviable economic growth and prosperity. As the traditional agrarian base of the province's economy was replaced by energy

revenues, urban-rural conflict increased as did as competition between the province's two main urban centres, Edmonton and Calgary. As I will illustrate, the rivalry between Edmonton and Calgary spills over into feminist politics as well. Alberta feminists face a hostile state in their contemporary organizing and endure substantial opposition from right-wing opponents. Although a provincial umbrella organization has existed since the 1970s, and Alberta women have mounted a relatively successful electoral project, Alberta feminism evinces a decidedly anti-state character.

Inclusion of the Northwest Territories in this thesis allows for the unique opportunity of investigating the pattern of women's organizing within a context isolated from the major centres of feminist activism in Canada and where Aboriginal people actually constitute a demographic majority. Here women confront a state structure distinct within Canada given the absence of party politics and the practice of consensual decision-making within the Legislative Assembly. As the NWT moves towards division in 1999, women are engaged significantly as participants in the design of new state structures and representational practices for both Nunavut and the western Arctic. Additionally, the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women in organizing around women's equality issues offers an invaluable opportunity to explore how women's movements deal with diversity matters in a context in Aboriginal women are a numerical majority and the influence of feminism is negligible.

I did not select Québec as one of my case studies since considerable scholarship already exists to show that its women's movement is markedly distinct from its counterparts elsewhere in that francophone feminists have focused primarily on the Québec state since the 1960s.⁶ Rather, my agenda in this dissertation is to explore the specificities of women's organizing in

settings outside of Québec to test the validity of the stereotype of "English-Canadian" feminism as homogeneously oriented towards federal politics and unaffected by space and place.

Sylvia Bashevkin proposes that comparative work on women's movements requires "a conscious turn" toward "a focus on what women's movements and their allies obtain in a variety of political environments" (1994: 276). Bashevkin believes that the impact of feminism across contexts can be measured most accurately through a comparison of public policy outputs which affect women's lives positively. Such evaluation of the relative "success" levels of the individual movements, however, is beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, I argue that the choices made by movements are always constrained and "good" strategies may not be possible to the same degree in every context. This dissertation concentrates, therefore, on delineating the choices made by feminists in particular political environments and offering explanations for the patterns uncovered in each case.

1.4 The Methodological Approach

The approach of this thesis may be described as an example of comparative feminist political science. Because of the many variables necessarily involved in the analysis, a most similar systems design is inappropriate for this type of project.⁷ Instead, a case study methodology has been selected to allow for a sampling of women's movements across the country. I use a "thick" comparative study of several cases which is most appropriate for tackling questions of "big structures, large processes and huge comparisons" (Tilly 1984) and testing the significance of several independent factors that may account for differences among the movements under

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scrutiny. As Charles C. Ragin argues: “[C]ase-oriented methods stimulate a rich dialogue between ideas and evidence. Because these methods are flexible in their approach to the evidence--few simplifying assumptions are made--they do not restrict or constrain the examination of evidence” (1987: 52). The design of this thesis does not seek to isolate a single causal mechanism responsible for variability in the dependent variable; the inductive approach applied to this research problem instead may be expected to produce a multivariate explanation. Such a multi-case design can generate testable hypotheses useful in future comparative work. Although the theoretical framework employed argues for the importance of understanding the specificities of the social, economic and political contexts within which women’s movements act, the methodology assumes that commensurability is possible in such an intra-state comparison.

Clearly, there are shortcomings inherent in such an approach. Tom Schuller admits that “case-study work is ... inherently incomplete and excessive fortune in striking a rich seam turns incompleteness into permanent unfinishedness” (1988: 70). When dealing with amorphous subjects of inquiry such as movements, Schuller’s admonishment is particularly applicable. Consequently, the comparative research agenda followed in this thesis remains open to criticism because of its partial and exploratory nature. The goal of such a multi-case comparison comprised of several “rich seams,” however, is to identify trends and tendencies within activism in each setting and to offer explanations to account for those discoveries. I do not purport to advance a comprehensive history of contemporary women’s movements operating in each context, although I do acknowledge the urgency of such research.

Ragin cautions further that "case-oriented researchers are always open to the charge that their findings are specific to the few cases they examine, and when they do make broad comparisons and attempt to generalize, they often are accused of letting their favorite cases shape or at least color their generalizations" (1987: ix). "Thick" comparisons, therefore, can be expected to generate only a weak form of causal analysis. Although, as Ragin states, scholars relying on a case study model must be extremely cautious in advancing empirical generalizations, a study such as this one can contribute to the literature by advancing testable hypotheses. As Stretton observes: "Comparison is strongest as ... a system for questioning, not for answering" (as quoted in Lijphart 1975: 160).

This dissertation is informed also by feminist interrogations of social science methods which have led to a rejection of traditional assumptions that knowledge is neutral and "politically innocent" (Code 1995: 16). At a general level, the methodology of this study is influenced by feminist epistemological debates which have generated the following principles for feminist scholarship: the need to attend continuously to the significance of gender and gender asymmetry as a basic feature of social life; a rejection of the traditional split between objectivity and value neutrality and the sharp separation between the observed and the observer; a challenge to the notion that insights drawn from personal and/or grounded experiences are unscientific; interest in the ethical implications of feminist research and recognition of the exploitation of women as objects of knowledge; and an emphasis on the empowerment of women through research (Cook and Fonow 1986: 5).⁸ Central to this project is my own conviction that feminism must reject decontextualized research. I call for contextualized analysis on women, especially concerning their relationships to politics. I argue explicitly that

"feminist commitments to fostering women's emancipation make it imperative for them to know the situations and circumstances of women's lives" (Code 1995: 20, emphasis in original).

Accepting the principles outlined above, this thesis builds on the feminist goal of "learning to see what is not there" (Code 1995: 23), or what Vickers terms asking the "non-questions" (1982: 28). Because documentation and analysis of feminist activism and the history of contemporary women's movements in Canada remains thin, particularly in a comparative format, the evidence on which this thesis is based has been collected through a combination of qualitative research methods. In addition to reliance on the documentary record of key feminist organizations, government documents and media reports, data were gathered through a series of in-depth, open-ended interviews conducted with key participants and organizations within the women's movements between 1992 and 1996. The interviews were informed by feminist insights also in that I rejected the traditional expectation of detachment between the interviewer and the interviewee. Rather, these interviews served as interactive "structured conversations" (Taylor and Rupp 1991: 126) between the researcher and the research participants.⁹ At many points during the process, in fact, I functioned as a conduit of information, or what Greta Hofmann-Nemiroff (1992) terms a "simultaneous translator," among feminists who often maintained little contact with their counterparts in other communities.

For each case study, interviews were conducted in several towns and cities in order to investigate further the impact of various spatial contexts within single jurisdictions.¹⁰ In Newfoundland, participants were drawn from St. John's, Corner Brook and Stephenville. Telephone interviews were conducted also with feminists in Goose Bay and Makkovik, Labrador. In

Ontario, interviewees were selected from Toronto, Thunder Bay, Kingston, Windsor, Hamilton, North Bay and Kitchener-Waterloo.¹¹ In Alberta, feminists were interviewed in Edmonton, Calgary and Lethbridge. Interviews were held as well in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. For each case, a search of documentary evidence on women's organizations and feminist activism was conducted first from which I generated lists of key groups and participants targetted for interviews. In each instance, however, women in the communities directed me to other individuals who consented to be interviewed.¹²

Methodologically, this project also treads on what Lorraine Code characterizes as the "perilous path" of feminist research which strives to avoid both

the old tyranny of authoritarian expertise that discounts women's experiences much as it discounts the experiences of other marginalized and oppressed people and a new tyranny of experientialism that claims for the first person experiential utterances an immunity from challenge, interpretation or debate (1995: 36).

In adopting Alison Wylie's concept of a "collectivist model" of research, my methodological approach endeavours to maintain a "balance between granting respect to the other's interpretations of her reality, while going beyond that interpretation to comprehend its underlying relations" (Acker, Barry and Esseveld as quoted in Wylie 1994: 614). In other words, the methodological approach adopted has been to "take [the] subjects' experience seriously as a point of departure, [but] not as immune to challenge and criticism" (Wylie 1994: 615, emphasis in the original). This research design, therefore, does not adhere to a participatory research methodology that demands the active engagement of the research participants at each stage of the research program (Park 1993). I argue that the participatory, self-study

model of research which assigns primacy to experientialism risks slippage into a "relativism that compromises the emancipatory potential of feminism and feminist research (Wylie 1994: 618)."¹³ Instead, I endeavour throughout the thesis to balance respectfully women's accounts of their experiences against the theoretical literature and my own analysis and insights.

1.5 Contribution of the Research

The central contribution of this dissertation lies its theoretical challenge to existing movement analyses and its integration of a spatial component into a women-centred comparative political science. The thesis is distinguished also by its movement-centred focus. As I will discuss in Chapter Two, while treatments of movements organized around constructs such as a political opportunity structure (Tarrow 1983) tend to emphasize the manner in which the state constructs and manipulates movements, in this thesis I stress the agency of movement actors in using their own experiences of location to pursue feminist organizing effectively in subnational contexts.

In her discussion of qualitative methodologies, Jennifer Platt (1988) insists that the empirical contributions of case study research should not be underestimated. A further contribution of this dissertation, therefore, is its mapping of previously uncollected empirical data on feminist organizing and its comparative treatment of women's movements within four Canadian jurisdictions. The project also adds an original Canadian contribution to the growing comparative literature on women's movements which still favours inter- rather than intra-state analyses (Kaplan 1992; Chowdhury and Nelson 1994).

More generally, the thesis responds to the research lacuna noted by Tupper and Gibbins who observe that "Canadian political science has never

accorded the study of provincial politics a status comparable to that conferred on the study of national events" (1992: viii). Donald Rowat also acknowledges the sparsity of comparative work in the area of provincial politics:

Despite the growing literature in the field of provincial government and politics ... there are surprisingly few genuinely comparative studies. Yet, the existence of the political systems in provinces of varying population size, culture and historical background provides an excellent opportunity to make significant comparative studies (1991: v).

Although data on women's participation in Canadian provincial politics is becoming available,¹⁴ the relationship between women's movements in Canada and subnational states remains seriously underexamined.

Finally, as an example of feminist political science, the thesis also seeks to contribute to "action-oriented research" for social change that is of political value to the "researched" as well as the researcher (Barnsley 1987). As I will argue, a fundamental problem of Canadian feminism has been the coordination of activism across geographic and jurisdictional divides. In highlighting points of difference among movements and accounting for how matters of space and place contribute to divergent patterns of activism, this analysis offers information valuable in devising strategies and tactics for future pan-Canadian feminist initiatives. With its focus on the interaction between movements and their respective subnational states, the thesis may help feminists strategize around the decentralizing trends in Canadian federalism and increasingly powerful provincial and territorial governments. In general, then, it is my position that documentation and analysis, particularly in a comparative format, of intra-state movement differences is essential if the multi-generational project of realizing women's liberation is

to keep pace with changing political realities and the exponential increase in interests seeking representation through feminist organizing in Canada.

1.6 Thesis Format

The thesis is divided into four sections. Chapters Two and Three chart a theoretical framework designed to facilitate a women-centred comparative analysis of women's movements sensitive to matters of location and issues of space and place. In Chapter Two, I review the traditional approaches to women and politics within political science and assess the strengths and limitations of existing comparative literature in feminist political science. I summarize the main streams within contemporary movement theory, consider current efforts at synthesizing these theoretical strands and question the applicability of these largely-imported theories to Canadian movements. Drawing on the work of sociologists Lorna Weir (1993) and Barry Adam (1993), I expose the problematic aspects of relying on movement theory to account for the behaviour of women's movements and, in particular, question the applicability of research reliant on the concept of a political opportunity structure. The chapter ends with a proposal for a women-centred comparative framework within which to organize analyses of feminist movements in subnational settings. Chapter Three continues the theoretical introduction by exploring the significance of theorizing space and place as part of a subnational comparative movement study. Borrowing insights from radical, feminist and political geography, I argue for the reintroduction of location as a critical element of movement theory. I survey the centrality of place and territory in the tradition of Canadian political science and maintain that, despite the trend in contemporary feminist literature to ignore spatial relationships, comparative studies of feminist activism incorporating spatial

analyses are warranted, particularly in the Canadian case. The focus of much of contemporary feminist activism on federal politics is discussed in the context of the current trend towards decentralization. This chapter also summarizes the political environments in which each of the four women's movements have pursued their agendas in the post-1970 period.

In the second section, Chapters Four and Five, I present the first half of the empirical study. Chapter Four introduces the comparison of women's movements and their representational projects vis-à-vis the state in each of the four cases. In this chapter, I posit that women's movements' relationships with the state exist along a continuum of engaged, ambiguous and detached orientations. I detail the electoral project of women's movements in each setting, comparing the electoral and legislative records of women and examining the linkages between women's movements and the electoral project. The evidence reveals marked differences in women's electoral successes across contexts and significant variations in the extent to which contemporary women's movements engage in electoral politics at the subnational level.

Chapter Five compares the bureaucratic and lobbying projects women's movements have mounted as alternative channels through which to pursue representation vis-à-vis the state. I consider the role of subnational status of women machinery, specifically advisory councils and women's policy secretariats across contexts and analyze the distinct differences in the character and performance of these mechanisms in divergent contexts. I also compare the character of state-centric lobbying conducted by women's movements outside of formal political channels. My analysis confirms the importance of documenting the diversity of women's interactions with the state and illustrates how comparisons sensitive to location can help account for the

divergences in experiences, opportunities and actions highlighted in the empirical discussion.

Chapters Six and Seven constitute the dissertation's third section and are devoted to a comparative examination of women's movements and their representational projects concerning diversity. Chapter Six begins with a discussion of how current debates around a politics of difference have led to a tendency within feminist literature to minimize the impact of spatial relationships. In this chapter, I document how women's movements across Canada mobilize around issues related to sexual orientation and compare the differences in the construction of, and response to, these issues across contexts. Chapter Seven advances a comparative analysis of women's movements and the challenges of integrating racialized women and their agendas to build an inclusive politics. I account for the distinct patterns of the four movements in dealing internally with diversity agendas by considering the experiences and opportunities of women's movements in particular locales and jurisdictions.

In the fourth section, Chapter Eight acts as the conclusion wherein I summarize the major findings, advance a series of testable hypotheses to account for the differences among the movements in question and flag new directions for future research. I conclude that women's movements in subnational settings are affected significantly by matters of location and that women's movements make their strategic choices based on their experiences with the state in their specific context, the political opportunities they both face and create and the influence of the place in which they organize. Finally, I argue for more detailed interrogations of questions of space and location in comparative movement research.

1.7 Notes to Chapter One

¹ The heightened visibility of women's organizations in contemporary Canadian politics has centred around feminist participation in free trade and constitutional debates. For discussions of this involvement, consult: Sylvia Bashevkin (1989; 1991); Chaviva Hosek (1983); Jill Vickers (1993a) and Diane Lamoureux (1991).

² Remarks to Roundtable on Provincial Politics, Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Montreal, June 1995.

³ Vickers, Rankin and Appelle (1993) discuss the difficulties of pan-Canadian organizing faced by the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.

⁴ The issue of nomenclature appropriate to describe the character of women's movements within Canada remains problematic. The commonly used "English-Canadian" movement distinguishes feminist activism outside of francophone Québec, but potentially misrepresents the nature of feminist organizing among allophones, some First Nations women, and francophone women's groups outside Québec.

⁵ For an early exploration of the concept of grounded theory see Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967).

⁶ The contemporary Québec women's movement, unlike its provincial and territorial counterparts, has received excellent scholarly attention from feminists such as Heather Jon Maroney who has explicated the complex interrelationships between different branches of feminism, labour, political parties and the Québec state since the Quiet Revolution (1988). For more recent analyses in English of the Québec women's movement, see Chantal Maillé (1997) and Micheline de Sève (1992b).

⁷ For a discussion of the problematic nature of a most similar systems (method of difference) design for case studies, see Stanley Lieberman (1991).

⁸ For more detailed explanations of feminist epistemology's challenge to the scientific method, consult Code (1995), Nielsen (1990), Westkott (1990) and Hawkesworth (1989).

⁹ Taylor and Rupp concur with Oakley's (1981) observations that interviewing women from a feminist perspective requires a more collaborative approach that attempts to break down the hierarchy between interviewer and subject. My interview experiences paralleled those of Taylor and Rupp who found that "not only would a 'proper' interview have been impossible with the women in our study... it might not have yielded the most useful kind of data" (1991: 125). See Oakley (1981) for an interesting discussion of the challenges associated with feminist interviewing.

¹⁰ The majority of interviews were conducted during a series of field trips to the communities cited; however, in a few cases, telephone interviews were used to supplement the data base.

¹¹ The extensive coverage of Ontario has been facilitated through my involvement since 1990 with the SSHRC-funded project "The New Politics of Ontario" under the direction of Professor Jill Vickers. This research project is engaged in mapping the role of Ontario women in a range of movement politics between 1990-1995. As one of fifteen researchers involved in this project, I

have benefitted significantly from access to a bank of approximately 150 interviews. The primary bibliography identifies those interviews for which I acted as part of the interview team and others which I have cited in this thesis but at which I was not present.

¹² Interviews were most difficult to obtain in Labrador and the Northwest Territories where my status as an outsider was problematic. In Toronto, my experiences in seeking interviews were similar to those of Vijay Agnew who describes how she found Black women "reluctant to be interviewed - 'again'" because of the extensive research already conducted in their communities which "has often not produced satisfactory results" (1996: 141). My decision to grant confidentiality to some interviewees related to the need to protect the anonymity of women who were in sensitive government positions or others who expressed concern about disclosure of their sexual orientation.

¹³ Wylie distinguishes the collectivist research model from the "self-study" model advocated by other feminists such as Stanley and Wise (1983).

¹⁴ See, for example, Cheryl N. Collier (1995) and Jane Arscott and Linda Trimble (1997).

CHAPTER TWO

Women's Movements in Comparative Perspective Constructing an Analytic Framework

2.1 Introduction

As a research field, the comparative study of women's movements is still in its infancy. Inter and intra-state analyses of feminist activism have tended to proceed either through the consideration of movement organizing as an adjunct to examinations of women's role in conventional politics or, alternatively, as a component of discussions that theorize women's movements as part of the much-debated 'new social movement' phenomenon. Although comparative work on women's movements, particularly in Western European and U.S. contexts, is increasingly available (Githens, Norris and Lovenduski 1994; Nelson and Chowdhury 1994; Kaplan 1992; Gelb 1989; Katzenstein and Mueller 1987), feminist political scientists continue to affirm the ongoing need "to do more comparative research on the political activism of groups of both differently situated women within countries and similarly situated women across countries" in order to broaden our knowledge of women's movements and women's political lives more generally (Nelson 1992: 495, emphasis added). Research of this variety, Nelson contends, can "illuminate the force of social structure and the power of individual agency in defining women's political engagement" (495).

Comparative literature on both women's movements cross-nationally and single-country studies nevertheless remains sparse. Diane Rothbard Margolis's review of scholarship on women's movements reveals that the majority of existing studies concentrate on movements active in the United States, Great Britain and Europe. Margolis notes that in appraisals of

women's movements elsewhere, the focus often slips from the movement to an emphasis on women's role in politics and the overall situation of the country's women (1993: 380). Citing the work of, among others, Ferree (1987), Kaufmann-McCall (1983) and Altbach (1984), she identifies the tendency within this literature to compare women's movements against U.S. feminism, to "veer away from theory" and avoid explanations of "why movements emerge at particular times and in particular forms" (1993: 386).

Several scholars of women's movements, including Margolis, have attempted, however, to generate hypotheses capable of explaining the relationship between women's movements and extranational influences.¹ Researchers such as Chafetz and Dworkin (1986) advance generalizations about factors such as urbanization and industrialization which they hypothesize affect the size and ideology of women's movements. Alternatively, Katzenstein and Mueller (1987) and Bouchier (1984) use their cross-national comparisons to isolate political factors which may account for differences among women's movements internationally.² But despite the growth in literature answering this research need, little attention has been paid to the question of how best to construct a women-centred approach to the comparative analysis of women's movements. Instead, tools from comparative politics and movement theory continue to inform our explanations and insights regarding women's movements. It is my purpose in this chapter to evaluate if, in fact, current approaches can theorize the specificity of feminist organizing and provide gender-sensitive models appropriate for comparative women's movement research.

I begin this task by contributing to the feminist project of giving analytic "voice" to what have been identified as "gender silences" within political science (Nelson 1989) in order to account for the relative dearth of

writing about women's movements within the discipline. I examine the emergence of women and politics as a research field, consider the treatment of women in comparative politics and assess the character of comparative feminist analyses of women and politics. In the second half of the chapter, I evaluate movement literature and its efforts to account for the strategies, structures and successes of women's movements. I survey the comparative literature on women's movements, highlighting the dominant theoretical and empirical approaches and isolating their weaknesses. The chapter ends with a synthesis of elements from these discussions and proposes a women-centred framework through which feminist movements at the subnational level may be compared.

2.2 Women and Political Science

Exposing the sexism of western political theory and charting the neglect of gender analysis in political science has preoccupied feminist political scientists for over two decades.³ Feminist theory has reinterpreted the writings of western political philosophers, offering illuminating reconsiderations of concepts such as citizenship, equality, freedom, justice, the public, the private, and democracy. As Pateman and Shanley observe, however, "[r]emarkably little attention has been paid to the implications of feminist arguments in the ever-increasing volume of commentary on the famous texts, or in discussions of contemporary political problems" (1991: 1). Practitioners of feminist political science posit that the discipline's theoretical separation of human activity into "the public world of politics and employment [and] the private sphere of family and interpersonal relations" (Siltanen and Stanworth 1984: 185) has created within the discipline a "cognitive community" reliant on paradigms that allow for limited "seeing"

of women's political activity.⁴ Because the scope of the discipline has been framed by a focus on "the politics of 'proper channels' and 'proper authorities'" (McAdam 1988: 60) political science has been both reticent and ill-equipped to examine and theorize the political orientations, priorities and actions of women who historically have been confined to the allegedly 'apolitical' private realm.⁵ Instead, women's political engagement has been measured against male standards accepted as normative and universal. Sandra Burt notes that political philosophers Carole Pateman and Iris Young concur that "western liberal-democratic societies exclude women by adopting a set of principles developed by and for men and offered to the polity as universal" (1995: 365).

The "gender silences" within political science have generated four main consequences. Women are

rarely deemed legitimate political actors; they are rarely deemed the primary subjects of political discourse; they are rarely deemed the appropriate commentators on political life; and they are rarely deemed to have an adequate perspective from which they could judge or enter political activities (Nelson 1989: 2, emphasis in original).⁶

Although a 'women and politics' subfield slowly has become established within political science, it remains marginalized within the discipline and has "not redefined the way we conceptualize politics so as to make the study of women and politics part of the mainstream" (Hopkins 1993: 562). Jones and Jónasdóttir view this as the "peculiar irony of modern political theory" that at the same time as the "ideals of freedom and equality for all" are being embraced, "the specific presence of women and men in the political field is denied" (1988: 8).

Prescriptions for filling these research vacuums are abundant.

Kathleen B. Jones, for instance, argues that "[w]hat a feminist political science

must do is develop a new vocabulary of politics so that it can express the specific and different ways in which women have wielded power, been in authority, practised citizenship, and understood freedom" (1988: 25). For Barbara Nelson, such a theoretical revamping requires "emphasizing that all political subjects are gendered while also giving special attention to those areas and concerns where women have traditionally put their political energy" (1989: 21). Canadian research conducted by Thelma McCormack and, later, Sandra Burt, suggests that, in fact, women and men inhabit "different democracies."⁷ Their respective findings point to the necessity of rethinking if, in fact, women and men occupy the same political world and what constitutes women-centred understandings of political participation (McCormack 1975; Burt 1986, 1988).

The daunting project of redressing political science's "gender silences" has been initiated through feminist work which critiques past practice, adds on the study of women, and, finally, integrates sex/gender⁸ analysis into the central questions of the discipline itself (Walby 1988). Jill Bystydzienski's assessment of these developments is that "[o]nce feminists redefined politics to transcend the dichotomy between the public and private, women emerged as politically active beings" (1992: 3). Sex/gender analysis within political science to date, however, has relied most heavily on what Jill Vickers terms a "normal integration model" which assumes that "over time, women will become integrated into the various arenas of official politics on the same basis as men" (1989: 29). This type of analysis "can generate information concerning the barriers to women's participation, the capability of specific institutions to mobilize women and the channels of participation least resistant to women's involvement. What it cannot do, however, is generate insights concerning the characteristics of women's politics on its own

ground” (Vickers, 1989: 30, emphasis added).⁹ Comparative treatments of women’s movements require a framework that indeed facilitates study of women’s politics “on its own ground”; that is, approaches that can reflect the range of women’s political engagement where it occurs and comparative tools that can capture analytically women’s unique relationships to political life.

2.3 Sex/Gender Analysis and Comparative Politics

Just as feminist responses to the gender-blindness of political science have challenged disciplinary norms over the past twenty years, the subfield of comparative politics also has been the site of exciting debates throughout the same period over its scope and direction, theoretical emphases, methodologies and terminology. Over two decades ago, Bill and Hardgrave documented how debates over the definition of politics, the nature and role of theory, the value and role of measurement and quantification, the techniques of research in cross-cultural settings and the relationship of interdisciplinary concerns to the study of politics caused scholars to question if, in fact, a comparative method was still identifiable (1973: 1). While these stimulating debates continue to be waged among comparativists (Ragin 1987), comparative politics today remains at its core a field of study that seeks to explain related patterns and processes which occur within two or more political contexts, and concerns itself primarily with the question of how and why political relationships are different or the same across space and time. Atul Kohli characterizes the methodological spectrum of comparative politics currently as a continuum ranging from scholars inspired by “postmodern or culturally relativistic claims, who doubt the value of causal explanations altogether” to others who look to microeconomics and/or game theory in order to explain all social actors as rational utility maximizers (1995: 1).¹⁰

In his overview of the intellectual history of comparative politics, Sidney Verba first reported over a decade ago how the research agenda has expanded to include attention to new variables and approaches such as study of the "more informal agencies of government, the attitudes and perceptions of mass and elite public, and nongovernmental institutions such as interest groups and political parties" in addition to producing "more sophisticated and discriminating studies of comparative political culture" and "the political cultural constraints on development and public policy" (1985: 32). This proliferation of subjects and approaches, Verba argued, also has spawned "'islands of theory' dealing with specific areas such as voting behavior, political participation, bureaucratic behaviour, value change, the role of the state and state-society relations, and public policy analysis" (1985: 34). Clearly, the field has matured far beyond its initial attention to constructing general frameworks for analyzing political institutions and systems. Although the bulk of comparative politics continues to rely on cross-national studies, Robert Jackson's survey of the field notes also the increasing number of intra-state comparisons. As Jackson explains, "[c]ontext does matter, and single-country studies add a degree of realism that is vital for correcting overly high-level abstractions that distort or oversimplify examinations of the political process" (1992: 13).

The heterogeneous nature of this renovated field, then, appears ripe for comparisons of movement politics, and, in particular, subnational comparisons of feminist activism. In fact, it has been argued by movement scholars that comparative study is particularly useful for movement research. Patrice LecClerc notes Tarrow's position that movement comparisons

can be a corrective to narrowly tested models, can be a check on proposed causal patterns, can demonstrate new theoretical possibilities, can sensitize scholars to a variety of outcomes under differing contexts,

and can bring out the effects of political institutions and their effects on opportunities, constraints, and forms of action for a social movement, ie., the effect of politics itself on a social movement (1993: 12).¹¹

Surprisingly, comparative research in this area, however, is still sparse.

Herbert Kitschelt observes that comparative analyses of movements "remain rare, although opportunities abound to observe movements with similar objectives or forms of mobilization in diverse settings (1986: 57).¹² A 1988 survey, for example, found few texts in comparative politics affording more than "passing attention to either social or political movements" (Klandermans and Tarrow 1988: 14). More recent collections that mount comparative movement research concentrate on explicating the pivotal role of the state in shaping the relationship between social movements and the institutionalized interest representation system (Jenkins and Klandermans, 1995a: 3).

Similarly, comparative politics has concerned itself only cursorily with women and their politics. Wiarda's New Directions in Comparative Politics (1991), for example, contains no mention of issues related to women and/or the study of sex/gender systems as part of the expanding agenda of comparative politics research. Indeed, analyses that compare women's experiences against other women's experiences, instead of against male-set norms remain rare (Nelson 1992: 492). This is not to argue, however, that comparative politics has neglected completely to consider women and their political participation. Feminist political scientists remind us that in "pre-feminist" political science research, "gender was normally a background variable in research involving social surveys and data on women was regularly collected" (Lovenduski 1982: 90). The first systematic comparative analysis of women's political behaviour dates back to 1955 and Maurice Duverger's IPSA/UNESCO study of women's political behaviour. In The

Political Role of Women. Duverger relied on election and survey data to investigate women's political behaviour in France, West Germany, Norway and Yugoslavia. This pioneering behaviouralist work did display an openness to "possibilities of sexism and sex discrimination as causal factors" in explaining women's political behaviour (Lovenduski 1982: 91). Ultimately, however, Duverger's conclusions were limited because the behaviouralist framework glossed over discussion of regime and economic factors. Barbara Nelson concludes that as Duverger "groped for a theory of the political and social relationships between women, and men, he could not articulate one" (1992: 491).

Lovenduski has criticized the lack of response of political science to Duverger's research, arguing that it generated only fifteen years of "resounding silence" (1982: 92). Although their later contributions were much more sensitive to the particularities of women's political participation, in their classic text on comparative politics, Almond and Verba's characterization of women's political behaviour articulated ideas that echoed Duverger's observations and stereotyped women's relationships to politics in ways that would resonate well past the advent of feminist scholarship on women and politics:

...where the consequences of women's suffrage have been studied, it would appear that women differ from men in their political behaviour only in being somewhat more frequently apathetic, parochial, conservative, and sensitive to the personality, emotional and aesthetic aspects of political life in electoral campaigns (1963: 388).

In the wake of renewed women's movements and a resurgence beginning in the 1960s of interest in women's relationship to politics, the field of women and politics was born. Initially, the emphasis was on women's participation in

conventional formal politics. Githens, Lovenduski and Norris argue that "this approach regarded traditional forms of political behavior as the norm ... hence, the central question was why women did not conform to expectations" (1994: x). The field of inquiry gradually developed an emphasis on tracking women's political participation and behaviour vis-à-vis electoral politics and exposing the ways in which conventional electoral research relied on research questions that marginalized women's political participation (Chowdhury, Nelson, Johnson and O'Loughlin 1994: 33).¹³ Comparative studies appeared which had as their "avowed aim the object of comparing the political behaviour of women with women rather than the more usual comparisons of women with men" (Lovenduski 1982: 95). Jeane Kirkpatrick's (1974) study of female legislators investigated the absence of women from U.S. elite politics using a political participation approach that examined recruitment patterns, socialization and role performance. Kirkpatrick's work became one of the earliest examples of what later would constitute the scholarly trajectory broadly defined as "women in politics."

Inspired by feminist rejections of the separation of women's public and private lives, a parallel literature emerged that reconceptualized traditional definitions of the political and broadened examination of women's political engagement to encompass their experiences in both formal politics and the "politics of everyday life" (Chowdhury, Nelson, Johnson and O'Loughlin 1994: 18).¹⁴ This literature responded to the manner in which the approach addressed above "tended to obfuscate that fact that, contrary to conventional wisdom, women had a long and rich history of political participation" (Githens, Lovenduski and Norris 1994: x). Here comparative work such as Jaquette's Women in Politics (1974), traced women's involvement in mainstream politics, considered the impact of sex-role socialization as a barrier to women's political

participation and discussed aspects of the women's movement and its changing definitions of politics and political activity. Another early example of this type of analysis is Iglitzin and Ross's Women in the World (1976) which undertook a comparative study of women's position worldwide in both the public and private arenas. Their cross-cultural approach challenged modernization literature vis-à-vis women's roles that earlier had stressed the importance of democratic institutions in ensuring women's equality. The country-by-country approach utilized in both these texts provided a descriptive account of women's political involvement and status, more broadly defined, but attempted only a limited comparative analysis. This framework became the standard model for much of the subsequent literature on women's relationships to political life.

A sampling of this literature reveals the intellectual path along which comparative work on women and politics developed.¹⁵ Joni Lovenduski and Jill Hills' volume, The Politics of the Second Electorate (1981), focuses on descriptive accounts of women's political participation in twenty countries. In this text, the emphasis centres on documenting women's involvement in formal politics. The collection surveys feminist campaigns of the 1970s, but mounts no comparative analysis. Vicky Randall (1987) blends analysis of women's involvement in both formal and non-electoral politics and policy-making. While Randall's contribution does offer some comparative analysis (limited to select public policy issues and the emergence of women's movements), it remains largely of a descriptive nature. Randall's more significant contribution to the women and politics field is her effort to define 'the political' more broadly so as to dislodge the traditional focus of political science on elite electoral politics.

Lovenduski's later text, Women and European Politics (1986) again mounts a comparative analysis. This time, Lovenduski considers the

development of first and second waves of feminism and incorporates a variety of forms of women's political behaviour including conventional elite politics, interest groups, trade unionism, feminist activism. She considers also how European states have endeavoured to "manage" women's interests and demands through public policy. Lovenduski's analysis demonstrates that the characteristics of specific political systems, in this case state socialist versus liberal democratic, must be examined in order to assess how women are permitted or inhibited from 'integrating' into formal political structures. Methodologically, however, Lovenduski admits that her work remains mostly descriptive and eclectic. In outlining the political roles of women in one particular geographical area, she notes that she has "been unable to identify one mode of political analysis which facilitates the achievement of [my] aim" and has "no particular methodological insights to offer" (1986: xi). As I will discuss later in this chapter, the comparative work of, for example, Jenson (1983), Dahlerup (1986) Katzenstein and Mueller (1987), Gelb (1989), Kaplan (1992) and Bashevkin (1994) reflect the influence of movement theory and examine in particular the relationship between women's movements and public policy.

Nelson and Chowdhury's recent Women and Politics Worldwide attempts to develop more fruitful analytic approaches to women and politics. Their collection advances a "thick" comparative framework that combines analysis of regime type, level of economic development and cultural milieu with an examination of women's political engagement, including the "development of self-identity, actions in the civil as well as political arenas, and grass-roots as well as elite behaviours" (1994: 33). This comparative effort and, more explicitly, that of Githens, Lovenduski and Norris (1994), reflects the influence of what has been isolated as the "third strand" of the women

and politics field. This newest approach, grounded in the idea that an identifiable feminist standpoint does exist, incorporates analysis of women's political culture and issues of citizenship and identity.¹⁶

Other contributors to the comparative literature on women and politics have relied on the generation of feminist indicators to evaluate and compare the situation of women across different political systems. In contrast to the "thick" comparisons attempted by Randall, Lovenduski, and Nelson and Chowdhury, "thin" comparisons "assume there is something called 'the status of women' which is syndrome-like in the sense that improvement in one or several variables will result in improvements in political participation" (Vickers 1989: 29). Those variables most frequently compared include: women's access to social services; the nature of workforce participation; participation in elite politics and legal guarantees of equality (Anderson 1991); or, alternatively, reproductive rights; elite positions in corporate world; roles in unions and formal politics; child care and attitudes towards sex roles (Norris 1987). Studies like that by Wolchik (1981) test the extent to which a regime change will influence the status of women while Norris (1987) concentrates on the role of political parties as agents that affect sexual equality. Although an important literature within the field, a weakness of this type of "status of women" analysis, however, is that it may tend to gloss over the characteristics of the political system and offer little theorization of the specificities of the state.

Jill Vickers's (1995a) survey of comparative women and politics literature concludes that there are eight identifiable approaches that have been developed thus far by feminist political scientists. She argues that the bulk of the literature compares women and their politics according to state outputs, milestones in women's history, participation rates, openness of the

political system to women's politics, government machinery created to incorporate women's needs, strength and pattern of activity of women's movements, the extent to which women's political activity is redefining what is political and the impact of women's activism on political discourse.

Vickers observes also that the major variables that have been theorized as explaining women's political activity include state, regime and government forms, electoral systems, party systems and types, political culture and political opportunity structures. Within the overall field of women and politics, however, the generation of explanations to account for women's political activity remains underdeveloped. Michelle Saint-Germain's findings (1992) note the largely descriptive nature of the field in general. Her review of 110 works on women and politics written between 1965 and 1992 discovered that only 31% provided some level of analysis beyond description while only 5% offered new hypotheses to be tested.

Clearly, questions of how best to construct useful frameworks through which to compare women's relationship to politics still animate feminist political science. As Nelson observes, scholars in this field continue to grapple with the dilemma of "how can these patterns [of women's political behaviour] be compared across and within nations, institutions, social movements, and groups of people--indeed, across all the structures and processes of politics, broadly defined?" (1992: 491).¹⁷ While feminist political scientists work to integrate the field of women and politics within comparative politics and political science more generally, scholars of women's movements have looked to political sociology and movement theory for appropriate theoretical frameworks. It is to a review of that literature that this discussion now turns.

2.4 Theoretical Approaches to Movement Politics

The increased visibility of activism cross-nationally around equality-seeking and quality-of life¹⁸ agendas has rendered the "new"¹⁹ politics of movements a popular subject of contemporary social research. Consistent with many intellectual frameworks that enjoy common currency in Canada, theories to account for the (re)emergence and proliferation of movements such as feminism, disability rights, peace, environmentalism, gay/lesbian liberation, Aboriginal self-determination and ethnic and racial equality have been imported in their entirety from both U.S. and Western European sources. Discussion of women's movements within social movement literature has relied, therefore, on transplanted theoretical models that do not necessarily incorporate an understanding of sex/gender systems nor reflect the specificities of movement politics within a Canadian context. In this section, I review the theoretical approaches that have been employed to explain the contemporary movement phenomenon. This discussion prefaces my critique of their appropriateness as analytic approaches with which to compare women's movements.

The escalation of movement politics throughout North America and Western Europe since the 1960s has inspired an avalanche of theoretical writing anxious to account for its appearance. Described as both "anti-politics" and "new politics," movements of this period have been attributed variously to the erosion of catch-all political parties, the failure of the Left to respond to the breakdown of the post-war compromise between the working class and capital and to the progressive decoupling of party and legislative activity (Berger 1979). Commenting on the European experience, Claus Offe (1987) depicts movements as a reaction on the part of civil society to an increasing encroachment by the state, as well as a consequence of the blurring

of the public and private spheres. Other scholars such as Ronald Inglehart (1990) explain movement activity as the political manifestation of post-materialist values in societies where citizens' immediate material needs are met which, in turn, frees actors to offer a critique of capitalist-defined progress and mobilize for the achievement of collective goods. Despite the diversity of approaches available within this theoretical marketplace, this literature stresses the common characteristics of these "social" activities and insists on their location in civil society. Such movements generally are believed to be engaged in non-institutional politics outside of formal channels and to display a commitment to the radical democratization of political life.²⁰ Membership is characterized as drawn predominantly from the young, well-educated and public sectors which creates a "politics of a class, but not on behalf of a class" (Offe 1987: 77). In general, the movements are described as products of the particular structural conditions found in advanced capitalist states with burgeoning bureaucracies and an overburdened welfare system.

In the United States, the dominant theoretical models trace their genealogy to theories of collective violence and the relative deprivation literature originally developed in response to the rise of fascist and communist movements of the 1930s. In early analyses, "[s]ocial movements were conceptualized as potentially dangerous forms of noninstitutionalized collective political behavior, which, if left unattended, threatened the stability of established ways of life" (Eyerman and Jamison 1991: 10). By the 1960s, however, the collective behaviour approach proved inadequate for explaining the rise of student movements. When demographic profiles of student leaders failed to substantiate empirically the assumptions of earlier approaches that dismissed participation as the action of "deviants on the margins of society" or "outcasts at the cutting edge of structural strain," new

interpretations were sought (Eyerman and Jamison 1991: 19). American social theorists looked first to rational choice literature that understood political action in terms of a cost/benefit analysis and predicted the reluctance of actors to engage in politics unless the balance sheet of personal gain outweighed the debits of involvement. Building on the foundations of economic rationality, political activism was theorized in terms of individual self-interest.²¹

Faced with the inability of rational choice theory to account for the persistence of altruistic activism on the part of apparently "irrational" individuals in pursuit of collective goods, however, U.S. sociologists crafted a new lens through which to view and "rationalize" movement activism. Shifting from an individual to an organizational focus, resource mobilization theory (RMT) locates the motivation for political activism as the permanent existence of dissatisfaction and conflict. RMT adherents cast their interpretation of movements in light of optimistic, pluralist assumptions about the openness of political systems and their ability to incorporate and accommodate the articulation of the interests of the dissatisfied. In this model, the theoretical spotlight illuminates the mechanisms of movement operations, the vehicle of activity, its formation, methods of membership mobilization and strategic choices (Oberschall 1993; Zald and McCarthy 1979, 1987). In effect, RMT considers the movements to be a hybrid form of traditional interest groups. Dalton, Kuechler and Burklin isolate the weaknesses of this approach, pinpointing the apolitical nature of the theory and its indifference to the political or ideological content of a movement: "[I]t was applied in an almost mechanistic way to organizations of widely differing political and ideological scope, without incorporating these factors within the working of the model" (1990: 9-10).²² Additionally, RMT offers no

explanation of why "new" movements such as disability rights and gay and lesbian movements emerge at particular historical junctures.

European scholars, reacting against reductionist Marxism which argued that only working class and vanguard parties could achieve transformative change (Vickers 1995b), conceptualized the "new" citizen-politics as "not just chronologically new but also represent[ing] a qualitatively new aspect of contemporary democratic politics" (Eyerman and Jamison 1991: 32).

Theoretical accounts of movements such as those advanced by Touraine (1981), Boggs (1986) and Melucci (1989) revolve around discussions of the identity formation processes at play within movements. Here movements are understood as historical actors producing new social identities. Rejecting the collective/organizational level of analysis that structures the resource mobilization model, much of the European literature relies on a macrostructural level of analysis that conceptualizes movements as engaged in "both the process of collective identity formation and as social actors struggling to define history" (Eyerman and Jamison 1991: 161). Using ideology as the criterion for judging the 'newness' of movement politics, this mode of analysis argues that, beginning with their re-interpretation of social relations and the creation of new meanings, one can analyze bases of movement support, motivations and predict the transformative potential of these movements (Kuechler and Dalton 1990).

The "new social movement" (NSM) approach emphasizes the capacity of movements to "reshape the discursive terrain of politics in distinctive and potentially radical ways, through personal and cultural transformations that refuse accommodation within existing institutions" (W. Carroll 1992a: 8). In contrast to the resource mobilization perspective, NSM theory "excludes from its analysis the dynamics of mobilization, the instrumental level of action,

political action, the relationship between social movements, political reform and the institutionalization of civil society and the organizational dynamics" (Canel 1992: 38).

Contemporary academic treatments of movements in Canada, such as Cunningham et. al. (1988), Leys and Mendell (1992) and William K. Carroll (1992), have documented the narratives of movement politics, considered the challenge to parties of the Left posed by such movements and speculated as to their potential for revitalizing Canadian socialism. They rely heavily on these transplanted two analytic approaches, however, to understand Canadian phenomena, despite older indigenous interpretive traditions, some of which emphasize the role of space and place. As I will explore further in the next chapter, Vickers argues that neither of the competing imported theoretical schools suggests that the character and/or form movements assume may be "profoundly affected by where they develop and the stance taken by a particular state in relation to them" (1995b: 4).

Efforts at synthesizing these two dominant schools of thought have been broached by scholars attempting a more integrated approach:

[T]he building blocks of resource mobilization--resources, formal organization, tactics, and political opportunities are not ignored, but rather reframed within a broader paradigm that is at once more sensitive to historical, cultural, and structural differences between groups seeking to mobilize on behalf of collective ends and more attuned to the micromobilization context in which social movement identities and grievances are forged out of specific experiences of constraint and opportunity (Mueller 1992: 22).

Canadian scholarship on movement politics has been advanced significantly by Jane Jenson's contributions to the theorization of representation (1986, 1989, 1991) which offer a model for integrating the two major trajectories of movement analysis. She proposes a more dialectical approach that theorizes

movements as "simultaneously subjects of structures and acting subjects carrying in their practices and meaning systems the possibility of both social stability and change" (1989: 236, emphasis added). Jenson locates identity creation as occurring within a 'universe of political discourse' that determines "beliefs about the ways politics should be conducted, boundaries of political discussion and the kinds of conflicts resolvable through political processes" (1987: 65). Her approach argues that while ideological 'space' for these actors is determined within the 'universe of political discourse,' structural 'space' is also determined by the "political opportunity structure." Tarrow (1983) defines the "political opportunity structure" as encompassing "access to state institutions, stability of political alignments and availability of allies and support groups" (S. Phillips 1992: 256). 'Space' at both the ideological and structural levels is subject to historical differences, however, and as I will argue, geographic differences as well.

Jenson's work reiterates the necessity for concrete historical analyses of movements to determine variations across time and space. Her call for empirical examinations of movements is reinforced by Barry Adams in his cogent critique of movement theory. Adams astutely criticizes movement theorists for their reification of movements into "de-contextualized, monolithic categories in order to solve pre-given theoretical problems" and dismisses "top-down theorizing which fails to 'do its homework' concerning its objects of analysis" (1993: 317). Adams castigates what he terms the "historical amnesia" of NSM theory that fails to identify the connections between contemporary movement organizing and its earlier manifestations (323) and uses a narrow range of movements as the basis for the generation of theoretical approaches (322).²³

Another trajectory of movement analysis in Canada that has generated stirring debates has centred on the role of the state. Warren Magnusson's treatment of movements hinges on the manner in which movements have expanded the parameters of politics beyond "state-centric" activity (1990: 527). Magnusson and Walker favour dislodging the state as a central analytic focus, believing that the state is losing its clout and that movements are "rejecting the state as the natural container for politics" (1988: 68). His enthusiasm for "radical pluralism" has been responded to by, among others, Jenson and Keyman (1990) who question the prudence of shedding of analytical "baggage" such as the state. Jenson and Keyman, however, do concur with Magnusson's identification of the diminished capacity of the state to regulate either economic or social relations (152). Their respective positions diverge, nevertheless, as Jenson and Keyman still identify the state as an ongoing locale "where meaning can take shape through political struggle" (1990: 157).

Regardless of the analytic approach used to understand their place in society, pronouncements on the longterm ideological and organizational impact of movements have been tepid. Resource mobilization and identity-oriented theorists alike express reticence about the ability of these movements to re-order politics fundamentally. A noted collection by U.S. and European scholars concludes by arguing that the "unintended consequence of securing the long-term stability of the political order may turn out to be the most important impact of today's new social movements" (Kuechler and Dalton 1990: 298). Offe (1990) concludes that movements are unable to develop institutional forms in which their particular mix of radical motives and demands can be accommodated. With Kuechler and Dalton, Offe argues that because movement politics do not advance a collective project of general social change, they "extremely ill-equipped to deal with the problems of time"

(1990: 237). Commenting on the Canadian context, Claude Galipeau, for instance, credits "new" movements with "changing the parameters of valid political discourse" (1989: 405); yet, he cautions that the "broad definition of the political" advanced by movement actors is "not easily translatable in a party system that is concerned with a manageable, if not opportunistic, definition of the political" (411). Galipeau maintains that "if one accepts ... that the most effective groups are those that 'adapt' to a specific set of policy-making institutions, then many social movements must be considered failures" (413). Scholarship by Susan Phillips on movement organizations and their networks offers conclusions consistent with those of Galipeau. Phillips notes how movements are understood as representing "new" themes of post-modern and post-materialist values instilled in participants drawn primarily from the new middle class who advocate a self-reflexive critique of reason and rationality and retain a suspicion of both state and market institutions (1992: 257). Her examination of movements' unequal representation in the policy process prompts the observation that protest or the "micro-mobilization" of individuals within "state, business or other institutions ... who can bring identity politics into these existing institutions" may be one of the few viable options for movement actors (271).

2.5 Women's Movements and Movement Theory

Despite the many theoretical analyses devoted to movements, certain "islands of theory" from the literature potentially impede theorization of women's movements. Most fundamentally, the identification of movements as "social" rather than "political" casts activism in an apolitical light that, in the case of women's activism, has provided justification for categorizing feminist goals as somewhat subsidiary to the demands of "real" political

actors. Doug McAdam (1988) insists that the definition of movements originating in civil society as "social" seriously undermines their political role and is damaging for women's movements in particular given women's historic exclusion from conventional politics. This de-politicization is especially inappropriate when applied to women's activism since movements are the site of most of women's political activity (Lovenduski 1986; Vickers, Rankin and Appelle 1993; Nelson and Chowdhury 1994). The "post-materialist" motivation attributed to movement participants by some commentators (Inglehart 1990) likewise fails to recognize that, particularly for some elements of the women's movements, activism by women from other than middle-class backgrounds has been crucial for them to secure basic material needs (Leys and Mendell 1992: 14).²⁴

Lorna Weir (1993) exposes several limitations in movement theory that can obfuscate analysis of women's movements. Weir argues convincingly that NSM theorists are guilty of constructing existing popular movements as "new" and, therefore risk causing "severe interpretive problems" that "seriously underestimate the complexity of social movement history" (1993: 74). Weir postulates that ignoring the continuities of movement history, undermines movements such as feminism which "make legitimacy claims precisely on the basis of [its] historical continuity" (75). Jill Vickers (1988) observes that theoretical explanations of women's movements in Canada have been stunted by such distortions of feminist history in Canada.²⁵ Inaccurate observations deny women knowledge of the strategies and successes of earlier waves of feminist activism. The sustained activity of key organizations of women's movements in Canada, in some cases for more than a century, challenges analyses that assume the eventual demise and or/absorption into the state of extra-parliamentary political activity on the

part of women's movements.²⁶ Weir's work highlights the theoretical problems that accrue from ahistorical movement research and analyses that lump together the experiences of all movements.

Weir's dissatisfaction with NSM theory extends further to what she sees as the perpetuation of a theoretical "false antithesis" that characterizes contemporary Canadian movements such as feminism, gay and ecological politics as "in the main characterized by a culturalist, lifestyle politics centred on civil society in abstraction from engagement with the state and economic demands" (1993: 87). Weir takes issue with claims such as those by Magnusson and Walker (1988) that movements and movement theorists alike must abandon the state as a focal point. As Weir's examination argues effectively, their position is not easily reconciled with the reality of feminist activism. As this thesis will show, she is correct in noting that for women, the impact of the state as an organizer and disorganizer of both identities and interests is complex and profound.²⁷ Because women's relationships to the state at all levels encompasses a wide range of roles as citizens, consumers, clients, employees and claimants in the arena of public policy, examining the place of women's movements vis-à-vis the state is an ongoing, crucial theoretical task. Sustained attention to the role of the state in relation to women's movements is necessary, therefore, to understand how sex/gender assumes political meaning across space and time and to map the articulation of power relations in a given social formation. As Pringle and Watson note in their illuminating discussion of women and the post-structuralist state, theorization and empirical study of women's relationship to states must continue in order to balance some postmodern analyses that "treat the women's movement merely as one amongst many new social movements which can be recruited to the project of 'radical democracy'" (1992: 54).²⁸

Another problematic tool that has been adopted from the lexicon of movement theory to explain women's movements is the concept of a "political opportunity structure" (POS) (Tarrow 1983). The concept looks to the degree of openness of formal political structures, the degree of stability or instability of political alignments and the availability of potential alliance partners in order to anchor analyses which focus on accounting for movement variations, particularly differences in patterns of mobilization, strategies employed and impacts (Kriesi 1995).²⁹ Herbert Kitschelt argues that the political opportunity structure is particularly useful as an explanatory tool in comparative movement research:

[C]areful comparison among them [political opportunity structures] can explain a good deal about the variations among social movements with similar demands in different settings ... Comparison can show that political opportunity structures influence the choice of protest strategies and the impact of social movements on their environments (1986: 58).

Perhaps the most comprehensive application of this theoretical approach to the study of women's movements to date is Joyce Gelb's assessment of feminism in Great Britain, the United States and Sweden.³⁰ Gelb's comparison highlights how "movement structure and systemic differences have affected and constrained opportunities for movement impact within each nation" (1989: 2). She focuses on "the sociopolitical context in which each movement operates ... the organization and strategies utilized by each movement and ... the impact of each movement on the political process, attitudes and public policy"(4). Gelb casts her analytic net widely, comparing the significance of parties, pressure groups, the bureaucracy and the nature of state power, the role of the judiciary, processes of socioeconomic change, and the constitutional cultural settings.

While Gelb's study does employ a systematic comparative approach, her reliance on a POS model leads her to the debatable conclusion that the position of U.S. women is more desirable than that of Swedish women because of the multiple points of access to the state that the U.S. movement may exploit. Because her framework does not compare state outputs, her comparison yields controversial conclusions. Nevertheless, examinations organized around a political opportunity structure model have generated central insights into differences in feminist organizing across time and, most importantly for this thesis, reintroduces attention to matters of context within movement analyses. Sylvia Bashevkin's (1994) comparison of the different experiences of the Canadian, U.S. and British women's movements under neo-conservative governments illustrates the extent to which ideological climates determine the nature of political opportunity structures.

Despite their usefulness in movement analysis and their widespread application in comparisons of feminist activism, however, explanations reliant on political opportunity structure analysis must acknowledge that not all women have access to political systems and, further, not all women have the same access to political structures. In other words, the political opportunity structure approach reveals little about the actors involved in the movement activity. Discussion of cleavages within women's movements (such as current crises around the representation of minority women's views) that fundamentally impact organizing strategies and structures are difficult to capture in POS-driven analysis. Theorization of how women within a single political system are differently located vis-à-vis political opportunity structures because of their geographic location, race, class, able-bodiedness or sexual orientation may also be limited in examinations that concentrate on delineating the political opportunity structure (West and Blumberg 1990b).

As Jenson has explained, “the configuration of the political opportunity structure cannot be grasped without first inquiring about who the actors are” (1993: 337, emphasis in original). As I argue in this thesis, inquiring about who the movements actors are must include consideration also of their geographic, political and social location.

Political opportunity structure analyses also may underestimate the potential elasticity of those structures. Jenson cautions movement scholars not to “treat the political structure and the environment as fixed entities into which social movements enter” (1993: 340, emphasis in original). She urges abandoning analyses that “treat the spectrum of social movement interests and identities as unidirectional with the causal arrow moving directly out of the political opportunity structure” (353). Finally, a focus on the interaction between movements and the political opportunity structure in the case of women’s movements potentially discounts those elements of feminist movements that are explicitly anti-state (such as radical feminism) and resist engagement with political opportunity structures. Taylor and Rupp conclude that the overall androcentricity of traditional approaches to movements demonstrates the pressing need to engage in studies of feminist activism in order to critique conventional theories and construct nonsexist movement theory (1991: 122).

To address such limitations, Chowdhury, Nelson, Johnson and O’Loughlin suggest rehabilitating the “political opportunity structure” approach through usage of a concept they term contingent political agency. They define contingent political agency in the following manner:

[W]ithin a social setting, the political activities of individuals of various social identities are shaped but not determined by complex political opportunity structures, themselves shaped by the organization of state and society as well as the actions of individuals and groups as

they constitute these institutions ... Each of the components of this definition--social identities, political activities, and opportunity structures--is influenced by the specificity of social arrangements and the historical moment (1994: 35, emphasis added).

This more dynamic formulation captures the important point that women's movements are subject to structural constraints but simultaneously are composed of actors who are defining these same structures. Their analysis, however, remains focused squarely on the nation-state and, therefore, can illuminate little about the character of feminist organizing at a sub-state level or, once again, the range of movement activity that is not state-centric.

2.6 Conclusion: Comparing Women's Movements in Women-Centred Ways

The preceding discussion illustrates that the construction of a framework capable of comparing women's movements and examining the impact of divergent structural and cultural contexts in which they pursue their agendas is a complex task in which we must choose selectively from among the theoretical tools available in women and politics and movement theory. As I have shown, the study of women's movements has been inhibited at a fundamental level by the legacy of western political theory's dismissal of women's politics as apolitical. When women's political lives are measured in conventional political science terms, too frequently the analysis assumes the form of "barriers research" in which women's integration into "normal politics" remains an implicit goal (Vickers 1989). Similarly, within movement theory, the specificities of women's movements' organizational and strategic logic have been dealt with using theoretical models that may impede our assessment. Additionally, the overall paucity of comparative

movement research has curtailed the construction of appropriate comparative movement frameworks.

A women-centred model for comparative women's movement research may take as its starting point Birte Siim's rejection of politics as defined narrowly as 'power from above' (1988: 176). Siim argues that "analyses of women's relation to ... power from below, focusing either on women's activities in social movements or on women's political interests and values, would no doubt give a more positive picture of women's relation to politics" (176). If we accept Siim's claim that women's political lives "from below" must be theorized as part of the spectrum of women's political involvements and not necessarily as a precursor to women's inevitable participation or integration into conventional politics, we can launch the task of understanding women's movements "on their own ground." This will allow feminist political scientists to liberate our theoretical models from the modernization-inspired "logic of linearity, development and progress" (Mohanty 1992: 87) that characterizes many of our existing approaches to women's political lives and instead acknowledge and analyze more effectively the temporality and spatiality of women's struggles for equality.

In the case of women's movements, the politics of sex/gender systems, as they have either excluded or marginalized women's involvement, must also inform feminist movement analysis. Furthermore, comparing women's movements in an integrative manner requires vigilance in examining both those individuals and groups targetting women's liberation and those operating within traditional policy-making structures.³¹ A comprehensive mapping of women's movements involves acknowledging the different strategies that flow from these two positions; but, particularly in the case of subnational comparisons, the creative tension between these approaches and

the extent to which they may overlap both at an organizational and individual level must be recognized.

It is useful also to reiterate Jenson's understanding of movements as capable of making opportunities and having choices, "in part by framing codes of meaning, promoting ideological packages, and creating new models of collective action" albeit within "particular structural and institutional contexts, traversed by relations of power" (1993: 339, 338). Because of the distinctive nature of women's historic and contemporary relationships to the state (Andrew 1984; Showstack Sassoon 1987), the study of women's movements necessitates careful attention as to how, when and why the state intervenes to support or obstruct women's activism in different contexts at different times (West and Blumberg 1990b: 10). But Jenson's insights point us also to the pressing need to challenge the usual direction of the "causal arrow" in movement analyses that invests the state with the ability to construct, direct and manipulate movements while minimizing the agency of movement actors to choose their own course of action and influence their political environments. Integral to any examination of women's movements, therefore, is the charting of the experience of women as both shaping and shaped by their specific structural and cultural contexts at particular historical moments.

Jenson posits that movements pursue both "the representation of interests via state institutions as well as those of civil society and the constitution of the identities of the represented, through political mobilization and policy innovation" (1993: 350). My framework for studying women's movements comparatively, accepts this observation of the dual activities of movements and focuses on investigating how feminists pursue, or choose not to pursue, these two strands of movement politics. More

specifically, the study that follows is organized around two poles. First, I compare how subnational women's movements in Canada pursue their political projects through institutions of the state, or what I describe as their "representational projects vis-à-vis the state." This discussion incorporates also a consideration of the extent to which women's movements at the subnational level have questioned or challenged the possibility and desirability of adequate representation through the state altogether. Second, I compare how these same movements reconcile internal cleavages around issues related to new collective identities or what I term their "representational projects of diversity." Here the analysis identifies how identity politics are framed differently across space with specific reference to organizing around cleavages of race and sexual orientation. These two sets of comparisons will then be used to generate hypotheses capable of accounting for divergences among women's movements at the subnational level. The approach employed throughout will be movement-centred, comparing in particular how the issues, structures and strategies of subnational women's movements vary across space.

In the following chapter, I outline my thesis that not only is the temporal location of women's movements pivotal in accounting for their issues, structures and strategies, but that the spatial location--geographically, politically and socially defined--of movements and their participants must also be integrated into such a comparative study. I argue, therefore, that an essential element of comparing women's movements absent from much contemporary scholarship is the contextualization of both differently located women's movements and well as differently located women within similarly situated movements. To begin this task, I turn next to a discussion of the impact of space, place and territorial politics on feminism in Canada.

2.7 Notes to Chapter Two

¹ Margolis posits that the following hypotheses might be considered in cross-national comparisons of women's movements: "(1) The greater the internal nationalism and insularity of a country, the smaller will be the effect of outside influences; (2) the greater the internal nationalism and insularity of a country, the greater the danger that outside influences, especially those emanating from former colonizer nations, will be incorporated into attacks against the women's movement; and (3) the greater the interest among the national leadership in expanding participation in international economic and social structures, the greater the chances of positive response to outside influences, especially when these come from extranational sources such as the United Nations" (1993: 385).

² Margolis explains that Katzenstein and Mueller (1987) look to factors such as overall feminist consciousness, opportunities to influence policy through political parties and the character of the state to account for differences among women's movements while Bouchier (1984) argues that movements thrive in political cultures exhibiting "egalitarian and liberal commitments" (1993: 386).

³ Feminist treatments of the sexism of western political philosophy include: Okin (1979); Clark and Lange (1979); Elshtain (1981); Saxonhouse (1985); Shanley & Pateman (1991) and Coole (1993). On the subject of the absence of women as practitioners of political science and the inattention of the discipline to women's politics, consult Vickers (forthcoming), Lovenduski (1982), Black (1989) and Nelson (1989).

⁴ For a discussion of the concept of "cognitive communities" see Vickers (1993b: 140). Vickers adapts this concept from Douglas (1986).

⁵ For more detailed discussions of the ways in which the norms of political science do not easily allow for theorization of women's politics and sex / gender systems, see Siltanen and Stanworth (1984); Vickers (1993b) and Hopkins (1993). Evidence that political science remains resistant to the notion that women and men have different relationships to politics is offered by Burt (1995). Burt documents how the academic journal *Canadian Public Policy* published only 6 articles (out of a total of 509) between 1975 and 1993 on "women's issues" narrowly defined as child care, affirmative action, male violence or prostitution (1995: 361). Burt notes also that policies which could impact differently on women than on men were examined without a gender analysis.

⁶ Other consequences of women's exclusion from political science research are discussed by Bourque and Grossholtz (1974) and Lovenduski (1982).

⁷ McCormack theorizes about women's unique relationship to politics and political action and proposes that women's responses to politics are "moral rather than pragmatic, status-oriented rather than class-oriented [and] concerned with continuity rather than change" (1975: 26). McCormack attributes these differences to "political socialization, political opportunity structures and the way in which the media of communication define each of them" (1975: 25). She pinpoints the primary difference between women and men's political culture as rooted in their contrasting attitudes towards power (26). Sandra Burt argues that gender-based differences exist in terms of perceptions of the ideal citizen in a democracy. Burt notes that the women surveyed in her research believed a reciprocal relationship should exist between the

represented and the representative while this emphasis on the "obligations of both citizens and elected officials did not emerge in men's responses" (1986: 77).

⁸ My usage of "sex/gender" rather than the more common "gender" follows from Vickers (1994b) who argues for the development of a theory of politics that does not marginalize reproduction. Vickers makes a convincing case for theorizing sex/gender on the grounds that the "greatest conflicts, both within feminism and in conventional politics, revolve around issues of reproductive sex ... [which] should alert us to the need to retain it firmly within our theoretical field of vision" (184).

⁹ Some representative works that employ a "normal integration model" include Sandra Baxter and Marjorie Lansing (1980); Marianne Githens and Jewel L. Prestage (1977); Cynthia Epstein and Rose Coser (1981) and Virginia Sapiro (1983).

¹⁰ For a fascinating discussion of the breadth of perspectives and methodological approaches currently under debate among comparative politics practitioners, consult Kohli et. al (1995).

¹¹ For a more detailed discussion of the value of comparative studies for social movement research, see Klandermans and Tarrow (1988), particularly pp. 14-17.

¹² Kitchelt's (1986) own comparative treatment of anti-nuclear movements demonstrates how the political context of the country in which movements act influence their impact and represents an important contribution to comparative movement literature.

¹³ Other studies in this genre include Brodie(1985) and Carol Christy (1987). Another important research trajectory that has developed out of a women and elite politics framework considers women's participation in party politics. See, for example, Sylvia Bashevkin (1993) and Joni Lovenduski and Pippa Norris (1993). For a more complete summary of this trajectory of women and politics, see Githens, Lovenduski and Norris (1994: ix-x).

¹⁴ The notion of a "politics of everyday life" originates with Vicky Randall (1987). Vickers (1987) employs the phrase the "politics of getting things done" to capture similarly the activism of women at the local and community level.

¹⁵ Other comparative treatments of women and politics that span consideration of elite and non-elite politics include Haavio-Mannila (1985) and Mueller (1988).

¹⁶ See Githens et. al. (1994 : xii and xiii) for a fuller explanation of this research trajectory. Bystyzienski (1992) for example, includes assessments of the impact of a women's culture on women's political engagement, updates on aspects of feminist organizing in selected industrialized and developing countries, and deepens our knowledge of women's participation in national liberation and development movements, but does not attempt cross-national or intra-national comparison. Such collections employ expanded definition of politics as "includ[ing] people's everyday experiences of oppressive conditions, the recognition of the injustice of power differences, and the many and varied attempts to change power relationships at all societal levels" (1992: 4).

¹⁷ Ironically, as feminist political science debates theoretical and methodological questions concerning the nature of comparison, the case for even examining women's relationships to politics "on its own ground" continues to be made. In their comparison of gender and local political interest, Hayes and Bean assert that "women's interest in 'politics' does not reflect

the same range of activities and issues as that of men (1993: 681). They write that research is required which "reflects the realities and concerns of women's lives" and "a radical reworking of the conventional territory of political analysis to take into account ... the range of concerns and the diversity of women's (as well as men's) political experiences" (682). Their call for a renovated methodology that more accurately captures women's political engagement echoes observations voiced by feminist political scientists for over twenty years and evidences the extent to which "gender silences" within the discipline still persist.

¹⁸ This distinction between equality-seeking and quality-of-life movements appears in Vickers (1988). Vickers et. al. (1993) distinguish between equality-seeking movements such as women, disability, ethnic minorities, and gay and lesbian movements; quality-of-life movements such as peace and environmental movements and reactionary movements which arose in response to the first two categories and are motivated by nostalgia for an idealized past.

¹⁹ The description of these movements as "new" is not a temporal reference but rather relates to their membership, ideological themes and their position in relation to traditional political parties. See Claus Offe (1990) for a discussion of the issue of "newness" as it applies to contemporary social movements. My own limited usage of "new" to describe contemporary movement politics is influenced by Weir's (1993) challenge to what she identifies in many scholarly analyses as the minimizing and ignoring of movement histories prior to World War II. She argues that defining contemporary movements as "new" can lead to "severe interpretive problems since the organizational form of most contemporary Western social movements is first found in the late eighteenth/early nineteenth centuries" (1993: 74). Weir attributes this occurrence to a tendency among NSM theorists to not be overly concerned about providing detailed studies of social movements, either past or present (75). On this subject, see also Kenneth Tucker (1991) and Paul D'Anieri, Claire Ernst and Elizabeth Kier (1990).

²⁰ This literature tends to omit neo-fascist, right-wing and status quo movements from its analysis.

²¹ The most comprehensive expression of the rational choice perspective is found in Olson (1965). It is interesting to note that despite the critiques of rational choice theory, it has re-surfaced recently as a theoretical framework for examining movements. See, for example, Dennis Chong (1991).

²² Other discussions of resource mobilization theory appear in Morris and Mueller (1992). In this collection, see in particular articles by Myra Marx Ferree and Mayer N. Zald.

²³ Adams notes that much movement discourse rests on the experience of the German Green Party and European peace and anti-nuclear movements. He points to other collections such as Dalton and Kuechler (1990) which pay "lip-service" to women's movements but "with very little direct analysis of feminist theories, issues, or struggles" (1993: 322).

²⁴ Accounts of organizing mounted by people in poverty, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities frequently challenge the post-materialist explanations of movement participation as a middle-class phenomenon. See, for example, Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward (1977), Linda Carty (1993), Diane Driedger (1989) and Fraser Valentine (1996).

²⁵ For example, in their study of movements, Clark, Grayson and Grayson (1975) insist that

An important point to keep in mind when assessing the current women's 'movement' is that it really has no historical connection with the women's suffrage movement at the turn of the century. The two are separated by a half century of inactivity on the part of women, with a few outstanding exceptions (as quoted in Vickers 1988: 2-3).

²⁶ On the sustained activity of feminist movements in Canada throughout the century, see Kealey and Sangster (1989) and Griffiths (1993).

²⁷ The complexity of the multiple relationships that exist between women and the state has inspired a rich feminist literature. See, for example, Anne Showstack Sassoon (1987) and Katzenstein and Skjeie (1987). For Canadian analyses, consult Andrew (1984) and Findlay and Randall (1988).

²⁸ Pringle and Watson acknowledge how postmodern treatments of movements which treat gender as "discursively constructed rather than objectively or structurally given" risk trivializing gender as little more than a "subject position within a discourse" (1992: 52).

²⁹ In later formulations of the concept, Tarrow adds the element of the degree of political conflicts within and among elites as a further dimension of the political opportunity structure (Kriesi 1995: 167-168).

³⁰ For additional applications of the POS approach, consult Leclerc (1993), Eisenstein (1991), Katzenstein and Mueller (1987) and Bouchier (1983). Leclerc's comparison of the U.S. and Canadian women's movements, for example, employs a political opportunity framework to account for the adoption of an equality clause in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the failure of the Equal Rights Amendment in the United States. An excellent Canadian application of the POS approach can be found in Bashevkin (1994).

³¹ Gelb (1989) refers to these two trajectories as the "wings" of feminism while Adamson, Briskin and McPhail (1988) distinguish between grassroots and institutionalized feminism. The weakness of this differentiation is that it fails to note that clear distinctions cannot be made between these two tendencies and that often, particularly at a subnational or local level, individual women and women's groups may be active simultaneously in both "liberation" and "equal rights" initiatives.

CHAPTER THREE

Space, Place, Politics and Women's Movements in Canada

3.1 Introduction

In one of the few intra-state comparisons of feminist organizing, Judith Hellman (1987) investigates how the social and political traditions of particular places influence the development of feminist practice through a comparison of the women's movement in five Italian cities. Working from the hypothesis that the ideology and practice of feminism in particular contexts is shaped by the traditions and political environment of the left peculiar to the city in which it emerges, Hellman's research indicates that location can be important in a number of respects, including the definition of issues, the structure of organizations and the tactics employed. This groundbreaking study concludes further that the impact of movement activity can vary substantially from one setting to another, as can women's own definitions and evaluations of their success.

In this chapter, I outline my approach to assessing the significance of space and place as key variables through which to identify and compare diversity within feminism in Canada. With Hellman, I argue that a framework for comparing feminist activism at the subnational level must incorporate attention to differences grounded in space and place. Such an analytic approach which treats both spatial and jurisdictional differences represents an important departure from contemporary treatments of feminist activism in Canada that tend to generalize women's experiences as differentiated by identity but not by location.

The chapter begins with a review of social theory's renewed attention to matters of space and place and suggests how theoretical insights from political, radical and feminist geography can be useful in a comparative political analysis of women's movements. I survey conventional applications of space and place in Canadian political science and, more specifically, in Canadian scholarship on movement politics. The treatment of spatial issues within feminism is traced and an assessment of the extent to which Canadian feminist scholarship has incorporated spatial analysis into the study of women's movements is advanced. I also account for the emphasis on federal politics in feminism outside francophone Québec. Here I posit that while Canadian women have been influenced profoundly by a spatially-organized political system in which territorial interests are prioritized, the practice of Canadian federalism has translated into a lack of attention to feminist activism at the subnational level, despite the fact that provincial and territorial governments wield significant power over women's lives.

In the second half of the chapter, I survey the post-1970s provincial and territorial political environments in which women's activism occurred. Although this thesis explores the interplay between the environment in which movements act and the choices made by women's movements based on their experiences and opportunities within particular places, it is necessary first to "locate" the political settings in which the movements under study pursue their agendas. This final section offers an overview of contemporary politics in each context and serves as an introduction to my empirical study of women's movements and their representational projects.

3.2 Theorizing Space, Place and Politics¹

Discussing the relevance of space and place for movement politics is to return to one of political science's fundamental categories of analysis. As Munroe Eagles reminds us, identification of the geographic size and the composition of political units as important determinants of the viability of democracy formed an integral part of Aristotle's conceptualization of the 'master science' of politics (1990: 286). Within modern political science, the tainted legacy of *geopolitik* meant that the subfield of political geography fell into serious disrepute following the World Wars (Dalby 1991). In tracing the marginalization of place within social theory, Agnew and Duncan cite the influence of modernization literature as responsible also for the abandonment of place-sensitive analyses and the tendency to ignore scales other than the nation-state in social science analysis (1989: 2). Agnew posits that the general premise of modern social science that "time conquers space" and that "differences between places become less and less relevant to social life" contributed to the shift away from theorization of the relevance of space and place in explaining social phenomena (1987: ix).²

In the past fifteen years, however, interest among social theorists from a wide range of disciplines in reintegrating discussions of spatial relations beyond explanations reliant on geographic determinism has been rekindled by the work of, among others, Giddens (1981), Soja (1989) and Foucault (1980, 1986), all of whom attach theoretical relevance to "the embeddedness of social relations in space-time contexts rather than their mutual exclusivity or singular determinism" (Agnew 1987: 230).³ Agnew and Duncan attribute the return of interest in matters of space in part to what they term the "crisis of the modern territorial state and its legitimating myths" (1989a: 2) which has compromised the power of the state under the weight of globalization.

Jenson submits that contemporary social theory's preoccupation with matters of identities, ideas and interest formation signals "a new and important focus on the variation of ideas and political practices in space and in time" (1991: 46, emphasis added).

The essence of this shift within social theory, as Edward Soja so eloquently describes it, is to escape the "stranglehold of a still addictive historicism" (1989: 12) that dismissed space as "fixed, dead [and] undialectical" with time seen as "richness, life, dialectic. [and] the revealing context for critical social theorization" (1989: 11).⁴ Building on the work of Marxist geographer Henri Lefebvre, Soja's own theorization of spatiality involves

a practical theoretical consciousness that sees the lifeworld of being creatively located not only in the making of history but also in the construction of human geographies, the social production of space and the restless formation and reformation of geographical landscapes (1989: 11).

Here, the theorization of space as socially produced (what Soja terms 'spatiality') transcends traditional bifurcated views of space as either physical or cognitive (Soja 1985: 92-93).⁵ Instead, both are deemed crucial as they constantly interact.

One application of spatial analysis to political science can be found in the work of John Agnew who appeals for a reconsideration of "the geographical rootedness of political life" (1987: 1). Agnew interprets the relationship between place and politics in the following manner:

To insist on the continuing importance of place, therefore, is not to deny that processes beyond the locality have become important determinants of what happens in place. But it is still in places that lives are lived, economic and symbolic interests are defined, information from local and extra-local sources is interpreted and takes on meaning, and political discussions are carried on (1987: 2).

Integral to his theoretical perspective, however, is his assertion that the reintroduction of place into the conceptual apparatus of political science does not involve limiting political analysis to structuralist interpretations that look to space or distance as the determining cause of human activity or to “reading permanence into historically constituted and dynamic geographical relationships” (1987: 229). Instead, Agnew envisions explanations of political activity that theorize space and place as providing a link between looking at the “micro-sites” of human activity in which agency can be realized (work, home, school, church, etc.) and the limits imposed by the macro-order of states and economies that restrict, direct, and obscure agency (1987: 230).

To capture these dynamics, Agnew employs three dimensions of place: locale, the micro-setting in which social relations are constituted on an everyday basis; location, the geographical area encompassing the settings for social interaction as defined by social, economic and political processes operating at a wider scale; and sense of place, what Agnew defines as the “structure of feeling” (1987: 28) engendered by living within a particular place. Agnew suggests that these three aspects have been studied by social scientists, but have “been viewed as mutually incompatible or [as] competing definitions of place” (1989b: 2). Simultaneously utilizing these three elements of place is crucial, Agnew believes, because locale cannot be understood apart from the objective macro-order of location and the subjective territorial identity of sense of place.

Although this theoretical turn towards a focus on the particularities of space and place provides the global inspiration for this thesis, it is, more specifically, the work of feminist geographers who explore the relationship between spatial and gender relations which furnishes insights particularly applicable to a comparative political analysis of women’s movements. At the

most general level, explication of the role of space in constructing sex /gender relations does, in fact, lie at the core of feminist theory. The marginalization and muting of women's experiences as a consequence of the symbolic as well as material division of human experience into public and private spheres has fuelled feminism's preoccupation with the "patriarchal imaginative geography which designates spaces either as public, masculine, and political or as private, feminine and domestic" (Rose 1990: 395). Feminism's project of bringing to light women's activities within private "space" has long been captured in the feminist slogan "the personal is the political." Because 'the personal' usually corresponds with the 'locale' of community and family life, feminist theory has sought to politicize the space and place of women's private lives and the privatized locale of community politics in order to end women's exclusion from public sphere space.⁶

Feminist geographers today marvel at the recent revival of geographical thinking within feminist writing and the now commonplace usage of space, place and location, employed both metaphorically and materially, as vehicles for rethinking questions of subjectivity, difference and political community (Pratt and Hanson 1994). Pratt and Hanson point, for example, to the extent to which feminists now routinely "situate themselves at the intersection of various power and social relations by a very careful reading of their own social location" (1994: 7) in order to critically examine their own epistemological base. Scholars such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty, whose work concentrates on the experience of women in non-western contexts, champion the development of a "politics of location" and recommend study of how geographic as well as social location "forces and enables specific modes of reading and knowing the dominant" (1992: 89).

Linda McDowell's survey of feminist geographical scholarship notes that

the geography of gender has variously involved the study of the extent of spatial variations in gender relations and in women's position across the globe [and] the distinctiveness of the relations and of the social construction of gendered identities in particular milieux or places (1993: 159).⁷

Integral to this literature is a prioritization of a research agenda that seeks "an understanding of the sites at which patriarchal practices are enacted" and "requires not only that context be treated as a background, but also that the siting and situating of such practices recognize the constitutive role of place itself as inseparable from social outcomes" (Kobayashi et al. 1994: xxix).

The contributions of feminist geographer Doreen Massey are particularly relevant for constructing a spatially-sensitive analysis of feminist activism. Massey argues that the massive spatial restructuring, both intranational and international, that characterized global events of the 1980s makes it clear that not only is space socially constructed but that "society is necessarily constructed spatially, and that fact--the spatial organization of society--makes a difference to how it works" (Massey 1992: 70, emphasis added). Massey regards this insight as crucial in countering what she identifies as an implicit depoliticization of the realm of the spatial in the writings of postmodernists like Laclau (1990) and Jameson (1991), despite their participation in the resuscitation of spatial analysis.⁸ Because Massey sees this literature as "depriv[ing] the spatial of any meaningful politics" (70), she proposes a dialectic approach to overcome the dualism inherent in the 'space versus time' debates, stressing instead the inseparability of the two and

arguing that the spatial is integral to the production of history, and thus open to the possibility of politics (1992: 84).⁹

Massey's interest in the renewed attention to issues of space and spatiality springs also from her frustration with the rejection of space and geographical differentiation that marked the 1970s and provoked what she sees as a "down-playing of the importance of the particularity [and] the individuality of places" (Massey 1985: 9). She advocates a renewed attention to the specificity of place because, as she simply states, "most people still live their lives locally [and] their consciousness is formed in a distinct geographical place" (1984; as quoted by Agnew 1987: 36).¹⁰

Parallelling the intellectual developments evidenced in other disciplines, feminist geographers have moved beyond an initial focus on the spatial constitution of social relationships and activities to incorporate issues of representation and the "significance of place and locality in gendered identity" (McDowell 1993: 162).¹¹ Pratt and Hanson insist that the study of the "construction of feminine identities in particular places counteract[s] the current tendency within feminism to rigidify differences among women" (1994: 5). They judge the tools of geographical analysis to be crucial to the political project of building alliances across women's multiple axes of differences:

A careful positioning in place would seem to be a prerequisite for the task of disentangling our shared complicities and struggles as well as our differences. An overvaluation of fluidity as a subject position may lead away from a careful consideration of the processes through which identities are created and fixed in place (1994: 9, emphasis in the original).

Some further insights into how best to re-introduce analysis of the intersections of spatial and temporal locations within contemporary feminist

scholarship are provided in the work of Canadian geographer Elspeth Probyn. Probyn argues similarly that feminist analysis must probe the "situatedness of any struggle" (1990: 187) in order to theorize how women are located not only by gender, class and race but also by place and event. In her discussion of tensions between feminism and postmodernism, Probyn acknowledges that "[a]gain and again we have heard (and also uttered) the need for specificity, as yet another postmodernist publication ends with a cry for the 'local'" (1990: 177). Linda Nicholson explains that feminists such as Nancy Hartsock (1990) and Susan Bordo (1990) share Probyn's rejecting of the postmodern "ideal of endless difference" that usually accompanies interest in 'the local' out of a shared concern that such theorizing may precipitate within feminism an "individualist politics [and] ... an ontology of abstract individualism" (Nicholson 1990: 8). Rather, Probyn's approach to rethinking issues of spatial and temporal location involves deconstructing how women negotiate their locales¹² and work to make sense of and articulate their contexts. She advises feminist scholars to remember that women "are never simply fixed within locale...[they] live within patriarchy but at different levels and in different ways the struggle to rearticulate locale continues" (1990: 182). To illustrate her position that attention to locales and their construction must form an integral part of feminist analysis, Probyn points to the overturning of Canada's abortion law in 1988. She explains how this event was the culmination of a series of local protests that adopted different tactics according to the specificities encountered in individual locales, despite the fact that abortion fell under federal jurisdiction.¹³

I argue that an application of these various reconceptualizations of space and place has much to offer analyses of feminist activism. My comparison of women's movements at the subnational level is an attempt to

re-insert into a comparative political analysis of women's movements questions of the relevance of where movement politics occurs. Such an approach can illuminate the impact of space and place on how women's movements prioritize their issues, choose their organizational vehicles, and undertake strategic action. To this end, the insights of feminist geography and Agnew's triad of locale, location and sense of place offers insights useful for guiding such an examination. By expanding our analyses of women's movements to consider not only the geographical spaces in which women's activism is pursued, but also the social, economic and political processes that shape the locations of movement actors within their environments, women's movements can be more fully contextualized and compared. In the following section, I argue that applying this type of spatially-sensitive analysis to the study of women's movements is consistent with Canadian intellectual traditions. Here I trace the role of space and place in Canadian politics and review the employment of space and place as well-established analytic tools of Canadian political science.

3.3 Space, Place and Canadian Politics

Observers of Canadian society have long accepted the enduring importance of space and place as almost axiomatic features of the country's political, economic and social relations. In a compelling discussion of post-colonial articulations of space, Richard A. Cavell asserts that "space is inarguably the central category of [Canadian] intellectual discourse" (1994: 75).¹⁴ Surveying the writings of scholars such as Inris, Frye, McLuhan and Gould, Cavell points to a common preoccupation with issues of space, but also observes a shared "tendency to render space as an abstraction which excludes the social dimension" (1994: 78). Cavell's argument is that Canadian

intellectual history is distinguished by a concentration on space without a corresponding interest in place; that is, he determines that much of Canadian intellectual thought treats the imprint of geography and the environment on the Canadian experience without equal consideration of the impact of society on physical space.¹⁵ For Cavell, the pressing project for postmodernism in Canada is the reintroduction of historical and regional specificities into our intellectual discourse. The aim is not to displace our focus on space, but rather to sculpt theorizations of space that localize discourse and counter the way in which "space has traditionally been articulated as a totalizing notion which seeks to express universals and, in doing so, eliminates context" (1994: 75).

This focus on the articulation of space has influenced profoundly many strains of Canadian scholarship. In Canadian historiography, for example, the construction of nation-building theses by Creighton (1956) and Careless (1954) around their interpretations of the "pull" of the physical environment and the centrifugal force of a diverse landscape shaped the writing of Canadian history for more than a generation.¹⁶ Creighton (1956), in fact, argued explicitly that Canada emerged not in spite of its geography but because of it. Literary scholar Northrop Frye's famous observation that "Canada, with four million square miles and only four centuries of documented history, has naturally been a country more preoccupied with space than with time, with environment rather than tradition" (1991: 123) encapsulates the environmental determinism that has permeated much of post-Confederation cultural studies.¹⁷ This leitmotif continues in present-day popular culture; journalist Robert Fulford has commented, for example, that "the natural world is at the core of the Canadian consciousness" and "all that Canadians have in common is the physical fact of Canada" (1991: 287).

As Janine Brodie summarizes, "the spatial dimension of Canadian politics overshadows most other social cleavages, such as social class, in our collective political experience" (1990: 3). Federalism entrenches the centrality of space understood as territory or "turf" in Canadian politics with the institutionalization of territorially-organized interests. Indeed, the assignment of jurisdictional responsibility to the subnational states for areas such as education, health administration, social welfare and labour law, in the absence of an adequate fiscal base, has produced decades of acrimonious federal-provincial relations and a legacy of unsuccessful attempts at constitutional reform. An equally enduring theme of Canadian politics has been the quest to accommodate regional representational needs and eradicate regional inequalities in the distribution of economic activity.¹⁸ Brodie notes further that in contradiction to the belief that issues of space decline with modernization, "spatially based conflict in Canada has not disappeared or diminished as the pace of development has accelerated" (1990: 3).

Generally, the tradition of political science in this country reflects a prioritization of matters related to territory and jurisdiction ("dead space" in Foucauldian terms¹⁹) over issues of locale or "sense of place." Dimensions of spatially-based politics are examined most commonly through the lens of regionalism, "an interpretation of politics that prioritizes the condition of the territorial entity rather than relations among groups of people defined in non-territorial terms" (Brodie 1994: 410). This analytic approach to understanding the spatial character of Canadian politics has proven problematic, however, due to the environmental determinism of some theoretical frameworks that lack a temporal component and, therefore, are vulnerable to the criticism that they "start with geology and end up with politics" (Massey, 1985: 9). Brodie, for example, illustrates how some social

scientists have confined their treatment of regional differences to static analyses that do little more than document regional political cultures and disparities in economic opportunities (1990: 7), often falsely implying that regionalism is a “universal political expression” (1994: 411). Brodie argues that the weakness in such studies is that they “begin with predefined geographic units and measure differences in the location of attitudes or things” and have “used the spatial distributions of attitudes and behaviour for evidence of regional political culture” (1990: 7, emphasis in the original). Alternatively, Brodie calls for a more relational approach that regards regionalism as a political creation of the state and its economic policies rather than as a ‘natural phenomenon’ (1990: 15). What distinguishes her approach from feminist geographers such as Massey, however, is that Brodie limits her analysis to examining the social construction of space and rejects the idea that the spatial construction of society is equally important to understand.

The tradition of Canadian scholarship on movement politics displays a similar legacy in its attention to spatial issues. William Carroll isolates the distinguishing feature of Canadian movement literature as its enduring “important sense of place” that has fostered an “emphasis upon constructing idiographic accounts rather than nomothetic explanations” of movements while “eschew[ing] the universalizing pretension of mainstream American sociology” (1992a: 2, 4).²⁰ Carroll, like Cavell, cites the enduring influence of Innis and others “who saw in Canada a specific social and economic formation that needed to be understood in terms of its particular, historically formed features and context” (1992a: 2). Pointing to the legacy of, among others, S.D. Clark and C. B. Macpherson, Carroll argues that a preoccupation with “grasping specificity” has continued to define Canadian scholarship

despite a shift from situating collective agency in a structural context to a focus on individual agency and strategy (5).²¹

Contemporary movement scholarship in Canada, however, has turned away from earlier spatially-differentiated work cited by Carroll which was devoted to, for example, agrarian protest movements. A comparison of contemporary women's movements undertaken through the lens of space and place, therefore, weaves together the tradition of spatially-sensitive movement analyses in Canadian political sociology with the legacy identified by Cavell of space as a central theme within our indigenous intellectual history. At the same time, such a project can broaden the parameters of spatial analysis within Canadian political science. A review of the treatment of space and place within feminist scholarship reveals further that locationally-sensitive analyses of women's movements also represent a return to questions central to feminist activism in Canada since the nineteenth century.

3.4 Space, Place and Feminism in Canada

Literature on turn-of-the-century feminist mobilization in Canada evidences a thematic attention to space and place consistent with the intellectual traditions noted by Richard Cavell and William Carroll. In fact, much of this scholarship attributes significant importance to issues of context and location on early feminist organizing. Catherine Cleverdon's (1974) summaries of the provincial suffrage campaigns waged by majoritarian women, for example, underscores the varied nature of the enabling and constraining factors that affected the pursuit and attainment of the franchise across provinces.²² Brodie and Vickers (1981) argue that the lack of a coherent,

country-wide campaign for suffrage in Canada stemmed from geographic and linguistic diversity and the impact of a decentralized federal system.

Other studies chronicle the centrality of local projects within early feminist activism. Alison Prentice et al. (1996, 1988), Sandra Burt (1994, 1990), Naomi Black (1993) and Jane Errington (1988) document the myriad of projects undertaken by early feminists, emphasizing their concentration on the suffrage campaign but highlighting also the equally vigorous work on "private sphere" issues. Burt, for example, discusses how first wave 'social feminism' in the western provinces embraced a broad range of concerns requiring action at the community and provincial levels:

Protecting the chastity of young girls, improving working conditions for women, instituting temperance, and obtaining property rights for wives ... suffrage, practical training for girls in the school system, and the protection of children ... public health services and dental clinics ... establishing municipal hospitals, appointing public health nurses, and strengthening child welfare legislation helped to improve the quality of life of both women and men on the prairie (1990: 543).

Valuable organizational histories such as those of the National Council of Women also record Canadian women's historic involvement in local and provincial politics and speak to the extent to which community-based struggles were influenced by the specific contexts in which they occurred (Strong-Boag 1976; Griffiths 1993).

Veronica Strong-Boag (1986) reads "inter-wave" feminists as choosing similarly to occupy particular political spaces, re-directing their energies from public to "private" political questions, thus making "domestic feminism" and the division of labour within the home their primary focus (as quoted in Kealey and Sangster 1989: 3-4).²³ Strong-Boag posits that feminism of the 1920s and 1930s was a "feminism of the workplace, of day-to-day life, a

feminist politics directed to the amelioration of women's situation in the private sphere" and was frequently marked by regional loyalties (1986: 32). In an era of slow communication and limited transportation possibilities, however, women's activism other than at the local, community level was difficult.

Attention to the impact of space and place within post-1960s women's movements both in Canada and throughout the western industrialized world became circumscribed, however, by the popularity of totalizing "meta-narratives" which ignored contextual differences between women and stressed instead the commonality of women's global oppression. Influential 'classics' of feminist thought such as The Second Sex (1948), Sexual Politics (1969), The Feminist Mystique (1963), The Dialectic of Sex (1970), Sisterhood is Powerful (1970) and The Female Eunuch (1971), promoted a "particular notion of universal sisterhood ... predicated on the erasure of the history and effects of contemporary imperialism" that commentators now criticize for assuming that women were a "cross-culturally singular, homogeneous group with the same interests, perspectives and goals and similar experiences" (Mohanty 1992: 78).

Canadian feminism was not immune to these developments.²⁴ Despite the validity of Barrett and Hamilton's observation that "a belief in undivided sisterhood was never very marketable in Canada" (1986: 4), the importation of U.S. radical feminist ideas to Canada (and, in fact, U.S. radical feminists themselves²⁵) during the 1960s helped root the concept of a universal patriarchy within many feminist circles throughout this country. These ideas gained currency in both "English Canada" and francophone Québec,²⁶ and "revitalized the existing traditions of liberal feminism and left feminism ... contributed to the widespread mobilization of young women and

... motivated young women to join groups often established by U.S. émigré feminists" (Vickers et al. 1993: 41).²⁷ With its emphasis on the fundamental nature of sex-based oppression, radical feminism discouraged examination of the ways in which women's oppression and feminist activism varied from place to place.

Over the last decade, the trenchant reaction against the assimilation of women's realities that marked the immediate post-1960s era has altered feminist discourse and politics profoundly both in Canada and elsewhere. Just as there has been a dramatic rejection of "grand theory" in many philosophic circles, feminism too has repudiated the "universalism of humanity," in particular "those most dubious essentialisms of 'woman or 'women'" (A. Phillips 1992: 13). The western, white majoritarian, middle-class, able-bodied, young, heterosexual bias informing much of this literature has been exposed through incisive critiques from women located in non-western settings as well as from marginalized cultural and identity groups throughout the western industrialized world.²⁸ At the end of the twentieth century, the pivotal questions for feminism not just within Canada "concern the construction, examination and most significantly, the institutionalization of difference within feminist discourses" (Mohanty 1992: 74, emphasis in original).

Questions of difference have been central to feminist practice in Canada for many years as francophone and anglophone feminists have struggled to reconcile linguistic, cultural and political differences within organizations such as NAC (Roberts 1988). The current terrain of Canadian feminist discourse, however, is occupied largely by debates that deconstruct the category of "women" to expose the theoretical and experiential divisions within feminist activism and the strategic difficulties which flow from such

cleavages. As I will demonstrate in Chapter Six, scholarship detailing contemporary Canadian feminist practice (Adamson, Briskin and McPhail 1988; Pierson, Cohen, Bourne and Masters 1993; Carty 1993) prioritizes issues of difference, primarily defined in terms of race and class, as feminism's central internal challenge. Crucial as these exciting debates are to incorporating the multiplicity of women's experiences into feminist theory, such a difference-based discourse has significant consequences for feminist practice in Canada. Linda Briskin explains that despite the importance of the 'discovery' of difference, such a concentration often merges problematically with an over-emphasis on experience causing an anti-theory emphasis on personal experience that can individualize difference to such a degree that deep-rooted processes by which experiences are socially constructed are concealed (1989: 25). Within these analyses, for example, an ongoing concern with the relevance of spatial relations, a trajectory of investigation that potentially may uncover new points of divergence (or sites of shared experience fruitful in political mobilization) generally has been abandoned.²⁹ As my empirical evidence demonstrates, however, a complete set of conceptual tools through which to compare women's movements must incorporate the study of how a range of variables such geographic location, regional disparities, political opportunity structures, political culture, jurisdictional conflicts and women's experiences of organizing affect the priorities and strategies of movements in particular contexts.

3.5 Women and the Territorial Politics of Canadian Federalism

Demands within feminism for development of a "politics of difference" is not the only factor responsible for the limited scrutiny of issues of spatial differentiation within the women's movement in Canada.

Indigenous accounts of post-1960 Canadian women's movements mirror trends in international feminist literature that have shifted away from stressing points of commonality among women's experiences. Contemporary women's movements in Canada also have not been subject to spatial analysis due significantly to the impact of Canadian federalism. The predominantly federally-focused nature of "second-wave" feminist activism (Phillips 1990; Wine and Ristock 1991; Black 1992) outside francophone Québec has generated surprisingly little research devoted to explicating how federalism as a political system impacts on women, and, specifically, its differential effects on women across space and place. This has translated into an analytic tendency to treat feminism outside of francophone Québec as a monolithic movement both little influenced by matters of space and place and uninvolved in activism other than that directed towards the federal government. In this section, I survey the impact on feminist organizing of federalism as a political system organized around territory and reiterate the need, particularly in federal contexts, to theorize space and place as part of a comparative analysis.

It is a truism of Canadian politics that many of the issues important to feminists lie within the purview of the federal government's jurisdiction; for example, issues such as abortion, prostitution and pornography, child custody, divorce and citizenship rights remain federal responsibilities in law, although their administration is often a provincial or even municipal responsibility. Such a division of powers does not mean, however, that focusing on the federal state is somehow "natural" for feminists or that women other than Québec francophones transcend their geographic and social locations and are unaffected by (or disinterested in) other orders of government. In fact, one important reason for documenting differences in

feminist organizing across Canada is that women frequently are less mobile in spatial terms than their male counterparts, or, alternatively, may experience geographic relocation as a result of their male partners' employment. Vickers, for example, discusses how "women experience a dependence in physical mobility which makes it harder for them to move themselves and their families to where jobs are located. Consequently, women are more dependent on resource transfers to economically disadvantaged regions and provinces" (1994a: 137). Accepting uncritically that feminist activism other than that of francophone feminists within Québec is necessarily federally-oriented risks ignoring the realities of many women's lives and clouding our understanding of how women's movements are influenced by and respond to their own locations and the political system's institutionalization of spatial-organized politics. As Naomi Black admits:

... a focus on political change is likely to direct attention to the national level of both political pressure and policy. As the largest-scale and most professionalized arena of attempts at change, national politics may be the least characteristic sector of the women's movement ... In a movement which both prides itself in and suffers from its diversity and its localness of scale and project, the grand public campaigns are atypical (1992: 100).

The roots of the attention afforded federal politics among feminists outside francophone Québec are easily identified. In part, the federal state emerged as the focal point for feminist activism outside francophone Québec as a consequence of many women's experiences with subnational politics throughout the "second-wave." Anne McLellan reasons that many women "have viewed provincial governments as less tolerant and receptive to their claims for equality than the national government" leading them to believe that "[p]rovincial politicians may be more susceptible to influence by

relatively small but vocal and 'headline-grabbing' groups whose views could only be described as intolerant and extreme" (1992: 10). Although, as I will illustrate, the disaffection of Canadian women with regressive provincial and territorial governments varies significantly across space and time, feminist Shelagh Day's reflections on the plight of equality-seeking groups under a regressive government accounts for women's reluctance to rely on the provincial state for equality measures:

In my province (British Columbia) we have been ruled by a government whose leader objected to the French on his cornflakes box, promised in one of his election campaigns to hand out shovels to welfare recipients, refused to pay for school lunches for hungry children on the grounds that they were only hungry because their parents were too lazy to get out of bed in the morning and feed them and tried to de-fund abortion ... Through the Canada Assistance Plan, Established Program Financing and block funding, the federal government plays a significant though swiftly diminishing role in national social programs of health, education and social assistance even though these do not fall within federal jurisdiction ... Every equality-seeking group has an interest in the stability and vitality of these programs because they are the most vulnerable groups and the conditions of their lives are determined by them ... My conclusion, then is that while devolution to the province of power over social programs makes sense for Quebec, I do not believe that it is in the interests of women or anyone else who is disadvantaged in the rest of Canada (1991: 99).

Clearly, women's recognition of the limited ability (or, in other cases, willingness) of subnational states to fund crucial social programs over the long term exists alongside suspicion on the part of some women about the willingness of provincial and territorial states to defend women's equality. Despite the fact that provincial and territorial governments have often been leaders in terms of policy innovations of importance to women and have afforded women proportionately better representation, (Arscott and Trimble 1997a; Vickers 1991) many feminists continue to direct their energies to

lobbying at the federal level. Moreover, Elizabeth Gidengil's (1992) study of women's political attitudes offers some preliminary evidence that women outside of Québec (and perhaps also Alberta) have weaker attachments to their regions or provinces than do men.³⁰ Vickers's (1994a) conclusion is that for many women, subnational states are not the political units which historically they valued or sought to preserve.

The role of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in solidifying a clientelist relationship between women's movements and the federal state also must not be underestimated. In 1967, the Pearson government agreed to strike a royal commission to consider the position of women in Canadian society under pressure from a coalition between the Committee for the Equality of Women (composed primarily of pan-Canadian women's organizations) and the Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ).³¹ The government's decision to launch such an inquiry was influenced also by the existence of the U.S. presidential Commission on the Status of Women (the Eleanor Roosevelt Commission, 1961-1963), significant pressure from women journalists, broadcasters,³² and internal lobbying from then-Cabinet minister Judy LaMarsh. Monique Bégin recalls that in the milieu of the 1960s with "the B&B soul-searching [and] the emerging mobilization around human rights," the decision to grant such an inquiry was "a logical one in the circumstances" (1988: 26). Sue Findlay argues additionally that the request for the Commission coincided conveniently with the equal-opportunities philosophy which the federal state had embraced already in response to other social issues of the day (1987: 35).

The Report tabled by the RCSW in 1970 espoused a moderate, equal-rights framework and came to serve "as a blueprint for the public face of feminism in Canada" (Wine and Ristock 1991: 5) by "defin[ing] the major

issues and a strategy for change" (Findlay 1987: 35). The Commission legitimized a largely federal, "status of women" state-oriented approach to equality that emphasized the commonality of Canadian women's experience. It was little influenced by the ideas of, for example, socialist feminists who advocated dramatic restructurings of capital and social relations or radical feminists working within a U.S. influenced, anti-state framework.³³ The involvement of thousands of women in Commission hearings across the country consolidated a sense of identification both with the Commission and its Report (Findlay 1987: 35).³⁴ Of the Commission's 167 recommendations, 122 were defined exclusively in terms of federal responsibility. (Findlay 1988: 5) thus reinforcing the federal government's leadership role in advancing women's equality. To prod the government towards implementation of the Report's recommendations, several key organizations were founded. Most notably, the formation of pan-Canadian organizations like the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) whose *raison d'être* was to lobby for the implementation of the recommendations, helped define a movement strategy which, outside of francophone Québec, continued to look to the federal state for the elimination of women's oppression.³⁵

The clientelist relationship developed between many feminist organizations and the federal government was cemented also through the integration of women's interests into the policy-making process. Initiatives such as the appointment of a federal Minister Responsible for the Status of Women (1971) and a Coordinator of the Status of Women (1972), the establishment of the Office of Equal Opportunity (1971) and the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (1973) together solidified the women's movement as part of the federal government's community of clients.³⁶ The extension of federal government funding to women's groups

through programs such as the Woman's Program of the Secretary of State (1974) and departments such as Health and Welfare was arguably the most significant element in this institutionalization of women's "issues" within the state bureaucracy.³⁷ Leslie Pal (1993) insists that the availability of such monies made it possible for organizations lobbying the federal government to survive without a grassroots level of local organization. (Pal neglects to note, however, that some pan-Canadian women's organizations had undertaken such lobbying without state money since the 1890s.) In the case of NAC, the umbrella organization developed without structures in every province or territory, rendering the task of lobbying individual subnational states often difficult.³⁸

Feminist commentators offer an ambivalent diagnosis regarding the legacy of state funding (Findlay 1987; Schreader 1990; Transken 1994). While federal funding ensured progress on certain issues and sustained many organizations, state funding has also been criticized for its manipulation and constraint of feminist agendas. Indeed, some observers conclude that women's groups are forced to devote "much of their time seeking funding, taking valuable time and energy from work necessary to the movement, and policing themselves and other feminists in terms consistent with bureaucratic directives in order to insure continued funding" (Wine and Ristock 1991: 10-11).³⁹ Regardless of the significant vulnerability created through long-term reliance on state funding, particularly given the funding clawbacks initiated under the Mulroney government, the monies made available through the Woman's Program "entrenched a focus among anglophone Canadian women's groups on the federal government" (Phillips 1990: 48). Indeed, even the Québec women's movement with its clear provincialist orientation did not escape completely from the pull of the

federal state. In recent years, for example, the federal state pressed for the FFQ and the Association féminine d'éducation et d'action sociale to have a greater presence at the federal level. Phillips explains that "[r]epresentation by the Québec groups gives national legitimacy to government-sponsored conferences and meetings and, thus there are state-generated pressures on the Québec groups to take an interest and be active at the federal as well as the provincial level" (1990: 52).

Whatever their experiences with the federal state, however, women's movements in Canada remain subject to a spatially-organized political system which divides authority and separates communities of equality-seekers into provincial and territorial units: "[A]s women become more actively engaged in various forms of political activity, they bump up against the federal structures of the Canadian state" (Vickers 1994a: 1). This reality poses profound challenges for movements whose agendas cross provincial and territorial states. Because women's policy needs "do not fit neatly into jurisdictional boxes" women's organizations are required frequently to mount lobbying efforts at all three levels of government (Trimble 1992: 87).⁴⁰ Linda Trimble sees these multiple arenas of struggle to be a serious impediment to feminist organizing and pessimistically concludes that "the current practice of federalism keeps women poor by evasion, territorial warfare, buckpassing and a lack of clear responsibility on which political actions could be taken" (as quoted in Vickers, 1994a: 15).⁴¹

3.6 Surveying the Political Environments

Because most examinations of feminism in Canada outside francophone Québec⁴² have tended to gloss over the ability of subnational states to act as organizers and disorganizers of women's interests given the

preoccupation with federal politics, our collective knowledge of the issues, strategies and successes of feminist organizing in subnational settings remains rudimentary. Jenson, however, articulates what women responding to the current regressive economic policies of Alberta and Ontario have learned all too painfully, that “[p]rovinces clearly have regained the power to shape representation ... [and] to restructure economic relations (1991: 63). Given that women’s movements pursue their representational projects, therefore, within subnational environments that vary across space and place according to particular configurations of economic, political and social relations, the need for comparative analyses of feminist activism appears urgent. By constructing a “locationally-sensitive” analysis that incorporates attention to matters of location, locale and sense of place as advocated by Agnew (1987), we can begin to account for the patterns of feminist activism across space and understand how movements are “directly stitched into the place and time which give rise to them” (Probyn 1990: 178). To initiate that process, in this section I summarize the political contexts encountered by contemporary women’s movements in each of the four cases, focusing mainly on the period 1960 to the present.

3.7 Case Study: Newfoundland

In 1948, Newfoundlanders voted by a slim majority to join Confederation and officially became a province in 1949. By the 1960s, the post-Confederation impact of access to such federal government social programs as unemployment insurance, old age pensions and mothers’ allowance had changed radically Newfoundland society. Yet, Premier Joey Smallwood’s personal vision of growth for the new province propelled by economic mega-projects had failed to materialize. A \$45 million surplus

accumulated by the Commission of Government that ruled Newfoundland from 1933 to 1949 had been exhausted with “virtually no permanent jobs or economic benefits to show for it” (Summers 1994: 14). Crippling economic decisions such as the routing of Labrador ore through Quebec diverted potential revenues away from Newfoundland and into Quebec thus compounding the precarious nature of the new province’s economy.⁴³

This economic vulnerability was exacerbated by Smallwood’s resettlement plan. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, over 200 isolated villages formerly reliant on the inshore fishery were relocated to 77 “growth centres,” communities where economic activity was precarious and problems of social dislocation quickly developed. Ongoing federal-provincial disputes over the fiscal terms of Newfoundland’s entry into Confederation, the failure of Smallwood’s industrial strategy, controversy over the federal government’s failed commitment to providing rail service in the province and internal caucus dissension fuelled by the premier’s own “paternalistic hegemony” (Graesser 1992: 34) together toppled the Liberals from power in 1972.⁴⁴ The new political era ushered in with the election of Frank Moores was the result of gains by the provincial Conservatives in both rural and urban areas, the disenchantment of the primarily-urban working class with Joey Smallwood’s regressive stance towards labour⁴⁵ and the rejection of Smallwood by the urban and better-educated middle class (Summers 1994: 19).

Upon assuming power, the Moores government quickly undertook an agenda of province-building⁴⁶ similar to that unfolding elsewhere in Canada at that time. The reforms included a modernization of the provincial executive administration, including the creation of Cabinet committees, a strengthening of the Treasury Board and reforms in municipal government (McCorquodale 1978). The electoral system which traditionally had been

based on the equal representation of religious denominations was restructured as well to allow for more equitable representation of urban constituents. In the early days of his administration, Moores even broached the thorny issue of reforming the province's denominational school system.⁴⁷

With the election of Brian Peckford in 1979, the pace of reform accelerated and an intense period of federal-provincial conflict was launched. Disputes over resource ownership, offshore oil and gas ownership and control, fisheries management and hydro development dominated the political agenda with Peckford emerging as a staunch supporter of a more decentralized Canadian federalism and champion of increased provincial autonomy in the resource sector.⁴⁸ During Peckford's decade-long term of office, conflict with the federal government over control of offshore resources escalated, with Newfoundland appealing unsuccessfully to the courts for a redefinition of the federal division of powers that would give the province control over offshore oil reserves.⁴⁹

Observers of Peckford's years in power have argued that the neo-nationalist rhetoric of this period constructed Ottawa as the "villain" and espoused a dependency analysis that explained Newfoundland impoverishment as a result of "having its raw resources taken away to fatten mainland coffers" (Walsh 1986: 33). Peckford and his government were left cast as the defenders of Newfoundland's interests. This strategy of fostering provincial neo-nationalism and arguing for increased jurisdictional autonomy that would allow provincial states to safeguard their cultural and social heritage mirrored similar movements at play in Québec and Alberta (Hynd 1986: 102).

Peckford's platform relied also on the flowering of Newfoundland culture that occurred throughout the 1970s and fostered a nationalist

sentiment interested in minimizing foreign investment and control (Overton 1993). James Overton maintains that Peckford was able to build support for his province-building campaign from debates about the need for Newfoundland to preserve its cultural distinctiveness, a discourse that had a "powerful mobilizing effect, especially in middle-class circles" (1986: 159). Hynd (1986) concurs with Overton that casting Newfoundland's future in terms of a rural romanticism using this dependency approach "articulat[ed] a simplified regionalism or nationalism, in which disaffection with the economic situation [was] directed towards 'outsiders' while some idea of organic community tie[d] the people of the region together" thus allowing the government to gloss over internal social and class tensions (Overton 1986: 170). The resurgence of "Newfunt" among the new middle class intelligentsia aided by the consolidation of Memorial University as a centre of "academic regionalism," sparked a cultural revival grounded in the belief that Newfoundland culture is unique in that it is "centred on the out-ports [and] has been undermined by industrialization, the welfare state, urbanization and the introduction of North American values in the period since the Second World War" (Overton 1993: 373).⁵¹

With the Premier's resignation in 1989, Tom Rideout briefly assumed the premiership until the election that saw a return to Liberal control under Clyde Wells and the end of seventeen years of Tory rule. The Wells government quickly abandoned the neo-nationalism of the Peckford administration in favour of a strongly federalist position, making explicit its preference for an integrated national economy and a strengthening of the role of the federal government in economic development (Tomblin 1992: 204). Advocating "stronger regional representation in the Senate and equality of the provinces, Wells's strident opposition to the Meech Lake Accord, which

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gained him national attention, was grounded in a defence of the idea of the equality of all provinces and the belief that Newfoundland's economic future can be secured only by a central government capable of carrying through federally-funded regional development policies

The 1993 election that saw Wells re-elected with a significant majority levelled a blow to the province's organized labour movement. Wells's successful election campaign included a vociferous attack on the Newfoundland Teachers' Union which had promised to strike if the government reduced its contributions to the teachers' pension fund. Earlier, in 1991-92, Wells alienated organized labour by instituting massive cutbacks in social services and public sector wage freezes. In the shadow of federal government "reforms" in social welfare policy, the Wells government also confronted the enormous cost of providing social programs to the more than 700 communities that dot the province's 10,000 miles of coastline. One proposal for restructuring the province's social welfare net was the abolition of the current unemployment insurance program and its replacement with a system of guaranteed annual incomes that would include work incentives and re-training programs. The government also made clear its intentions to end the province's denominational school system after a close positive vote in the September 1995 referendum on the issue. Privatization of Newfoundland Hydro and further cutbacks to the public service, including wage reductions to public sector employees were also part of the government's deficit-cutting agenda (Bickerton 1994).

After Premier Wells resigned in 1996, former federal Fisheries and Oceans Minister Brian Tobin assumed the leadership of the Liberal party and won a landslide electoral victory. Despite Tobin's personal popularity and solid connections to the Chrétien government, the economic devastation

wrought by the disappearance of northern cod stocks renders the future of Newfoundland and Labrador extremely precarious. Cod stocks are reported to have plummeted 95% since 1990 and more than 35,000 fishery workers have lost their jobs.⁵¹ The economic challenges facing Tobin are daunting. With over 80% of fishery workers lacking a high school diploma and over 90,000 persons over age fifteen with eight or less years of education, the province faces a monumental task of retraining a seriously underskilled labour force.⁵² An annual out-migration of up to 20,000 persons has contributed also to the loss of skilled and better-educated Newfoundlanders who travel to the mainland in search of employment opportunities. Newfoundland has Canada's highest unemployment rate, lowest average educational levels, lowest per capita income and the highest level of federal benefits per capita.⁵³

3.8 Case Study: Ontario

Like their counterparts in Newfoundland and Alberta, Ontario feminists faced a Progressive Conservative government at the point of their renewed mobilization in the 1970s. But unlike either of the other provinces under examination, the election of Premier William Davis in 1971 represented a continuity, rather than a change, in government. At the time of his election, Ontario was already entering its third decade of Tory rule. Anxious to put his own stamp on government, Davis initiated a series of legislative reforms, appointing the province's first Omsbudman, creating the ministries of the environment, energy and culture and recreation and restructuring the executive. Additionally, the new Davis-led government established French-language high schools, abolished medicare premiums for seniors, instituted a new Guaranteed Annual Income Systems for the elderly

and persons with disabilities, and established a free prescription drug program for pensioners and social assistance recipients (Dyck 1991: 319).

In its first term of office, however, the Davis government endured a series of setbacks caused by questionable ministerial behaviour and labour strife within the public sector.⁵⁴ By 1975, Progressive Conservative support was eroding and in elections in 1975 and 1977, the PCs led minority governments. Brownsey and Howlett argue that the faltering of the post-war economic boom in the mid-1970s strained existing social services at the same moment when "[w]omen's organizations, minorities, labour, and other groups demanded new concessions and increased services from the provincial governments" (1992: 159).

The response of the Conservatives to the province's economic downturn was to call for a freeze on government spending and a downsizing of the public sector. When Ontario suffered a severe recession in 1981-82, the Conservatives implemented cutbacks in social programs, curtailed public sector growth through an unpopular wage control program and pursued a strategy of deregulation. While the province's financial situation had stabilized by the time of Davis' unexpected resignation in 1984, his successor Frank Miller's alienation of the public sector and urban middle classes in the 1985 election resulted in a legislative alliance between the Liberals and New Democrats which permitted the Liberals to form a minority government.

Guided by the terms of their accord with the NDP, the Liberal government under David Peterson implemented an aggressive social policy agenda, with initiatives in areas such as pay equity, education, health care (including the 1986 decision to ban extra-billing by doctors), rent controls, social assistance and the environment. Brownsey and Howlett argue that the Liberal government was able to "reap the political benefits of the fiscal

conservatism of the Davis years" (1992: 164) as increased government revenues accrued as the Ontario economy underwent a period of remarkable growth.⁵⁵ The first Peterson administration, in fact, was dubbed "Ontario's 'Quiet Revolution'" in reference to the proliferation of social policy spending in contrast to the Tories conservative agenda of the mid-1970s (Haddow 1994: 480). Although easily capturing a majority government in 1987, the Peterson government quickly unravelled between 1987 and 1990, plagued by the Patti Starr scandal, the unpopularity of its support for the Meech Lake Accord, a series of tax increases and charges of opportunism because of an early election call in the summer of 1990.

The dramatic election of the New Democratic Party in the election of 1990 was, in part, a consequence of a general electorate distrust of politicians. Ontario's first NDP government came to office promising an agenda that included pay equity, expanded child care, public automobile insurance, an increased minimum wage, greater environmental protection, the extension of rights for gays and lesbians and the continuation of rent control. By 1990, however, another fiscal crisis loomed over the Ontario economy forcing an abrupt end to the previous period of spending increases.⁵⁶ The much-maligned Social Contract legislation introduced in 1993 alienated the NDP's traditional support base of organized labour. This, combined with the inability of the New Democrats to woo the support of the business community angered by the NDP's labour law reforms,⁵⁷ contributed to the NDP's electoral defeat in 1995.

In 1995, the unanticipated victory of the Progressive Conservatives under Mike Harris brought to office a party bearing little similarity to previous Progressive Conservative governments. Pledging itself to neo-conservative measures such as workfare, social welfare cuts, a reduction in

the public service of over 10,000 jobs and the elimination of employment equity programs justified as ways of fighting the deficit, the Harris government's agenda of social and economic conservatism initially resembled that of the Klein government, but, in fact, has moved towards an agenda resembling the U.S. Republican "Contract with America" platform that supports a more radical, permanent elimination of the welfare state.

Scholarly treatments of Ontario's political culture have stressed the blend of moderate elements of liberalism, conservatism and a "slight tinge of socialism" responsible for the allegedly "progressive conservative" ethos of Ontario politics (1989: 17).⁵⁶ Rodney Haddow's (1994) reading of Ontario politics, however, questions the continued depiction of Ontario's political culture as "moderate" and "centrist." Haddow suggests that the "red Tory" tag applied to the Progressive Conservative dynasty masks the Tories free market approach to both social and economic policies and notes the quite conservative policies pursued by the Davis government particularly after 1975. He posits instead that "the conservative flavour of what Tory governments actually did was not always compatible with their moderate image" (1994: 478).

Graham White notes further that the Ontario populace is generally agreed to be oriented towards federal rather than provincial politics and, as such, he surmises that "the Ontario legislature probably has the lowest public salience of any Canadian legislature" (1989: 17). Certainly, research conducted during the 1970s confirmed that Ontarians exhibited high levels of political trust, efficacy (Elkins and Simeon 1980) and a greater interest in federal than provincial politics (Elkins 1980). Accounts of Ontario politics that emphasized its "red Tory" nature, however, often glossed over the province's internal cleavages in political culture. Elkins and Simeon (1980) and more recently,

McDermid (1990) confirm significant variations in political culture within the province based on class and, in particular, regional differences. McDermid's work (1990) documents that "peripheral" parts of the province (particularly northern Ontario) and "industrial" Ontario are the most supportive of government efforts to end inequality and supportive of unions and women's issues while suburban Ontario exhibited the most right-wing allegiances (Haddow 1994). Geoffrey R. Weller's discussion of northern Ontario politics stresses the alienation of the region which arose because of

major economic differentials between the north and the south (compounded by clear differences in areas such as health care and education); major ethnic grievances on the part of Francophones and natives, environmental grievances relating to specific problems and the general matter of resource use conflicts; and, finally, a general feeling among northern Ontarians that the region has not been allowed to fulfill its historical promise and has been forced to play the role of southern Ontario's resource reserve hinterland (1990: 279).

Whether or not this regionalism will be ameliorated by having all three major party leaders drawn from northern constituencies remains to be seen.

The province also has had a three-party system since 1943 when the CCF became the Official Opposition at the beginning of the Tory dynasty. Ontario continues to display the most stable three-party system in Canada, although in the 1990 provincial election, 6 percent of the total votes cast went to candidates not affiliated with the three major parties. The Family Coalition Party, for example, has run a slate of candidates since 1987 on a traditional family values, anti-abortion and anti-gay rights platform.

What traditionally distinguished the Liberal and NDP governments in Ontario from their Progressive Conservative predecessors was a shift in relations with the federal government. Rand Dyck describes the Trudeau-Davis years as a period in which "federal-Ontario relations were better than

ever" because of the challenge to central Canada's hegemony at that time by the western provinces (1991: 298).⁵⁹ H.V. Nelles argues that "Ontario changed from being the leading advocate of provincial rights and decentralism to the stoutest supporter of centralized federalism when its interests were put in jeopardy by high energy costs on one side and Quebec separatism on the other" (1990: 84). Consequently, "[n]o 'province-building' economic elites ... emerged in Ontario to fuel assertive provincial power, as happened in Alberta or Quebec" (Simeon 1990: 172), and, I would add, Newfoundland. During the Davis years, the Premier often acted as a broker between Conservative governments and the federal Liberals and emerged as a strong defender of the federal Liberals centralizing vision for constitutional reform. The federal orientation has changed in recent years, especially following the liberalization of trade with the United States and later Mexico. In the 1980s, studies found only 28% of Ontario residents identifying more strongly with the federal government while 48% saw the provincial government as most likely to represent their interests (Norrie, Simeon and Krasnick as cited in Nelles 1990: 94).

Brownsey and Howlett identify the "collapse of the Ottawa-Queen's Park axis" as a result of the NDP's election in 1990 (1992: 149), but clearly Premier Peterson's fight against free trade and the "fed-bashing" evident in the Liberals 1987 campaign strategy reflects a somewhat earlier deterioration in the Ottawa-Queen's Park relationship (Gagnon and Rath 1991: 42). Under the NDP, relations between Queen's Park and Ottawa were noticeably strained as Premier Rae fought against cutbacks in transfer payments, constitutional decentralization, privatization, the North American Free Trade Agreement and the imposition of the Goods and Services Tax. The NDP government, however, was unable to tap into provincialist sentiments that could unite the

electorate in protest against federal policy. In his first year of office, Premier Harris has been a staunch advocate of further decentralization in his relations with the federal Liberals.

3.9 Case Study: Alberta

In Alberta, contemporary feminist activism also emerged provincially within a era of Progressive Conservative electoral domination. The election of Peter Lougheed in 1971, often cited as a watershed in the province's history, marked the end of the Social Credit regime that had ruled the province since 1935. Richards and Pratt point to this electoral contest as one of "critical realignment" which reflected the economic, demographic and social changes that had redefined the province in the years following the discovery of oil at Leduc in 1947 (Melnik 1993: 224). In the 1950s, unconcerned about the long-term consequences of foreign control, both the federal and provincial governments had promoted the external takeover of Alberta's oil and gas sectors by primarily U.S. capital. Richards and Pratt (1979) document the transformation in the province's economy from a pre-war agricultural base to reliance on the petroleum and natural gas sector in the aftermath of the Leduc oilstrike. Demographically, the province underwent a dramatic population growth as well in this period, doubling its population between 1946 and 1971. During the same period, the urban percentage of the population rose from 32 to 73 percent (Melnik 1993: 234). By 1971, "the economic and social base of Social Credit had been eroded by a generation of petroleum development and urbanization" (Richards and Pratt as quoted in Melnik 1993: 236) and the Progressive Conservatives, supported by Alberta's urban-based new middle classes, rose to power.

Enormous wealth was generated through oil and natural gas revenues in Alberta during the 1970s, a period in which the province enjoyed "a decade of growth, low unemployment and substantial in-migration" (Lupper 1992: 452). Between 1971 and 1981, Alberta's Gross Domestic Product increased from 7.9 billion to 47.2 billion in current dollars. Peter J. Smith explains that at the peak of the boom, between 1977 and 1982, the province was able to save 25% of all revenues collected from all sources (1990: 165). The province became the wealthiest in Canada with the highest per capita income and boasted a brimming Heritage Savings Trust Fund which came to symbolize interprovincial and intergovernmental conflict.⁶⁰ The same period witnessed another dramatic population increase from 1.6 million in 1971 to 2.2 million in 1981 (Palmer and Palmer 1990: 327).

Lougheed embarked on an aggressive program of "economic provincialism" in partnership with indigenous capitalists in order to increase the province's share of resource revenues. His political strategy involved focusing the attention of the state on economic mega-projects and federal-provincial tensions that succeeded in making the dominant issue within provincial politics the question of Alberta's autonomy within Confederation. Foreshadowing the approach of the Newfoundland Conservatives a few years later, the Alberta government's careful orchestration of federal-provincial conflict over unpopular federal policies such as the National Energy Program⁶¹ successfully appealed to feelings of provincial alienation and worked repeatedly to the government's electoral benefit (Stevenson 1986: 235). Lougheed's Conservatives also set in place a number of initiatives in the health and social services sector, particularly in the areas of civil rights, senior citizens, mental health and the arts.

Leslie Pal characterizes this period also as one in which Lougheed maintained a firm grip on the party and governed in a "non-partisan" manner (1992: 20). Because Lougheed himself had almost single-handedly built the Progressive Conservative party in Alberta throughout the 1960s, he was able to wield considerable personal power. Rand Dyck characterizes the style of governing that marked this period as follows:

... in the face of a federal threat and in the absence of internal conflict, there was no need for an Official Opposition; democratic nominating conventions and caucus procedures could accommodate all demands. Those who wished to have influence would work through the Conservative party; opposition parties were not part of the policy-making process; and those voters who chose not to join the government party were only permitted to assess the performance every four years or so (1991: 528-529).

Other scholars of this period have observed that many of the political cleavages with the province--between men and women, between Aboriginals and others, between workers and employers--were muted by the affluence of the times (Tupper and Gibbins 1992: xvii).

Alberta in the 1980s, however, "demonstrated the persistent vulnerability of the provincial economy to external markets, the resultant instability of that economy, and the elusive nature of economic diversification" (Gibbins 1992: 83). In 1982, the Alberta economy suffered a sharp decline that did not show recovery until 1985 and again faltered in 1986. The downturn represented a sharp departure from the three preceding decades when the province's performance was generally equal to or better than the national average. The sources of the instability included fluctuations in international energy prices and the high capital intensity of the province's primary sectors. The downturn also showed the unstable nature of investment in the oil and gas sector and the extent to which this

investment is a key driving force for many of Alberta's secondary and service sectors (Mansell and Percy 1990). In their analysis of Alberta politics, Lupper, Pratt and Urquhart stress the chronic vulnerability of the Alberta economy to outside influences and note that this vulnerability "exerts an extraordinary influence" on the provincial government (1992: 31).

Western alienation and, in some quarters, western separatism, also attracted national attention during the Lougheed years. George Melnyk (1993) attributes the combination of the rise of the Parti Québécois, the new found wealth generated by high energy prices, the federal-provincial hostility emanating from jurisdictional disputes and the policies of a centralist federal Liberal government as combining to re-ignite western protest movements in this e. a. Groups like WestFed and the Western Canada Concept (WCC) party gained in popularity with the WCC electing M.L.A Gordon Kesler in a 1982 provincial by-election in the riding of Olds-Didsbury. But by the early 1980s, the appeal of western separatism was waning in light of the outcome of the 1980 Québec referendum and the impact of the recession of 1981-2 which "mark[ed] the beginning of the end of a provincial rights era founded on the wealth of rising prices for both natural resources and agricultural production" (Melnik 1993: 294).

After Lougheed's retirement in 1985, former Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Don Getty, one of the original six PCs elected in 1967, assumed the premiership and went on to win the 1986 provincial election. The new Getty government faced a major drop in world oil prices in 1986 and an agricultural crisis precipitated by droughts which together resulted in a \$3.3 billion provincial deficit by 1987. The Conservatives responded with major cutbacks in the areas of grants to municipalities, schools and hospitals and \$1 billion in tax increases (Dyck

1991: 523). This period also saw an increase in labour unrest in the form of the Gainers meat packing strike in 1986⁶² and the strike by the province's nurses in 1988.

In the interim western alienation had replaced separatism with reform. The birth of the Reform Party of Canada "retained right-wing ideology and jettisoned unpopular western separatism" (Melnik 1993: 320). Championing the slogan, "The West Wants In," designed to mobilize provincial rights advocates, the RPC fashioned a

common-sense celebration of the average citizen, a preference for the devices of direct democracy to allow direct and ongoing influence by the electors, an identification with small-scale business capitalism, a tendency to blame outside forces for economic and social problems and to see solutions in simple terms, a strong feeling of community and traditional values that borders on nativism and xenophobia and a project of reform rather than revolution to solve economic and social ills (McCormick 1992: 350).

It is to the province's populist roots that the Reform Party first appealed in its appearance the late 1980s.⁶³ Garth Stevenson explains this brand of populism as an ideology constructed to appeal to the 'average Canadian' and was originally "based on the premise that there are no significant class conflicts within western Canada, that the fundamental conflict is between western Canada on the one hand and central Canada on the other, and that western Canada therefore can and should unite against the external foe" with the goal of a "quasi-party system ... which will eliminate interparty competition at the provincial level" (1986: 211). The populism that inspires Reform also "has had significant undercurrents of anti-intellectualism, puritanism, xenophobia and religious fundamentalism" (Stevenson 1986: 210).⁶⁴ Palmer and Palmer note that in Alberta, while mainstream churches such as the United, Presbyterian and Anglican lost numerical and social

influence since the 1970s, evangelical churches such as the Christian and Missionary Alliance, the Church of the Nazarene, Pentecostal, Jehovah's Witness, Mennonites and Mormons have become more prominent in the province's religious mosaic and share "a dedicated belief in the family, and opposition to what they [see] as immoral social trends including premarital sex, pornography, abortion, common-law marriage and drug use" (1990: 336).

When a faltering Don Getty faced the electorate in 1989, the Progressive Conservatives were quick to rely on a populist discourse, waging an electoral campaign that stressed the need to strengthen and protect the Alberta nuclear family and "family values." The Conservatives retained their grip on power but the Premier lost his own seat and the party as a whole saw an erosion in their power base. In 1992, Getty stepped down and was replaced by former Calgary mayor, Ralph Klein. When pronouncements about the end of the Pe dynasty were heard in anticipation of the 1993 election, Premier Ralph Klein fought a highly successful campaign on a decidedly populist platform, regaining a substantial legislative majority.

Bolstered by the staunch support of rural and southern Alberta and perhaps most importantly, the Calgary "oilocracy," the Klein revolution was implemented with dizzying speed as the new premier initiated a drastic agenda of deficit reduction through restructuring, program and service cuts, deregulation and privatization.⁶⁵ In 1994, Klein slashed funding to Alberta hospitals by 17.6%, education spending was reduced by 12.4% over four years, post-secondary education by 14.2% between 1994 and 1997 and the Alberta public service was targeted for cuts in staff of 22%. In 1995, the government passed the Government Organization Act which permits the privatizing and contracting out of virtually all government activity except law making. Gordon Laird reports that the new Act allows "cabinet members to delegate

major functions, in the words of the Act, 'to any person'" (1995: 16) and therefore blurs the line between "political decision-making [and] the realm of private marketeering" (Adkin 1995: 32).

While the success of populist strategies in Alberta electoral contests is undeniable, the province's perceived preference for one-party dominance is, to a large extent, a consequence of electoral system distortions. The image of a politically conservative electorate committed to supporting right-wing governments defending the last bastion of Canadian free enterprise is a stereotype that obscures more than it explains about the political behaviour of the Alberta electorate. Electoral boundaries over-represent rural constituencies and Keith Archer's research shows that "the distribution of voter support in Alberta has become very unstable" with dramatic decreases in voter turnout of up to almost 50% (1992: 132). Stevenson attributes the electoral failures of the Alberta New Democrats⁶⁶ and the absence of class-based politics to the character of Alberta's working class that has displayed "little continuity or cohesion" (1986: 229) due in part to the high mobility of the population. Alberta's low level of unionization has been explained as a direct result of successive governments that have discouraged unionization and the "seduction by high wages and the prospects of continued prosperity" (Dyck 1991: 486).

3.10 Case Study: Northwest Territories

The modern era of politics in the Northwest Territories dates to 1967 when, in response to the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on the Development of the Government in the Northwest Territories (Carrothers Commission), the seat of government for the NWT was relocated from Ottawa to Yellowknife. The Carrothers Commission endorsed a new

structure for the territorial government, including the creation of a territorial civil service and the devolution of executive authority to the territorial Commissioner; however, it stopped short of supporting any division of the territories (O'Keefe 1989: 215).⁶⁷ In 1969, this decentralization of responsibilities from Ottawa was initiated via a Commissioner appointed by the Privy Council and accountable to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Moor and Vanderhaden 1984). Peter Clancy explains that electoral politics was still "embryonic" in the NWT at this stage. The territorial council consisted of five members appointed by the federal government and eight members elected to seats spanning 1.3 million square miles (1990: 561).⁶⁸

The decision to establish territorial government in the NWT was not motivated solely by the desire to democratize politics in the north, but was precipitated also by the dramatic escalation in northern resource-based economic activity the 1960s. Moor and Vanderhaden (1984) argue that, throughout the decade, the federal government was forced to turn its attention to the territories because of growing interest in exporting hydrocarbons, the perceived need to assert Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic and the initiation of land claims by increasingly politicized aboriginal populations. Between 1968 and 1972, the federal government increased spending on northern oil and gas exploration from \$30 million to \$200 million (Dickerson and Glenn 1993: 15). Mega-projects were quickly undertaken including the Beaufort Sea Offshore Drilling Initiative, Mackenzie Valley and Norman Wells Pipelines, lead-zinc mining on Baffin Island, and uranium exploration in the Keewatin region. This non-renewable resource development, however, did not produce an immediate economic boom for the NWT. Instead, the \$13.3 billion in investment made

the NWT between 1977 and 1986 flowed south and the “‘trickle-down’ theory of economic development based on non-renewable resource exploitation ‘never happened’” (Dickerson and Glenn 1993: 17). Dickerson and Glenn argue further that, in fact, federal government economic policy vis-à-vis NWT between 1970 and 1980 prioritized goals and implementation methods designed to benefit southern Canada.

As resource development progressed, so too did debate over the course of the NWT’s political development. In 1970, the NWT adopted a House Committee system that struck Finance, Legislation, Rules and Procedures and Indemnities and Allowance committees (O’Keefe 1989: 215). The colonial relationship with Ottawa remained firmly entrenched, however, as the fledgling NWT government relied on a federal grant that supplied 70% of its operating budget. Moor and Vanderhaden make the point that because the grant was funded through DIAND, the NWT was treated as if it were one of the department’s programs or divisions, a situation that made for difficult relations between Ottawa and Yellowknife and undermined the credibility of the territorial state (1984: 183).

The first fully elected NWT council met in 1975. By this time, the legislature was beginning to resemble a modern parliament. The council was renamed the Legislative Assembly, fifteen seats represented all regions of the NWT and three members were chosen by the Assembly to sit on the Executive Council. With the election of 1979, the legislature was expanded to twenty-two members with Aboriginal communities finally attaining direct representation in the territorial state and ministerial roles in the Executive Council. This election marked an important shift away from the previous domination of the Assembly by the NWT’s non-Native business community and the beginning of a working relationship between First Nations

organizations and the territorial state (Moor and Vanderhaden 1984: 185). The Commissioner's role gradually receded, but it was not until 1986 that the government leader became sole chair of the Executive Council (O'Keefe 1989: 217). These developments aside, however, "for much of the period since 1967, the GNWT, in isolation from the Native organizations, adopted southern models for the development of institutions and programs--in local government, for example--and pursued the goal of provincial status for the entire NWT" (Moor and Vanderhaden 1984:186).

Debates over political and constitutional development in the Northwest Territories have been inextricably linked to the emergence of contemporary Aboriginal movements. Clancy (1990) points to the Alaskan Atlantic Richfield oil strike in 1968 as the beginning of contemporary northern politics. He explains that at that time, no Aboriginal political organization above the local level existed in the NWT. The combination of resource exploration throughout the north (in particular, the Atkinson Point oil strike in January 1970 which was the first petroleum discovery on the NWT mainland) and the release of the federal government's White Paper on native issues in 1969⁶⁹ acted as catalysts for Aboriginal political mobilization in the NWT.

Aboriginal organizations emerged quickly, including the Committee for Original Peoples Entitlement (1970), the Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories (1969--later known as the Dene Nation), Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC) (1971) and the Métis Association of the NWT (1972).⁷⁰ The extension of federal funding to aboriginal organizations in 1971,⁷¹ the decision of Ottawa in 1973 to negotiate aboriginal land claims and, in particular, the report of the Berger Inquiry combined to give First Nations organizations "both a community base and a political strategy" (Abele and

Dickerson 1985: 3). In 1975, the Dene declaration calling for "independence and self-determination within the country of Canada" catapulted the issue of Aboriginal self-government onto the national political stage. The following year, the ITC proposed the division of the NWT in order to create a new Inuit-dominated eastern territory. In 1982, a benchmark plebiscite confirmed that a majority of NWT residents were in favour of the principle of a divided territory.

Despite the now-stronger representation of Aboriginal peoples within the territorial state,⁷² the NWT government has faced a chronic crisis of legitimacy. The paternalistic approach of the federal government towards the NWT spawned a legacy of distrust in the Legislative Assembly (White 1991). In 1975, for example, the Dene Nation boycotted the Assembly to protest their lack of confidence in the institution. An ongoing issue has been that constitutional powers and control of resources which remain the federal government's prerogative have resulted in a perception that the Northwest Territories continues under the colonial rule of a southern, white-dominated government. Graham White has described the lack of fit between the Westminster model of government and the social structure and political culture of the Northwest Territories: "Like the rest of Canada, the Northwest Territories had the British parliamentary system imposed on it, but unlike the rest of Canada, only a small proportion of the population had any experience or familiarity with that system" (1991: 501). White sees the lack of legitimacy faced by the government as derived not just from the Westminster model, but also from the clash of values between Native and non-Native populations. He explains that among some segments of the First Nations population, the state itself is illegitimate because of its focus on individuals rather than collectivities: "... a key question is whether the participation of

natives in the Assembly and in the government is significant in building their legitimacy among the native population or whether native MLAs are viewed as having sold out once they become part of the system" (1991: 522).

As the issues of legitimacy continued to plague the GNWT, sweeping administrative reforms undertaken by the government led by Nellie Cournoyea involved an attempt to redesign a northern government that is more fiscally viable, community-based and Native-led. By 1991, the GNWT had ballooned into a \$1.1 billion operation with over 375 programs, 800 boards and agencies and 18 government departments (Gillies 1993: 40). Because its "southern style" approach to governing has "relied heavily on an 'imported' civil service," Gillies explains, "much of the government is inaccessible to native northerners because of the complexity and technical standards that permeate everything from job descriptions to program delivery systems" (40). In short, the GNWT, Gillies charges, "remain[s] surrounded by a cultural glass wall" (40).

In particular, the small revenue based controlled by the GNWT and the increasing demand for services from a population growing at a rate three times the national average has limited the choices available for the GNWT (Dickerson and Glenn 1993: 17). Consequently, the GNWT set for itself the enormous task of decentralizing its powers to smaller, First Nations-controlled community governments that would assume responsibility for programs including schools, nursing stations, housing, welfare and business assistance (Gillies 1993: 40-41).

With the Final Agreement on the Nunavut set to take effect on April 1, 1999, the division of the Northwest Territories will be completed. The Nunavut deal gives the Inuit exclusive ownership over 353,000 square km, a cash settlement of \$1.15 billion, royalties on the exploitation of non-

renewable resource and various agencies for environmental management. The deal represents the culmination of discussions regarding territorial division that first were voiced in the 1960s. Sensitive negotiations are also ongoing in the western Arctic over the political and constitutional future of the new western territory. Gilles notes that the GNWT must negotiate as well its ongoing difficult relationship with the Dene who have consistently challenged the legitimacy of the territorial government and pursued greater autonomy through claim negotiations with the federal government (1993: 43).

Politics in the NWT is organized around small constituencies that average about 2,000 people per riding. This translates into a situation where MLAs are familiar personally with a good percentage of their constituents and, therefore, groups have access to their provincial representative. The salient cleavages within the Assembly remain east versus west, Inuit / Dene / Métis / Inuvialuit versus non-aboriginal interests and Yellowknife versus smaller communities (White 1991: 511). Brokerage between the western and eastern regions is a central task for the GNWT. In the eastern Arctic, the population is overwhelmingly Inuit and the area's economy remains primarily traditional. By contrast, the western Arctic relies mainly on a wage-based economy and has a minority Aboriginal population. The tensions between Yellowknife and the outlying areas are also substantial as Yellowknife represents a concentration of economic and political power in the hand of non-Aboriginals.⁷³ Exacerbating this regionalism is the presence of many short-term, non-Aboriginal residents within the city of Yellowknife.⁷⁴

Kevin O'Keefe describes the parliamentary traditions of the NWT as "not yet congealed into a fixed form" (1989: 220). Clearly, the governmental

system is still evolving and confronts cultural issues requiring innovative responses. The political culture of the area has been described as a "series of sub-cultures whose configuration remains open and fluid" (Clancy 1994: 529). While there are debates within the population about the extent to which the Legislative Assembly actually functions in a consensual manner, it is clear that the practice of legislative politics differs in some fundamental respects from legislatures elsewhere. Cabinet is elected by secret ballot of all elected members. All members of the legislative assembly including ministers meet weekly in a secret caucus to resolve political issues and draft bills; draft budgets are submitted to legislative committees for detailed review prior to their public release by government.

Party politics has not developed at the territorial level, although they are well established for NWT federal elections.⁷⁵ Ongoing representational concerns are also visible through the issue of electoral boundary redistribution. Graham White's analysis (1993) of the electoral distribution in the Territories points to a lack of fit between electoral reform dictated by liberal-democratic values and northern and Native conceptions of politics. White observes that "aboriginal political culture puts much greater store than does western liberalism on the importance of cultural communities as collectivities, with the corollary that representation of cultural groups may be more important than that of individuals" (1993: 24).

Further complicating the NWT political agenda is the current fiscal crisis. Peter Clancy (1992) argues that the redefinition of northern politics is occurring within an economic downturn that has surfaced in the north a decade later than in the provinces. In addition to the cutbacks in federal monies historically available to the territorial government where public administration constitutes 25.5% of the GDP, the NWT has experienced the

"first recession ever to have a major impact" having long been sheltered from the vagaries of the national economy because of its government-driven economy (Pool 1992: 19).⁷⁶

3.11 Conclusion

My overview of the political environments of the four case studies underscores the diversity of contexts in which women's movements act. Constructing a comparative movement analysis that can investigate the impact of location on women's movements can be achieved by meshing together the tradition of spatially-sensitive movement literature in Canadian political sociology with the legacy of space and place as central metaphors within Canadian intellectual thought. As I demonstrate in this chapter, analytic attention to space and place has assumed a central role in Canadian political science because of federalism's entrenchment of a territorially-based division of powers. The impact of locale and "sense of place" as defined by Agnew (1987), however, have been little studied. This line of investigation that compares locale, location and sense of place is integral to understanding women's politics, given the extent to which political participation by women occurs in local settings. Even when cultures are being homogenized by global capital and technological innovations erase barriers of geographic distances, movements for change such as feminism remain embedded in particular locations and daily negotiate the specificities of those contexts. Indeed, to paraphrase Massey (1984), women still live their lives locally with their consciousness formed in a distinct geographical (and, I would add, political) place. As I will argue in Chapters Six and Seven, alliances crucial for women's movements may be forged across multiple axes of difference when the commonality of women's activism within particular contexts is explored.

My overview of the contemporary political environments of Newfoundland, Ontario, Alberta and Northwest Territories documents the diversity of settings in which feminists act. Although women's movements at the provincial, and to a lesser extent, territorial level, confront similar political systems, they undertake their activist agendas within contexts marked by differences in party politics, ideological climate, economic base, political culture and relationship to the federal government. As subsequent chapters will show, additional factors of location also emerge as salient variables in accounting for the strategic choices of movement actors both across and within jurisdictions. The divergent patterns of activism by women's movements at the subnational level represents the interplay between movements' agency and the constraints and opportunities of the environments in which they mobilize. I begin to chart the differences within feminist activism at the subnational level by turning first to compare their representational projects of the state.

3.12 Notes to Chapter Three

¹ My usage of "space" is both physically and socially defined; that is, I use "space" to designate a particular geographic area as well as social, political and economic "locations." As Rose explains, "place" refers to a specific set of interrelationships between environmental, economic, social, political and cultural processes (1993: 41).

² For a lengthy explanation of the devaluation of place in social science that traces this trend to the 19th century and the growth of nationalism as a "place-transcending ideology" consult Agnew (1989b): 16-21

³ Even geopolitics has been rehabilitated as part of the revival of political geography. Dalby (1991) notes that the 1980s witnessed the efforts of scholars to "rethink the legacy of German geopolitik and its US wartime commentators to clear away the historical baggage of earlier and less happy days in political geography" (270)

⁴ The original quotation is drawn from Foucault (1980: 70). The contours of debates within postmodernist social science over conceptualizations of time and space are traced in Pauline Marie Rosenau (1992). Massey (1992) also addresses the "space versus time" debates at some length. See also Keith and Pile (1993) and Rob Shields (1991), particularly Chapter One.

⁵ Consult Soja (1989), especially Chapters 2, 3, 5 and 6 for an expanded treatment of his theory of spatiality

⁶ On this topic, consult Jean Bethke Elshtain (1981).

⁷ Gillian Rose describes the project of feminist geography as exposing how geography as a discipline holds a series of assumption about the spaces occupied by men and women, and critiques how "the discipline concentrates on the space, places and landscape that it sees as men's" (1993: 2). For a discussion of how women's spaces were outside the concerns of geography, see Rose (1993), especially Chapter Three. Representative texts in this field include Sophie Bowlby, Jo Foord and Suzanne Mackenzie (1981) and Janice Monk and Susan Hanson (1982). For a sampling of contemporary developments in feminist geography, consult F. Bagguley, J. Mark-Lawson, D. Shapiro, J. Urry, S. Walby and A. Warde (1990); Audrey Kobayashi and Suzanne Mackenzie (1989) and Liz Bondi and M. Domosh (1992).

⁸ Massey maintains that for Laclau, for example, space is the "realm of stasis" in which there is "no true temporality and thus no possibility of politics" while for Jameson, "space is chaotic depthlessness" (1991: 67).

⁹ See also Soja (1989: 23 ff).

¹⁰ This emphasis on the interdependence of the social and the spatial is echoed also by geographers such as Wolch and Dear who call for a "socio-spatial dialectic" through which to analyze how social life structures territory and how territory shapes social life (1989: 4). They call for analyses that track the interaction between the economic, political and social spheres of human activity and the constitutive, constraining and mediative roles of space (9).

¹¹ See, for example, Liz Bondi (1993). For a different application of this theoretical perspective, read Catherine Nash (1993) and her feminist application of a geographical analysis to the work of Irish landscape artist Kathy Prendergast.

¹² With John Agnew, Probyn recognizes the need to clarify one's employment of spatial terminology. Her spatial vocabulary, however, differs slightly from that of Agnew. Probyn distinguishes between local, locale and location in the following manner: "locale" is used to define "a place that is the setting for a particular event"; "local" is that directly issuing from or related to a particular time; and "location" designated as the "methods by which one comes to locate sites of research" (1990: 178).

¹³ This interpretation of the importance of local struggles in the abortion debate differs from other treatments of the subject that stress the actions of the state in abortion politics (Brodie, Gavigan and Jensen 1992).

¹⁴ Cavell's (1994) brilliant interdisciplinary treatment of the theorization of space in Canada combines literary criticism, postmodern geography, deconstructivist theories of architecture and an analysis of the Canadian Chancery in Washington, D.C. in order to construct a post colonial theory of space. My thinking about spatial matters and the politics of space has been influenced by his unique approach.

¹⁵ Cavell traces the concept of space within "Canadian" intellectual discourse, arguing for an attention to issues of place, yet his own analysis relies exclusively English Canadian, non Aboriginal sources.

¹⁶ The nation-building theories to which I refer are, of course, Donald Creighton's (1956) Laurentian thesis and I.M.S. Careless's (1954) metropolitan-hinterland thesis. Elaboration of these frameworks and evaluation of their role in shaping Canadian historiography can be found in Carl Berger (1986).

¹⁷ See, for example, Northrop Frye (1965).

¹⁸ Brodie (1994) cites the Canada Round of constitutional proposals on Senate reform as reflecting the continuing "imprint" of regionalism on Canadian political history. As she explains, the argument for Senate reform in the Charlottetown Accord revolved around better representation for citizens according to their regional, rather than their social, location.

¹⁹ See Soja (1989): 10-21 for his interpretation of Foucault's theorization of spatiality.

²⁰ Douglas McAdam and Dieter Ruecht (1993) add the issue of the diffusion of ideas and movement personnel across borders. Vickers (1992) and Valentine (1996) both illustrate, however, that disengagement from or focus on the state can change as ideas and organizations are transplanted from state to state.

²¹ The validity of Carroll's observations regarding the centrality of "place" in Canadian movement literature is reinforced in collections like Colin Leys and Marguerite Mendell (1992) that consider the particularities of the contexts in which social movements act. Lorna Stefanick's comparative study of the environmental movements in British Columbia and Ontario focuses on the organizational structure of the two movements and concludes that the

structure groups assume and the tactics they adopt are influenced by the socio-political and economic circumstances of the community in which they are a part" (1995: 3).

²² Cleverdon's study (1974) documents, for example, the indifference to suffrage that characterized the campaign in the Maritimes, the close association between suffrage groups and farm organizations on the Prairies, the difficult campaign waged by women in Ontario and the protracted struggle for suffrage by Québec women.

²³ The criticisms against the post-suffrage era in the women's movement outside Québec which chided feminists for their failure to capitalize on the crest of mobilization strength the suffrage campaign generated was leveled most vehemently by Carol Bacchi (1983) who diagnosed what she saw as the 'disappearance' of feminism after the suffrage campaigns as a consequence of suffragists' inherent conservatism and lack of interest in redefining gender roles. Bacchi's interpretation has been rejected by many historians who argue instead that feminism activism shifted to other arenas in the post-suffrage era. See, for example, Kealey and Sangster (1989).

²⁴ In fact, Ottawa-born Shulamith Firestone was a pivotal contributor to this literature.

²⁵ As I will demonstrate in Chapters 4 through 7, the emigration of radical feminists from the United States to Canada in the late 1960s and 1970s significantly influenced the course of feminist activism in certain locales.

²⁶ Radical feminism was influential also in the francophone Québec women's movement. The Cho Collective states, for example, that "radical feminism... was the initial driving force behind feminism in Quebec" (1987: 357). Texts by Millet (1969), Firestone (1970) and Greer (1971) were translated quickly into French and widely read by Québec women.

²⁷ The role of U.S. radical feminists like Marlene Dixon in the early years of "second-wave" Canadian feminism is examined in Jill Vickers et. al. (1993: 42-45).

²⁸ Such critiques have generated an avalanche of feminist literature and activism that has been described as constituting a "third wave" of women's movements. Some examples of this literature include bell hooks (1981), Arun Mukherjee (1992) and Nila Gupta and Makeda Silvera (1989).

²⁹ It is interesting to note the case of Carty's (1993) volume in which the relevance of space and place disappears with the Toronto-centric perspective of most contributions.

³⁰ Gidengil's (1992) study probes gender differences in policy preferences by examining the gender gap in support for the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement. Her findings reveal little evidence that women's political views, outside Québec and Alberta, are shaped by their provincial context. See also Brenda O'Neill (1992).

³¹ The most comprehensive treatment of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women remains Cerise Morris (1982). For an "insider's" reflection on the impact of the RCSW, see Monique Begin (1992).

³² For a discussion of the role played by the feminist media in lobbying for and reporting on the RCSW, consult Freeman (1995).

³³ The RCSW was exposed, however, to the ideas of both socialist and radical feminists as the list of submissions to the RCSW makes clear. It is interesting to note then, Monique Bégin's comment that the Commission "did not benefit from discussions generated with the women's movement because we did not know what was going on" (1992: 28). See also Jane Arscott (1995) for a discussion of the internal dynamics of the RCSW and their impact on the recommendations of the Commission.

³⁴ See Jenson for an insightful discussion of the ways in which Royal Commissions serve as vehicles of representation. Jenson's point that Royal Commissions have "contributed to the way that we subsequently conceptualized our interests and collective identities" (1994: 45, emphasis in the original) is applicable to the case of the RCSW and its pivotal role in defining the course of feminist practice in Canada during the second-wave (Black 1988).

³⁵ An account of NAC's founding appears in Jill Vickers et al. (1993), Chapter 2. Monique Bégin (1988) speaks to the manner in which the Royal Commission revived traditional women's groups across Canada. The enduring centrality of the federal state as the focus of "English Canadian" feminist practice and scholarship is clear in Findlay and Randall (1988). This edition of *Resources for Feminist Research*, entitled "Feminist Perspectives on the Canadian State," considers the federal state almost exclusively.

³⁶ A comprehensive discussion of this institutionalization of women's interests within the federal state appears in Sue Findlay (1987, 1988).

³⁷ Phillips makes the important point that the funding assistance extended to Women's Institutes by provincial governments during the suffrage-era generation is the first example of the state clientelism that would later characterize the relationship between the state and women's organizations in the second-wave (1990: 41).

³⁸ Phillips observes also how the absence of a provincial structure within NAC stands in contrast to the theories presented by Thorburn (1985) and Schultz (1980) which argue that national pressure groups will automatically reflect the power structures of federalism in their own organizational structures (1990: 79).

³⁹ Phillips argues too that the emergence of groups such as the DisAbled Women's Network in 1985 and the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women in 1986 was facilitated by the availability of federal sponsorship (1990: 53). Roxana Ng (1986) suggests that the motivation behind the extension of government funding to minority women's organizations was to construct artificial barriers between "immigrant" versus "visible minority" women that served to constrain their mobilizational potential. Becki Ross (1988) has noted how Secretary of State funding after 1986 discriminated against lesbian-centred organizations and activities. For an alternative perspective that stresses how feminist organizations utilized government monies to pursue their own agencies, consult Pal (1993).

⁴⁰ For example, the fifteen areas of concern to women as framed by groups active in the 1981 constitutional debates (and therefore mainly from outside of francophone Québec) each required action at all three levels of government. These areas were cited in a Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women brief (1987) and are quoted in Trimble (1992: 87). The issues in question were human rights, aboriginal women's rights, family law, economic policies, education, political representation, income security, health and welfare, criminal law, immigration, administration of justice, communications, cultural policy, housing and the

environment. In her discussion of these areas, Vickers notes that "the exclusion of labour law from the original list may reflect the CACSW's failure to examine the briefs of women's groups within labour" (1994a: 26).

⁴¹ The case against federalism and its negative effects on women is substantiated further by recent OECD-based comparisons of seventeen industrialized countries that shows three out of five "laggards" in providing social protection programs are federal states whereas all of the top five spenders were unitary states. The OECD-based comparison (1990) cited Sweden, France, Netherlands, Belgium and Finland as those states providing the highest level of support for social protection programs. Among the five least supportive countries were Canada, Australia and the United States (Vickers 1994a).

⁴² Micheline de Sève (1992a, 1992b) and Micheline Dumont (1992) maintain that the Québec women's movement remains an enigma frequently misunderstood by feminists outside Québec. For discussions of feminist practice in Québec and the relationship of the movement to the Québec state see Diane Lamoureux (1987) and the Clio Collective (1987).

⁴³ Most devastating were the power contracts negotiated in 1969 for sixty-five years with Hydro-Quebec which robbed the province of much-needed economic rent from the Churchill Falls hydro-electric facility (Summers 1994: 15).

⁴⁴ In the election of October 1971, the Conservatives won 52% of the population vote, but elected only one member more than the Liberals. Smallwood caused a controversy by remaining in office until January of 1972 when Moores took over as Premier.

⁴⁵ The relationship between the federal government had deteriorated in part owing to Smallwood's harsh treatment of union movements which brought him into conflict with both Prime Minister Diefenbaker and Opposition Leader Pearson.

⁴⁶ The concept of province-building has been used to describe the manner in which provincial states have adopted competitive strategies of pursuing economic growth and self-reliance at the expense of one other, particular with respect to natural resource development. For a full-length study of the phenomenon of province-building, see Richards and Pratt (1979). Other examinations of this phenomenon can be found in Young, Faucher and Blais (1984) and Stevenson (1988).

⁴⁷ Constitutional protection for denominational education was a condition of Newfoundland's entry in Confederation. The province's twenty-seven school boards are controlled currently by the Roman Catholic, Amalgamated Protestant and Pentecostal churches.

⁴⁸ Peckford's election coincided with the discovery of the Hibernia offshore oil field and later, the Terra Nova, White Rose and Hebron fields which were touted as the cure for Newfoundland's economic ills. The battle for Newfoundland control over offshore resources had been initiated earlier under Frank Moores. In 1977, the Newfoundland government argued that the province had not surrendered control over the continental shelf as part of its joining of Confederation. Bruce Pollard explains that the preoccupation with resource management issues in Newfoundland politics is a consequence not only of Newfoundland's export-driven economy but is due to the fact that Newfoundland is "perhaps the most constrained of all governments in Canada in its ability to implement policy autonomously" (1985: 83).

⁴⁹ Although defeated in the courts, Peckford was offered a deal by then Opposition Leader Mulroney that included a promise of co-management of offshore development. Summers (1994) explains that by the time the Atlantic Accord was reached with the Mulroney government in 1985, however, the Newfoundland electorate had grown skeptical of value of the deal and wary of the windfall promised by the Hibernia project. A further mega-project failure occurred in 1988 with the collapse of the Sprung Greenhouse in which the Peckford government had invested \$20 million.

⁵⁰ Overton identifies this romantic and idealized refocus on traditional culture as a convenient vehicle for conservative policies that called for entrepreneurship and a reliance on outport culture in order to limit dependence on the state (1993: 378). He cites examples of how this cultural renaissance was politicized through the Royal Commission Employment and Unemployment (1986) which appealed to rural Newfoundlanders to "return to the ancestral wisdom of the outports in order to become more self-reliant" and support small-scale development (380). Overton argues that "at a time when the state [was] retreating from responsibility for both employment creation and the support of the unemployed, the virtues of outport culture [had] been rediscovered and presented as essential to the construction of a "post-industrial" society (381). This neo-nationalism was evident also during the controversy over seal hunting. Overton explains: "The seal hunt counter-protest [was] more than just a defence of employment and rural living. It [was] a reaction against a perceived cultural assault on what is regarded as a vital Newfoundland tradition (1985: 249).

⁵¹ Refer to McCorquodale (1994) for an analysis of the fisheries crisis.

⁵² Unemployment levels have improved slightly from a 1993 high of 20% to 18.3% in 1995 (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1996: 15).

⁵³ In fact, Newfoundland depends on Ottawa for 44% of its total revenue. Despite its reliance on federal coffers, David Milne argues that the tendency to analyze Newfoundland through a dependency perspective may obscure the extent to which Newfoundland has pursued an independent political role on the national stage, particularly in constitutional negotiations. Milne reminds us that "it was a Newfoundland court responding to a Newfoundland government reference in the spring of 1981 that stopped Trudeau's unilateral resolution in its tracks [and] it was Newfoundland that first used the power in the amending formula to rescind its earlier consent to the [Meech Lake] accord and refused to accept federal pressure to take another final vote after it had become clear that the Manitoba legislature had adjourned hours before the deadline" (1992: 315).

⁵⁴ Rand Dyck (1991: 318-319) outlines the problems of ministerial land speculation and other conflicts of interest that plagued the Davis cabinet as well as the labour disputes with the province's teachers.

⁵⁵ For example, Nelles (1990) reports that between 1983 and 1988, Ontario's real GDP rose by over 33 percent and the provincial growth rate outperformed that of Canada by over 40 percent.

⁵⁶ Consult Haddow (1994) for a discussion of the NDP's spending patterns.

⁵⁷ These reforms included a series of labour code amendments including expansion of the Labour Relations Board, strict limits on the ability of companies to hire replacement workers in strike situations and extension of the right to unionize to domestic, professionals, front-line supervisors and some agricultural employees (Brownsey and Howlett 1992: 167).

⁵⁸ The province's "red tory" image has been described by among others, Wilson (1980), Wise (1990), Nelles (1990) and Williams (1991).

⁵⁹ It is important to note that during the late nineteenth century, Ontario was an advocate of increased provincial rights. Nelles (1990: 92) notes that Ontario during the 1930s and again during the 1960s, sided with Québec in opposing federal intrusions into provincial jurisdictions and calling for further decentralization.

⁶⁰ See Peter J. Smith (1990) for an analysis of the Heritage Fund's role in provincial politics.

⁶¹ In 1982, the federal government created the National Energy Program in response to growing disputes between energy producing and energy consuming provinces over gas and oil prices. By effectively controlling the entire industry, the federal government prevented energy producing provinces like Alberta and Newfoundland from setting world market prices and maintaining control over the use of profits which, following the creation of the NEP, they were obliged to see redistributed across Canada (Robinson and Simeon 1994).

⁶² For an analysis of the Gainers strike, see Noël and Gardner (1990).

⁶³ Richard Sijurdson reminds us, however, that Reform's support is "solidly urban middle class and not a rural phenomenon at all" (1994: 266). For a thorough treatment of the Reform phenomenon, consult Trevor Harrison (1995).

⁶⁴ Garth Stevenson maintains that any explanation of Alberta politics must begin with an acknowledgement of the profound impact of the populist tradition in that province both historically and in contemporary politics. As Stevenson observes, this analysis

seems questionable when migrants from other provinces or other countries account for almost half the population, and explanations based on class homogeneity have even more obviously been overtaken by [historical] events. The preempting of radical dissent by the Social Credit movement in the 1930s cannot fully explain the impressive hegemony of an overtly conservative party in the 1980s. The petroleum-based prosperity of the 1970s declined sharply in the early 1980s, without any discernible effect on the behaviour of the electorate. Even federal-provincial conflict, although it temporarily reached extreme levels under both Aberhart and Lougheed, has not been as much of a constant factor in Alberta's history as is sometimes assumed (1986: 206).

⁶⁵ Ralph Klein's dramatic deficit attack has attracted much scholarly and media attention. For a sample of this literature, see, for example, Lisac (1995), Whyte (1994,) and Neu (1995).

⁶⁶ While capturing 16 seats in the 1986 electoral campaign, the New Democrats were again wiped out in the 1993 vote.

⁶⁷ The question of dividing the NWT dates back to the 1960s when it was promoted primarily by non-Natives of the western Arctic who felt the relatively undeveloped eastern Arctic was slowing down progress in the public and private sectors (O'Keefe 1989: 218).

⁶⁸ The Executive Council, however, continued to be controlled by the commissioner, deputy and assistant commissioner.

⁶⁹ See Sally M. Weaver (1981) for a full treatment of the 1969 federal Statement on Indian Policy.

⁷⁰ For an analysis of these organizations, consult James Frideres (1993), especially Chapters 8 and 9.

⁷¹ See Frideres (1993): 310 for an account of the extension of federal funding to Aboriginal groups first from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and later from other government departments and agencies.

⁷² Today, the assembly's membership numbers twenty-four. Aboriginal members hold fifteen seats.

⁷³ Aboriginals constitute approximately 26 percent of the Yellowknife population, and about 70 percent of the balance of the territorial population.

⁷⁴ One illustration of the relevancy of the migrant populations is found in White (1993) where the electoral reform proposed a residency requirement for voters.

⁷⁵ Some analysts suggest that political parties may well emerge following the division of the territories and the resolution of accommodation for Aboriginal peoples within the new structures of post-division government. On these issues, consult Gurston Dacks (1990).

⁷⁶ This decline in private-sector investment is due largely to the withdrawal of large oil exploration companies after the federal government discontinued petroleum incentive payments in the mid-1980s and the drop in gold, lead and zinc prices that have seriously eroded NWT's mining industry. This downturn has had a devastating impact on labour relations in the NWT as witnessed by the tragic Giant gold mine strike that saw the death of nine men in September 1992. See Devine (1993).

CHAPTER FOUR

Women's Movements and Representational Projects: Political Representation vis-à-vis the State Part I

4.1 Introduction

Sylvia Bashevkin (1993) argues that women's movements in English Canada have displayed a historic ambivalence over balancing their autonomous activism against engagement with conventional politics. Such debates have animated feminist politics in this country for more than a century as movement activists weighed the effectiveness of pursuing women's demands through traditional forms of political representation as opposed to concentrating on strategies for change through alternative representational vehicles. This characterization of feminism in Canada as predominantly 'state-centric' has become commonplace in movement analyses (Cohen 1993; Vickers 1992; Barrett and Hamilton 1986; Wine and Ristock 1991); however, as I will demonstrate in subsequent chapters, depicting women's movements in Canada as exclusively state-focused discounts and distorts much of the history and development of feminist practice during the post-1970s era.

The preoccupation of the literature with explaining the interaction between feminists and the federal state has left the nature of the state-centred representational project at the provincial and territorial levels largely unexplored. As well, most accounts of women's struggle for representation within the state concentrate on women's experiences within electoral politics (Arscott and Trimble 1997b). While I agree with Arscott and Trimble that it is crucial to understand "the presence of women" in electoral contests, legislatures and policy outcomes, my examination of the interaction between

women's movements and provincial and territorial states is somewhat broader in scope.

Chapters Four and Five compare women's movements and their representational projects through the subnational state, paying attention to locale, location and sense of place as identified by Agnew (1987) in order to highlight and account for the variations evident in state-oriented action. The comparison is divided into three parts. This chapter considers women's formal participation in subnational electoral politics in each of four case studies and examines comparatively the linkages between women's movements and the electoral project. The evidence reveals marked differences in women's electoral successes across contexts and significant variations in the extent to which contemporary women's movements engage in electoral politics at the subnational level.

In Chapter Five, I move beyond the realm of electoral politics to investigate other avenues through which women's movements pursue representation vis-à-vis the subnational state. I evaluate the bureaucratic project of women's movements, examining the role of subnational state machinery for women, specifically advisory councils and policy secretariats. I review the establishment of these mechanisms in each context and then compare the extent to which state machinery for women has served as an effective vehicle through which to communicate to the state the demands of provincial and territorial women's movements. Chapter Five also examines the character of the overall lobbying strategy of provincial and territorial movements aimed at the subnational state.

I have three objectives in these chapters: to map the multidimensional strands of women's movements and their state-oriented representational projects; to compare the experiences of women's movements with their

subnational states and, finally, to isolate variables that account for the divergent patterns identified. As I argued in Chapter Two, it is insufficient to rely solely on a narrow political opportunity structure framework to understand women's politics. Instead, my analysis considers both the opportunities available to women through electoral politics and the experience of women's movements in different contexts with the electoral project.

Chapters Four and Five confirm that a strong current of 'state-centric' activism remains a dominant feature of Canadian women's movements in most settings, although the nature of the "state-centredness" of this representational project differs across contexts. In general, the orientations of women's movements to their subnational states exist along a strategic continuum that may be characterized as engaged, ambiguous or detached. I demonstrate that the Newfoundland women's movement has sustained an active engagement with the state since the 1970s, although that engagement has been channelled through government machinery and lobbying rather than electoral politics. By contrast, the contemporary Alberta women's movement has chosen a detached stance vis-à-vis its provincial government in recent years in the face of increasingly hostile regimes, although it was engaged actively with the provincial government through electoral politics in the decades immediately following World War I. In Ontario, the women's movement activism has remained largely state-oriented, yet that orientation has been concentrated primarily at the federal level of politics, leaving the provincial state at times overlooked, collapsed or confused with the federal level. Across the Northwest Territories, the orientation of the women's movements to the subnational state is best characterized as "newly engaged"

as Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women alike are pursuing unique opportunities made available as a consequence of territorial division.

The patterns that emerge, however, also illustrate that these orientations may diverge also among locales within single jurisdictions and may vary over time. Chapter Five documents marked differences in the organizational strategies of women's movements between Edmonton and Calgary, for instance, and between Toronto and the "hinterland" of Ontario, indicating that orientation patterns are somewhat fluid within jurisdictions and influenced by the particularities of locale and location. The evidence of different organizational and strategic approaches among women in the eastern and western Arctic underscore also the profound influence of cultural differences in shaping women's activism. To analyze these patterns, therefore, it is necessary to identify variables that influence women's orientation towards the state in addition to understanding the specificities of the places in which women mount their representational projects.

4.2 The Electoral Project and Legislative Politics

Gotell and Brodie note that there is "an implicit, if not explicit, assumption in most of the literature on women and party politics in Canada that if more women achieved political power, the political system will necessarily be more responsive to women's issues and concerns" (1991: 59). Citing Burt's observation (1988) that "governmental commitment to breaking down gender roles is unlikely without a proportional representation of women in legislative bodies," they caution that the greater numerical representation of women and even feminist women within party structures cannot necessarily be counted on to translate into more gender-sensitive politics (1991: 60). Throughout the history of feminism in Canada, the

relevance of electoral politics as part of an overall strategy to end women's oppression has been much debated. As Lisa Young observes, however, even though feminist strategies have "expanded from an emphasis on lobbying and cultural change to include litigation, 'unconventional' protest and social movement coalitions, electoral undertakings have been a constant, but secondary, part of the movement's action repertoire" (1994: 4). Analyzing the extent to which a successful electoral project and the presence of a "critical mass" of women legislators translates into the adoption of public policy that takes women into account is emerging as a priority item of the feminist political science agenda.¹ While an evaluation of the "success" of the electoral projects in each case is beyond the scope of this thesis, this chapter overviews women's electoral project in each of the case studies and identifies the ties between women legislators and provincial and territorial women's movements. This evidence supports Arscott and Trimble's observation that "the presence and impact of women in political life differs dramatically from province to province, legislature to legislature" (1997a: 3). A discussion of some of legislative achievements that have accompanied women's participation in electoral politics at the subnational level is also advanced.

4.3 Case Study: Newfoundland

In a recent analysis of women's role in Newfoundland electoral politics, Jane Arscott (1997) chronicles the province's history of serious underrepresentation² of women. Prior to 1996, only eight women held a seat in the Newfoundland House of Assembly, rendering women's provincial electoral prospects quite dismal. Before 1996, women accounted for only 5.8% of the legislature's membership, giving it the lowest rate of female participation at the provincial or territorial level.³ The absence of women

from Newfoundland provincial politics was replicated at the federal level as well where women were first elected to the House of Commons only in 1993,⁴ and the first Newfoundland woman, Ethel Cochrane, was not appointed to the Senate until 1986. Newfoundland women were first eligible to vote and stand for election in 1925.⁵ Five years later, Lady Helena Squires, wife of the Newfoundland prime minister, won a by-election that saw her serve until 1932.⁶ Following Squires' defeat, however, no other woman was elected until 1975, a fact that meant that Newfoundland's entry into Confederation in 1949 was "decided without any direct representation from the Island's women" (Arscott 1997: 323).

Arscott posits several hypotheses for the paucity of women legislators in Newfoundland politics such as provincial party organizations which resist commitments to sex parity measures, low rates of legislative turnover and the "traditionalism" of the Atlantic politics that may impact negatively on electing women legislators (1997: 313). Whatever the explanation for their invisibility within legislative politics, the lack of women provincial representatives meant that women's voices within the House of Assembly were few throughout the development of contemporary feminism. In the immediate post-Confederation period, women's participation in legislative politics was frowned on by the province's influential first premier. Lillian Bouzane, a former Director of Labrador Affairs, recalls that Joey Smallwood adamantly opposed women as provincial politicians. Bouzane remembers that Smallwood, "made it clear to her that he had no use for women in the House of Assembly or in his cabinet" (as quoted in Patey 1992: 30). The political environment in which contemporary Newfoundland feminism organized in the 1970s, therefore, would appear to mitigate against a strategy of engagement with the provincial state given women's virtual exclusion

from both the House of Assembly and the provincial bureaucracy during the Smallwood years. In fact, it was not until Smallwood's Liberals had relinquished power to the Conservatives in 1972 that a women member again took a seat in the House of Assembly. Liberal Hazel McIlsac's election in 1975 in the riding of St. George's coincided with International Women's Year and made her the first post-Confederation Newfoundland woman to serve in provincial politics. Although McIlsac, a former town clerk, rejected being labelled a feminist,⁷ her election constituted a milestone in Newfoundland women's history.

Although electoral victories for women were rare, it is important to note the early successes of the women's movement in lobbies with the Tory government led by Frank Moores. The campaign for the inclusion of marital status and sex as prohibited grounds for discrimination within the provincial Human Rights Code yielded quick results in 1974 and consolidated feminists' commitment to continue a concentrated lobby effort at the provincial and federal levels despite the absence of women from the provincial legislature. Later, the transfer of power from Moores to Peckford in 1979 afforded Newfoundland feminists new opportunities to advance their demands on the state. In a province where leaders have been able to exert considerable influence over provincial agendas (Dyck 1991), the willingness of Peckford to take on women's demands greatly facilitated women's continued engagement with their the provincial state. Beth Lacey states simply that in Newfoundland "premiers hold all the power ... you can get everyone on side, but if the premier's not on side, you don't get anywhere" (Personal Interview, 16 August 1992). In the late 1970s, feminists such as Lynn Verge and Ann Bell realized this fact and involved themselves in Peckford's leadership bid once they had ascertained his openness to feminist demands.⁸ Bell acknowledges

that their decision to pursue elected office through the Progressive Conservatives rather than Liberal Party was not motivated ideologically but represented a careful calculation about which party would best respond to a feminist agenda (Interview with Ann Bell 15 July 1988). With the election in 1979 of Progressive Conservative Lynn Verge, a Corner Brook lawyer, however, a feminist presence was established in Newfoundland's legislature. Verge and her PC colleague Hazel Newhook, who, like Verge, had been drawn into the political arena by leader Brian Peckford,⁹ were appointed to his cabinet. The third woman to serve in the Conservative government, Ida Reid, was also hand-picked by Peckford to run. Arscott observes that "[t]hroughout the 1970s, until the change of government in 1989, the surest way for a woman to become an MHA was for her to gain the Conservative nomination" (1997: 324).

From 1979 onwards, progress on women's equality issues within the House of Assembly (and, as I will argue in Chapter Five, the bureaucracy) was facilitated significantly by Verge's presence. A founding member of the Corner Brook Status of Women Council and Newfoundland's first representative to NAC, Verge was a high-profile Cabinet minister through the Peckford years, assuming the portfolios of Education (1979-1985), Justice and Attorney General (1985-1989) and Consumer Affairs and Communications (1989). These positions allowed her to solidify a provincial profile and advocate for women's equality within the Cabinet.¹⁰ The Peckford government proved quite open to women's equality demands, adopting a policy of gender equity in government appointments to boards and commissions, creating the provincial advisory council and the women's policy office, providing initial funding for transition houses, support for enforcement agencies and adopting pay equity legislation. Verge retained

close contact with the women's community throughout her tenure and acted as a vital link between grassroots women's organizations and the provincial state. In 1989, when the Progressive Conservatives fell to defeat, Verge was re-elected and joined in House by Liberals Sharnie Duff, a St. John's city councillor and Patricia Cowan, a former teacher and head of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association who in 1991 became the province's first woman Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. Verge's prominence in provincial politics meant that during her years in opposition, she could continue to lobby vigorously for feminist demands, frequently confronting Premier Clyde Wells regarding the situation of Newfoundland and Labrador women.¹¹ In 1993, the Liberals elected Kay Young, who at that time was President of the Canadian Farm Women's Network. Young assumed the post of Minister of Social Services and Minister Responsible for the Status of Women in 1994. In 1995, Verge became the first woman to lead a provincial party in Newfoundland when she assumed leadership of the Progressive Conservatives.

Women's sparse representation in the House throughout the modern era generated little concern among male provincial politicians. At a Provincial Women's Lobby held in 1987, for instance, when questions were raised as to why only one woman (then Justice Minister Lynn Verge) sat in the governing Progressive Conservative caucus, the members of the Tory caucus in attendance laughed, raised their arms simultaneously and said "it's not our problem" (McKim 1987: A1).¹² Since that incident, however, the issue of female legislative representation was broached by NDP leader Jack Harris who in 1992 introduced a resolution to the House of Assembly that, if successful, would have introduced gender parity into the legislature through a return to the Newfoundland tradition of dual-member constituencies.¹³

The NDP maintained that ridings served by a male and female representative would eliminate the problem of women's underrepresentation and improve the overall working of the House of Assembly. Harris suggested that

the approach [of the House] might well be different with an equality of women and men, that the approach in seeking solutions to the problems that we face would perhaps be more people oriented, more oriented to the needs of families, more oriented to the needs of people who we see suffer in our society, and perhaps greater working together in order to find solutions to the problems we all face" (NF House of Assembly Debates, 18 March 1992: 257).

As Arscott notes, the main speaker against the resolution was Government House Leader Winston Baker who dismissed the proposal as 'totally undemocratic' (1997: 321).¹⁴ By contrast, Progressive Conservative Leader Ien Simms recommended the issue be submitted to an all-party House committee for further study. Although the resolution was defeated, the House proceedings show that considerable interest in the proposal existed within the legislature.

While it is quite evident that women legislators have not constituted a "critical mass" in Newfoundland politics, Arscott's (1997) research reveals that, on occasion, women legislators have been able to muster cross-party support to further the debate on women's equality needs. M.L.A Lynn Verge's attack on the 1991 budget, for example, was not repudiated by Minister of Employment and Labour Relations Patricia Cowan. Verge harshly criticized the Wells government's proposed rollback on pay equity, cuts to health care that would disproportionately impact on women workers, public service cuts and budget decreases to the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women and the Women's Policy Office. Cowan used this critique to further the debate on the question of how caucuses expect women to be represented

adequately simply by having a woman member responsible for "women's issues."¹⁵

The provincial election of February 1996, however, represents a breakthrough in female representation, with seven novice women MHAs elected to the House for a total of 14.6% female membership in the House of Assembly. Premier Tobin also appointed a record four women to Cabinet posts. Also noteworthy is Labrador's election of Yvonne Jones in the riding of Cartwright-L'Anse au Clair, marking the first female independent elected anywhere in Canada outside the territories since 1918. Despite this watershed in female representation, the defeat of Progressive Conservative leader Verge by seven votes in this election, and her subsequent resignation from her party's leadership, constitutes a major blow to feminist politics in the province. As the case of women's history as legislators in Ontario proves, however, gains in the numerical representation of women may not indicate a permanent improvement in the level of representation by women or signal better representation for women.¹⁶

4.4 Case Study: Ontario

Despite achieving the right to vote in 1917¹⁷ and the right to hold office in 1919, women have been present as Ontario legislators only since 1943 when CCF members Rae Luckock and Agnes Macphail took their seats at Queen's Park. Ontario women entered the federal House of Commons twenty-two years earlier than Queen's Park, however, when Macphail sat as a member of the Progressives (and later the United Farmers of Ontario) from 1921 to 1940. Cairine Wilson, Canada's first woman Senator was chosen from Ontario in 1930. As the province's first women MPPs, Macphail's advocacy of equal pay for equal work and Luckock's demand that women's role in child-rearing be

recognized as "of inestimable value to the state" (as quoted in Dawber 1994: 35) shows that equality for women has long been sought by women legislators within Ontario provincial politics.¹⁸ Between 1943 and 1995, 61 women members served in the legislature with more than half assuming Cabinet posts. Female representation in Ontario provincial politics improved dramatically during feminism's second-wave as women's presence at Queen's Park escalated from 1.5% of MPPs in 1971 to 22.3% in 1990. The drop in women MPPs from 28 to 19 (or to 14.6%) following the election of the Harris government in 1995, however, is an important reminder that increases in women's representational levels are neither constant nor guaranteed and that gains achieved can be reversed.

Luckock and Macphail's entry into the Ontario legislature coincided with the beginning of a Tory dynasty that ruled the province for forty-two years. Through over four decades of PC rule, however, Conservative women championed few issues related to women's equality. Hamilton area MPP Ada Pritchard, the first Tory woman member at Queen's Park, sat in the Ontario legislature from 1963-1971 and carefully distanced herself from the women's movement although she supported increasing women's representation within electoral politics:

It is most important, therefore, that political parties begin to separate reality from fantasy and shake off the old attitudes by increasing in very real terms, the representation of women within their ranks, not just as door-knockers, tea-servers and telephoners in election campaigns, but also in the highest ranks of the party, which, of course, are the candidates in election campaigns [A]ll women are interested in the home and the preservation of the race--an obvious outgrowth of this concern is the necessity for women to take an active interest in all levels of government--to study the terms and conditions under which they and their families live, and, wherever possible, to offer

themselves for public office--and strongly support those who do (Ontario Legislative Assembly Debates, 18 July 1968: 5977).¹⁹

During Bill Davis's long tenure as Ontario premier (1971-1985), a handful of women served as part of the government caucus; however, each of the four women in Davis governments entered Cabinet as part of a Tory pre-election promise in 1971 to appoint a women to Cabinet if they could get elected.²⁰ Although these appointments raised the visibility and status of women in Ontario politics, progressive forces within the women's movement found no strong ally among PC women members. Dr. Bette Stephenson assumed senior positions within several Davis cabinets and demonstrated interest in improving the working conditions of women during her time as Labour Minister. Stephenson "failed to come to grips" with the issue of equal pay for work of equal value, however, and opposed universal access to government-subsidized childcare (Labreche 1982: 170). Her support for women's rights was informed by a conservative philosophy that rejected legislative measures specifically targetted to improve women's equality. Dr. Stephenson expressed her position as follows:

[I'm] convinced, absolutely convinced, that given the appropriate period of time, the appropriate change of attitude on the part of both males and females, that women will come into their own full flower ... But I'm an evolutionary, not a revolutionary, and I just think it's going to happen anyway because women are innately superior to men ... It's a very simple argument to say we need equal value legislation ... It's a popular position, but it's wrong. As wrong-headed as it can possibly be" (as quoted in Hoy 1985: 241).

MPP Margaret Birch's opposition to new social programs and her appeal to "the traditional values of 'neighbourliness' and 'family responsibility'" (Novick 1980: 386) frustrated the women's movement during her term as

Provincial Secretary for Social Development (1971-1983); MPP Margaret Scrivener proved similarly uncommitted to the agenda of the women's movement. Susan Fish, although much more sympathetic to feminist goals and supportive of, for example, pay equity and the recognition of gay rights in Ontario's Human Rights Code²¹ failed to emerge as a strong advocate on women's equality issues. Instead, during the Davis years, attention to status of women issues was maintained by opposition members such as Liberal Margaret Campbell who, as a member of the Toronto-based organization, Women for Political Action, brought to Queen's Park a fierce commitment to increasing women's integration into formal politics. Between 1981 and 1984, Sheila Copps added an articulate feminist presence to the Liberal caucus and in 1982 became the first woman in Canada to run for the provincial leadership of a political party.²² In the election of 1975, the NDP elected feminists Marion Bryden and Evelyn Gigantes and Peterborough-area MPP Gillian Sandeman. During their careers as MPPs, Bryden and Gigantes staged a sustained lobby for equal pay for work of equal value legislation.

But despite the limited nature of women's representation at Queen's Park, feminist activism in the early 1970s did not encounter great resistance from Premier Davis who throughout his tenure would cultivate carefully his image as a "moderate" and "middle-of-the-road" politician. The pragmatism that characterized Davis's approach to politics, however, meant that the premier recognized the political value of addressing some of the needs of Ontario women given the emergence of a more visible and vocal women's movement in Ontario at the time. Davis, for example, publicly encouraged businesses to hire more women, although he remained opposed to affirmative action legislation. In 1973, his government appointed career civil servant Ethel McLellan as executive co-ordinator of women's programs to

oversee an increase the number of women in the civil service.²³ The following year, Pauline McGibbon was appointed as Ontario's Lieutenant-Governor, making her the first woman in Canada to hold a viceregal post. During International Women's Year, the Conservatives initiated a program called "Women on the Move--Equal Opportunity 1975" that assigned advisors to sixteen ministries to help promote women. In 1978, the Davis government introduced family law reform in the areas of property settlement, maintenance and support.²⁴ While still rejecting quotas for hiring women in the public service, in 1980 Davis ordered ministers to pursue a "'planned approach' to equal opportunity" by setting yearly targets for hiring or promoting a minimum number of women to jobs in the public service where they were underrepresented (Hoy 1985: 235).

The issue of equal pay for work of equal value, however, remained the dominant legislative item of interest to Ontario women. In 1978, Liberal Margaret Campbell introduced a private member's bill calling for the economic equality of women. A year later, NDP member Ten Bounsall sponsored a private member's bill calling for equal pay for work of equal value. The Tories made clear their support for the principle of equal pay, but refused to enact legislation to entrench equal pay laws.²⁵ In 1984, a resolution by Sheila Copps calling for the equal value concept to be enshrined in law was given unanimous approval in principle by all three parties, but the 1984 amendment by Labour Minister Russ Ramsay only required equal pay among "substantially similar jobs" (Hoy 1985: 236).

By the time Davis retired from politics in 1984, protracted delays on issues such as childcare funding and pay equity had frustrated feminist activists. In the election of 1985 (that coincided with the taking effect of the equality provisions of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms) both

the Liberals and the New Democrats campaigned on promises of legislation on equal pay for work of equal value and better childcare (Dyck 1991: 328). Tory leader Frank Miller, however, showed himself to be seriously out of touch both with the agenda of the women's movement and the progressive wing of the provincial PC party. Rosemary Spiers reports that during the 1985 campaign, Miller "wondered aloud how anyone could evaluate the relative worth of his secretary and his driver, saying 'My secretary can save my job, but my driver can save my life'" (1986: 116).

The election results precipitated the end of the Tory dynasty and prompted the signing of a political accord between the Liberal and New Democrats. To gain the cooperation of the NDP, the accord included a Liberal commitment to implement equal pay legislation and the recognition of daycare as an essential public service. Patricia McDermott argues, however, that the nature of Ontario's pay equity legislation adopted in 1987 which covered both the public and private sector, demonstrated that "the Liberal government was not truly committed to closing the wage gap but introduced pay equity primarily because it had been part of the 1985-87 Liberal-NDP accord" (1992: 137).²⁶

In 1987, bolstered by a land-slide majority Premier Peterson appointed a record number of women into Cabinet, including high-profile feminist and former NAC president Chaviva Hosek as Minister of Housing.²⁷ The optimism that accompanied this breakthrough in women's representation, and, in particular, Hosek's election, was short-lived. Apart from the introduction of the flawed pay equity legislation, the increased number of women legislators produced few gains for women and, arguably resulted in major setbacks for the clout of women in the provincial cabinet. By 1989, Solicitor General Joan Smith had resigned from her position after interfering

in an OPP investigation, Elinor Caplan had resigned as chair of the Cabinet's Management Board over conflict of interest charges and the Patricia Starr affair forced Peterson to drop both Hosek and Culture Minister Lily Munro in an 1989 Cabinet shuffle.²⁸

The increase of women in the upper reaches of power was accelerated dramatically, however, with the unanticipated election of the NDP in 1990. While by 1990, the Ontario Progressive Conservatives, Liberals and the NDP had all adopted special measures designed to increase the participation of women,²⁹ the Ontario NDP had been the most aggressive in ensuring that women gained access to provincial nominations. In 1982, the Ontario NDP made a formal commitment to affirmative action and in 1989, the party adopted a voluntary affirmative action program for woman candidates that involved setting a spending limit of \$5000 for all candidates seeking nominations, a goal of 50% constituencies with woman candidates and 75% of priority ridings allocated to affirmative action target groups including women (Brodie 1991). Although NDP's targets fell somewhat short in the 1990 provincial election, the unexpected victory of the NDP did result in nineteen women securing seats on the government side of the legislature. The Rae government demonstrated its strong commitment to equity by magnifying this to a female representation in cabinet of 40%.

Clearly, the election was a watershed not only in increasing female representation, but also marked the election of at least ten NDP women with experience in the women's movement.³⁰ It also was the first electoral contest in which the Ontario Liberals were led by a woman, Lyn McLeod. The NDP's election on a platform which prioritized economic reforms designed to facilitate women's equality appeared to usher in a period in which the movement could rely on a "woman friendly"³¹ government to address

feminist demands. The electorate's choice of a party which promised policies designed to address gender, racial and class inequalities created a high level of expectation within the women's movement and among social activists in general.³² By autumn, 1991, however, two of Rae's feminist Cabinet ministers had been forced to resign and two others offered Rae their resignation. In April 1991, Evelyn Gigantes resigned after inadvertently breaching privacy guidelines. Gigantes later also resigned her housing portfolio following a return to Cabinet and further controversy. Also in April, Zanana Akande and Elaine Ziemba faced accusations of breaking conflict of interest guidelines. In June, Anne Swarbrick and Shelley Martel offered the premier their resignations after allegations that they had tried to influence the College of Physicians and Surgeons to suspend a doctor convicted of sexual assault. In October of that same year, Akande resigned from Community and Social Services amidst allegations of rent gouging (Collier 1995).

The deficit-reduction campaign adopted by the government and the highly unpopular Social Contract legislation of 1993 brought the Rae government vociferous criticism from feminist, anti-poverty and labour activists.³³ Many reforms lobbied for by the women's movement such as a mandatory employment equity law, stiffer controls on child support defaulters, an expansion of pay equity to cover workers not included in the province's existing legislation, funding for free-standing abortion clinics and increases in daycare spaces were implemented by the Rae administration.³⁴ Burt and Lorenzin's (1997) analysis of the Rae government suggests that the achievement of a critical mass of feminist legislators in Cabinet did little, for example, "to effect a restructuring of the labour market to accommodate gender inequalities in employment options" (1997: 216). They point to

similar disappointments in the areas of income support for women and childcare and argue that even in policy areas where progress was identifiable, the NDP's approach reflected "a continuing shift in the party away from socialist policies and towards a market-driven agenda" (1997: 222).

Additionally, their analysis suggests that feminist members were often reticent to address the particular demands of women's groups for fear of accusations of conflict of interest and, as a result, the NDP government did not open access to the state for the women's movement. Thomas Walkom reports that the Rae government's equity agenda was facilitated by strongly-committed cabinet ministers, but "could be derailed if it interfered with the overriding goal of deficit control" (1994: 213). Walkom documents also the anger of groups like the Ontario Nurses Association and the non-profit childcare sector who, for example, "castigated the weakened pay equity bill as 'shocking' and 'fundamentally misdirected'" (213).³⁵ Cheryl Collier's (1995) comparison of progress on women's equality issues in Manitoba and Ontario between 1990 and 1995, however, is much more positive regarding the record of the NDP than either Walkom or Burt and Lorenzin. Her comparison of "woman friendly" public policy outputs under the Rae and Filmon governments indicates that when analyzed comparatively, the NDP government did yield some significant equality gains for women.

With the election of Mike Harris in June 1995, however, Ontario women found themselves imperiled by a government committed to a radical restructuring of the province's economy and social welfare system guided by neo-liberal principles. In the first year of the Tory mandate, the government instituted an array of measures including welfare cuts of 21.6% and the implementation of workfare, the repealing of employment equity, a \$5 million cut to women's shelters, the end to the NDP government's Bill 40

labour reforms and education and health sectors cuts, all of which serve to make more vulnerable the province's women and children. Former NAC president Sunera Thobani summarized the measures as creating a "more nasty, brutish society" (1995: A25). Around the Cabinet table, women's representation dropped from 40% under the New Democrats to 20% under the Progressive Conservatives. Of the four women who received Cabinet portfolios under Harris, it is interesting to note their participation in the Harris "revolution." Labour Minister Elizabeth Witmer has overseen the imposition of regressive labour measures adopted by the Tories while Marilyn Mushinski handled the scrapping of employment equity. Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, Dianne Cunningham has defended cuts to women's portfolio of over \$4.9 million and denies that the funding cuts to shelters will jeopardize the safety of women fleeing abusive homes (Monsebraaten 1996: A15; Philip 1995: A10).

4.5 Case Study: Alberta

Despite a long and continuing tradition of modest electoral successes by women in Alberta politics, there has been considerable debate within the movement in the post-1970 era over the appropriateness of state-focused activism at the provincial level. Indeed, by the 1990s, the fact that the stance of Alberta feminists to their provincial state might best be termed "detached" represents a dramatic shift away from the pattern characterizing Alberta's early political history. This turn away from the state reflects the fact that many of the women elected to the provincial assembly have supported anti-feminist positions.

Frederick Engelmann depicts Alberta women as having a "long but, on balance, sparse history in the Alberta legislature" (1992: 148). Yet, their

electoral successes prior to the emergence of second-wave feminism were markedly better than either Newfoundland or Ontario. The electoral victories by Alberta feminists in the immediate post-suffrage period established a significant (for the times) presence of women in the legislative assembly. Forty women, several of whom self-identified as feminists, served in the Alberta Legislative Assembly between 1917 and 1996, twenty-four of them for multiple terms. Leaving aside the ten newly elected in 1993, only seven women served a single term. Nine women held a total of twenty-six cabinet positions among them.

Alberta women secured the right to vote and stand for election in 1916.³⁶ Louise McKinney of the Non-Partisan League and Soldiers' Representative Roberta McAdams enjoyed immediate electoral success in the election of 1917. In 1921, Liberal suffrage leader Nellie McClung and United Farmers of Alberta candidate Irene Parlby entered the legislature with Parlby's appointment as Minister without Portfolio making her the first female cabinet minister in the British Empire. Prior to 1967, eleven women sat in the Alberta legislature, despite the fact that until 1975, women had never comprised ten percent of all candidacies (Palamarek 1989: 104). In 1979, Martha Bielish was appointed as Alberta's first woman Senator.

In her 1950 analysis of Canadian women's suffrage, Catherine Cleverdon observes about Alberta that "some of the most enlightened and liberal laws in the dominion are embedded in the province's statutes " (1950: 66). By the post-war period, Alberta women enjoyed factory acts, child protection acts, dower and mother's allowances and the Sex Disqualification Removal Act (ASWAC 1976: 6). Nonetheless, the Alberta women's movement re-mobilized by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women could not continue the equality gains characteristic of the movement's earlier

wave. Despite the early electoral successes and constant presence of women in the Alberta legislature since receiving the right to stand for office,³⁷ Alberta politics largely remained immune to the influence of second-wave feminism that affected electoral projects in Ontario. Linda Trimble's (1992) assessment of the Lougheed years (1971-1985) notes that throughout this administration, attention to women's demands for equality measures was minimal and gender politics remained marginalized. Although the Lougheed government inherited the Citizen's Advisory Board³⁸ appointed by the Social Credit government to respond to the RCSW's recommendations, passage of the Alberta Bill of Rights in 1972 and the Individual Rights Protection Act (IRPA) in 1973 were deemed by Conservatives as adequate responses to the demands of the women's movement because of their prohibition of discrimination based on race, religious beliefs, colour, age, ancestry, place of origin, sex and marital status. Lougheed's appointment of Helen Hunley as Solicitor-General in 1973 marked the first time a woman held a portfolio within Alberta's Executive Council.³⁹ These initiatives led Deputy Premier Hugh Horner to announce proudly in 1976 that, in fact, "legally, in this province, men are equal to women, and women are equal to men," reflecting the government's position that gender equity was *a fait accompli* (Trimble 1992: 224). Women, however, remained absent from the executive level of Alberta politics. Between 1971 and 1979, one woman served in cabinet with that number increasing only to two between 1982 and 1986 (Trimble 1992: 228). In fact, all the women elected between 1971 and 1986 were Progressive Conservatives who "made clear their intent not to 'make waves about women's issues'" (Trimble 1992: 227).⁴⁰ Trimble summarizes the Lougheed years in the following manner:

In the period between 1971 and 1986, the conservatives created few policies designed to help women: 1977 labour regulations offering eighteen week unpaid maternity leave after one year in the job; the Matrimonial Property Act of 1979 which provided a more equitable distribution of marital assets after divorce; and the 1983 Widow's pension act. The Individual Rights Protection Act, passed in 1973, provided little help to women; for instance, it did not protect pregnant working women, who could be fired without recourse (1993: 18).

At first examination, it seemed that the election of Peter Lougheed in 1971 would offer an opportunity for women's equality demands to be translated into public policy. Like Conservative Frank Moores in Newfoundland, Lougheed came to power on the support of the urban middle classes ending a long period of domination by another party. The election of the Progressive Conservatives for the first time in Alberta's history, however, represented little change in terms of ideology or policy. Rand Dyck argues, in fact, that "when Social Credit gave way to the Conservatives, nothing changed except the names and faces" (1991: 490). Early in their term, however, the PCs did implement some legislation welcomed by the women's movement. Trimble argues that while these policies were important for women's rights in Alberta, the women's movement sought much stronger and more substantive reforms areas such as daycare, maternity leave, maintenance enforcement, education, job training, affirmative action and pay equity in the civil service (1992: 223). Women's expectations about substantive reforms rose with the sudden affluence of the province in the mid-70s, but the government showed no intention of translating the spoils of the economic boom into meaningful change for women. In her evaluation of the Lougheed years, Linda Trimble argues that women's needs were excluded from political discourse in part because "feminist ideas and goals were not represented in the legislature and civil service" (1992: 225).

Although women MLAs were present in this period, Trimble documents how the absence in Alberta of a strong feminist presence within the government's ranks impeded progress on women's equality struggles.

Trimble points also to the preoccupation of the Lougheed government with natural resource policy, economic megaprojects and federal-provincial wrangling over resource revenues as diverting attention away from cleavages internal to the province such as class, race and gender issues (1992). Although both Newfoundland and Alberta engaged in similar projects of province-building, the ideological content differed significantly and thus had divergent effects on the women's movement in each place. Province-building in Newfoundland made space on the political agenda for women's equality demands. The neo-nationalism of the Peckford years contained a strong cultural element that included women in its overall ideological vision. It was grounded not only in federal-provincial conflict over resource management, but relied additionally on a neo-nationalist campaign that demanded increased provincial autonomy for cultural as well as economic survival. In Alberta, by contrast, western alienation and separatism relied on arguments for economic autonomy to guard against the exploitation of central Canada and the assumed dominance of Québec within Confederation. Alberta scholar Susan Jackel explains that the combination of a U.S.-imported equal rights liberalism and a culture of women's abnegation within Alberta's pioneer tradition left little space for women to argue the need for special treatment for women or for feminists to gain a foothold within the Alberta state (Personal communication 29 February 1996).

Women's voices in the legislature grew stronger, however, beginning with the election of 1986 when six Progressive Conservative women took their place on the government benches and were joined by three New

Democrats and one Liberal MLA. (These four opposition members became the first women to sit on the opposing side of the Legislature since Nellie McClung in 1921.) Women's representation in the executive was also strengthened with the appointment of four women ministers to the 1986 cabinet. Trimble (1993) argues that their presence coincided with at least symbolic responses to women's demands as challenges to long-standing institutional norms, values and practices began to occur. During this period, the government was forced to respond to women's demands, in part because of the existence of a stronger opposition lobby that was willing at times to work together to press for government action on women's issues.⁴¹ Crucial too was the public identification of some opposition members as feminists (such as NDP MLAs Marie Laing and Pam Barrett) and their deep involvements in the women's movement.⁴² Trimble (1992) attributes the shift in government attention to gender issues which occurred at this juncture not only to the presence of feminist members in the Assembly, but also to the other changes in Alberta politics. The economic recession, for example,

revealed significant class and gender cleavages in Alberta society, divisions the Alberta Tories could no longer easily obscure by pursuing an "anti-Ottawa" strategy. The election of the Progressive Conservatives to national office in 1984 eliminated the external scapegoats and focused Albertans' attention on internal problems such as the recession, the decline of the oil industry and labour relations (Trimble 1992: 233).

The 1989 election saw seats won by 5 opposition and 8 government women. Particularly encouraging was the move of Nancy Betkowski and Elaine McCoy to the senior portfolios of Health and Labour and Women's Issues, respectively. This election, however, also witnessed the injection of a

more explicit social conservatism⁴³ into Alberta electoral politics. While the 1986 Speech from the Throne had stressed the importance of family values and the family unit as the cornerstone of society, the acceleration of a right-wing agenda was evident after 1988, coinciding with the formation of the Reform Party of Canada. This phenomenon translated into a focus by the Conservatives on a "family values" platform. Premier Don Getty's vow in 1988 to combat the "disintegration of the family" became a rallying call for supporters of an anti-feminist, anti-welfare state agenda (Alberta Legislative Assembly Debates, 9 June 1988: 1606). This development created a political opportunity for a virulent and vocal opposition to feminism from right-wing organizations that gained public attention and support and increased access to government members. For example, the provincial profile of the Alberta Federation of Women United for Families (AFWUF), a forerunner of the nationally-based Realistic, Equal and Active for Life (R.E.A.L.) Women, increased as the organization found support within the governing caucus.⁴⁴

AFWUF's desire to influence electoral politics was explicit in its founding mandate. In addition to defining objectives such as the promotion and defense of legislation protecting the traditional family unit and the rights of unborn children, AFWUF pledged itself to providing a vehicle through which to enable women to express concern for women's rights to all levels of government (Blais 1992: 92). In contrast to feminist organizations that expressed ambivalence about state lobbying, AFWUF's strategies were clearly legislatively-focused. AFWUF, for example, published a "Good Citizens, Good Government Manual" delineating how best AFWUF members could lobby politicians and supplied its membership with names and addresses of political figures. This activity was deemed crucial because as AFWUF president Bernadette Lougheed warned:

Individuals who belong to these [feminist and gay rights] groups, often put their own careers first, and so are in positions of power where they can influence change to their liking. What this means is that it is no longer possible to peacefully and quietly raise your family and be oblivious to the political climate of the nation (Blais 1992: 93).

AFWUF also maintained a resource registry to facilitate the appointment of their membership to boards and commissions and involved itself actively in lobbying against issues such as abortion, pay equity and homosexuality. AFWUF's battle against the equality-seeking initiatives of the Alberta women's movement were bolstered by the province's religious right,⁴⁵ but in Don Getty, the right-wing found an eager, although somewhat unexpected, ally. In 1988, Getty unveiled his government's plan for combating "family decay":

Our initiative is to strengthen the family, to provide reasons why the family is stronger, why mothers will stay in the house, in the family while not having care outside of the house. We will have care in the home: parent care, not institutional care. In our society, Mr. Speaker, too often we have as a result of government programs, the family being detracted from. The family has been under attack in North America (Alberta Legislative Assembly Debates, 8 June 1988: 1577).

Championing a family values strategy, Getty established the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families and in 1990 enacted Family Day as a statutory holiday. Such prioritization of "family" issues in Alberta permeated all sectors of the provincial state and moved the Conservatives further towards the right to attract the formerly Social Credit religious right. In this context, for example, the Alberta branch of Secretary of State in 1991 set the family as one of its project priorities for its next five years of funding. The Lieutenant-Governor's Conference on Alberta Families held in 1990

established goals for the Premier's Council on Alberta Families that worked from a narrow definition of the family and excluded feminist organizations from participation (Bremner 1990). The Getty government's approach to dealing with violence against women was also framed within a discourse on family values:

In the Legislative Assembly, Getty stated that family violence is a "very small part of family problems" and asserted that ...We are not going to zero in on that part. We will help, and we support initiatives in that area. But for me a family is a place where love is at work, not destruction and battery, and we are going to try and build in this province a greater strength of families (Blais 1992: 88).⁴⁶

The embrace of a social conservative stance on the part of the Conservatives was powered by the rising popularity of the Reform Party. The RPC's combination of family values ideology and reprivatization agenda had been made explicit in their 1990 publication, Principles and Policies in which the RPC outlined that it "would actively encourage families, communities, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to reassume their duties and responsibilities" (Blais 1992: 20). The Alberta Progressive Conservative's popularity declined throughout the mid-1980s. A 1990 Angus Reid Group-Southam News poll which forecasted that if the Reform Party ran in the next provincial election, the Tories might not win a single seat (Blais 1992: 105-6), explains the vigour with which the Conservatives developed their own "family values" strategy.⁴⁷

Within this context, the marginalization of women's demands for equality within legislative politics became even more blatant with the transfer of the premiership to Calgary MLA Ralph Klein in December, 1992. The retirement of leadership rivals Elaine McCoy and Nancy Betkowski, both of whom had shown support for women's equality struggles, signalled the

silencing of progressive voices on gender issues within the Cabinet.

Journalist Sydney Sharpe saw the loss of McCoy and Betkowski as leaving "[t]he field wide open to Conservative MLAs who hold the Reform Party view that women, the little dears, have no special worries in this wonderful Alberta of ours" (1993: B4). The disdain held by Premier Klein for the rights of Alberta women was evidenced in his appointment of backbencher Calgary Glenmore MLA Dianne Mirosh to the position of Minister Responsible for Women's Issues. Indeed, Mirosh's brief term in that portfolio until July, 1993 inspired the observation that the Klein government represented an "abrupt end to any remaining effort to advance the role of women in politics, business or any other area of life" (Sharpe 1993: B4).

Shortly after her appointment, Mirosh set off a storm of controversy for the Klein administration with comments that guaranteeing homosexual and lesbians protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation would be giving them "rights over and above everybody else" (Cernetig 1993: A5). Later, Mirosh mused publicly that the government might be well advised to scrap the Alberta Human Rights Commission entirely as a cost cutting measure and questioned the appropriateness of the Commission undertaking investigation of complaints based on sexual orientation discrimination (Oake 1993: A2). Mirosh voiced her belief that immigrants to Alberta should only be English-speaking, agricultural and oilfield trained workers. She also decried pay equity and employment equity, arguing that such measures would drive industry out of the province (Ferguson 1993: B1). Buoyed by support from groups such as AFWUF, Victory Christian Fellowship, Healing and Freedom from Homosexuality, and the Alberta Report,⁴⁸ Mirosh also speculated about collapsing the Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues (AACWI) into the Alberta Human Rights

Commission and declined to appoint Chairs of both bodies, which in the case of AACWI threatened its survival.

With the re-election of the Conservatives in 1993, the percentage of women in the legislature increased to 19.3%.⁴⁹ Although several Liberal MLAs identified with the goals of feminism (Trimble 1997: 147), 'gone were the important voices of New Democrat women as Alberta returned to a two-party system. Under this administration, setbacks to women's equality have occurred more explicitly as a consequence of slashed social welfare programs, however, rather than neo-conservative social ideology. Dacks, Green and Trimble (1995) have documented how the Klein agenda has disproportionately disadvantaged women by eroding their economic independence.⁵⁰ Although Trimble's reading of the Alberta legislative debates reveals that Opposition women continue to raise questions regarding the inequities to which Alberta women are subjected,⁵¹ their efforts have failed to dissuade the government from pursuing its deficit-reduction agenda. Trimble (1997) records also the opposition of sitting female Conservative members to policies "for women." Ralph's Klein "revolution" of deficit reduction, privatization and "downsizing" marries an unprecedented program of laissez-faire conservatism to the social conservatism that inspired the Getty years, producing an environment hostile to women's equality demands.⁵²

In the contemporary period, therefore, legislative politics within Alberta have failed to serve as a successful focal point for women's equality struggles. Certainly few Albertan feminists believe that having socially and fiscally conservative women in Social Credit or Progressive Conservative governments was very helpful to the advancement of women. Their symbolic presence has been used to legitimize anti-feminist action and

policies and to justify the abandonment of special bureaucratic mechanisms because "women" are already "represented" through female MLAs. Indeed, it has also been used to de-legitimize feminist demands. Under Ralph Klein, women such as Dianne Mirosh in the Alberta legislature and Cabinet have spearheaded anti-feminist attacks and helped marginalize feminist activism. This parallels Harris's use of female Ministers in Ontario to implement key portions of the "Common Sense Revolution."

Additionally, scholars analyzing the Alberta legislature have stressed its essentially undemocratic character. Due to the long periods of one-party rule, "it has been easy to overlook the Alberta legislature since, to an even greater extent than the nine other provinces, almost all of the action takes place in the Executive branch" (Dyck 1991: 494). Unlike most other provinces, Alberta's legislature has no policy committees. Instead, policy work is conducted by committees of the governing caucus which results in a "quasi-party legislature" unaccountable to the Alberta electorate or difficult for opposition members to hold accountable (Engelmann 1992: 139). In 1992, Premier Klein dissolved sixteen cabinet and caucus committees and replaced them by four standing "super-committees" on natural resources and sustainable development, economic planning, agriculture and rural development and community services. These "super-committees" were designed to enhance the involvement of government backbenchers and offer opportunities for the public to make representations directly to the super-committees. Whether or not these changes "open up" government or concentrate power even more within the executive is a matter of some debate.⁵³ Therefore, while Trimble (1993) shows that women opposition members attempted with some success to represent women's needs, particularly during the Getty years, it is important to recognize that their

representational capacity within the Alberta legislature was severely constrained. These practices, coupled with what Allan Tupper views as the Conservative attitude that "voting in an election every four years is enough citizen involvement and the idea that the public interest is served by a servile Legislature that must never compromise the government's capacity to act," (1992: 463) has meant that Alberta parliamentary politics historically have been difficult for movements to lobby effectively. Tupper's analysis also highlights the significant gap between populist rhetoric of grass-roots participation and the reality of political practices within Alberta.

4.6 Case Study: Northwest Territories

In the absence of partisan politics at the subnational level, women in the Northwest Territories have made significant representational gains in territorial politics. To date, eight women have sat as representatives in the territorial assembly. In 1996, women account for 8.3% of the assembly with two sitting MLAs out of a 24-member caucus. Inuk Manito Thompson, one of two woman MLAs elected in the 1995 election, currently is the sole woman Cabinet member, holding the office of Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs and Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. The highest level of female representation in territorial politics occurred following the election of 1991 when three women (12.5%) were elected, each of whom served as part of the Executive Council. Out of the eight women elected in the history of the NWT, however, four (50.0%) have assumed Cabinet responsibilities.

What distinguishes NWT politics in particular is the role of First Nations women in the Assembly as five out of the eight successful woman candidates (62.5%) have been Aboriginal. This achievement is noteworthy

given the denial of full political participation rights until 1960 for Status Indians and 1954 for Inuit. Federally, NWI was first represented by a woman in 1962 when Isabel Hardie was elected to the House of Commons through widow's succession. In 1988, Ethel Blondin-Andrew became the first Aboriginal woman elected to the House of Commons and assumed the positions of Secretary of State for Youth and, later, Training. Although the NWI has not been represented yet by a woman senator, it is interesting to note that Aetna Bolt, a Coppermine midwife, was considered for appointment as Canada's first woman senator ("Suggest Daughter of 'Eskimo Princess' as First Canadian Woman Senator" The Ottawa Evening Citizen 15 January 1930: 1). The Northwest Territories also has had a female Lieutenant-Governor, Helen Maksagak, since 1994.

The first woman to serve as part of the territorial Council was Lena Pedersen who was elected representative for the Central Arctic on the Council of the Northwest Territories in 1970. Pedersen (often introduced in the Council as the 'wife of' area administrator Red Pedersen) served until 1974. In 1979, Lynda Sorenson, a Yellowknife nurse and consumer affairs advocate, gained election to the newly reconstituted Territorial Assembly, holding the riding until 1983. That same election saw the election of Nellie Cournoyea from the Mackenzie Delta riding of Nunakput, launching what would be a long and illustrious career for the first Aboriginal woman in territorial politics. Cournoyea, an Inuvialuit from Aklavik, was a former announcer and manager at CBC Inuvik who brought to politics a long and distinguished history of involvement in First Nations organizations. Cournoyea was a founding member of the Committee for the Original Peoples Entitlements (COPE), and a former land claims fieldworker for the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC) and the Inuvialuit land claims organization.

During her sixteen year tenure as an M.L.A, she held many Cabinet posts, including Renewable Resources, Communications & Culture, Health, Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, Public Works and Highways as well as serving as Minister Responsible for Workers Compensation Board, the NWT Power Corporation and the Women's Directorate (between 1992-1995). In 1991, when the Assembly held its first ever open vote for government leader and Chair of the Executive Council, Cournoyea was selected to the top post, making her the first Aboriginal woman ever to lead a government in Canada. She retained this post until her resignation in 1995.⁵⁴ Cournoyea gained national attention when she, Mary Simon, a former President of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, and Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC) president Rosemarie Kuptana became the first women to participate in official constitutional negotiations during the debate over the Charlottetown Accord.

Cournoyea was joined in the Assembly in 1983 by Dene Eliza Lawrence. Lawrence, a nurse, brought to the Assembly a deep commitment to the status of NWT women having organized the first Native Women's Association Conference in 1977. Lawrence also acted as a co-organizer of the Northern Women's Coalition Conference in 1983. Like Cournoyea, she had experience within Aboriginal organizations as a former President of a local of the Métis Association. The NWT's second Aboriginal woman Cabinet minister was Métis teacher Jeannie Marie-Jewell who served between 1987 and 1995. During her two terms of office, Marie-Jewell held portfolios as Minister of Social Services and Personnel as well as Minister Responsible for the Women's Secretariat, Youth, Workers Compensation Board and the Highway Transportation Board. Marie-Jewell also acted as Speaker of the Assembly, but resigned the position in 1995 to pursue conflict of interest allegations against Public Works Minister (now Premier) Don Morin.

In 1991, Rebecca Mike, an Inuk interpreter from Baffin Island, entered the Assembly and assumed responsibility for Social Services and Municipal and Community Affairs and Personnel until 1995. Mike faced a barrage of criticism during her term as a Cabinet Minister, culminating in a probationary period following a Cabinet review and a non-confidence vote after some MLAs protested that she was not performing her role adequately. She resigned her Cabinet post in January, 1995 after being assaulted in a liquor-related incident in the dry community of Pangnirtung and publicly insisting that she had been pressured to resign by Premier Nellie Cournoyea and her cabinet colleagues (Schmidt 1995). The October 1995 election witnessed the defeat of incumbents Marie-Jewell and Mike and the election of two new female members, Jane Groenewegan, a business person from Hay River and Manitok Thompson, a teacher and language consultant.

Among the Aboriginal women elected to the Legislative Assembly, feminism has played a negligible role. Jeannie Marie-Jewell, for example, rejects identification as a feminist, preferring instead to describe herself as "more concerned that people as a whole are treated fairly" (Illnik 1990: 39). When first elected in 1987 as one of two women in the Assembly, Marie-Jewell dismissed any suggestion that the fact she was a woman would influence her performance in any way (Harper 1987). Similarly, when asked about the significance of being the first Aboriginal woman to lead a government, Nellie Cournoyea responded: "I think it's very much a Southern perspective to bring attention to the fact that I'm a woman" (Dickie 1992: 27). Despite a reluctance to embrace feminism, the fact that the NW1 has had three Aboriginal women Cabinet Ministers responsible for the women's portfolio has ensured that First Nations women are active in ensuring women's equality.

Undoubtedly, the success of high-profile Aboriginal women such as Nellie Cournoyea in gaining entry to the Assembly and ultimately rising to the position of Premier has opened up the realm of electoral politics to other First Nations women. Cournoyea's profile both within the NWT and across Canada had a positive impact on women's, and particularly Aboriginal women's, role in northern politics. Journalist Marina Devine points to the Assembly's 1994 Zero Tolerance Declaration on Family Violence against women as one of the most significant legacies of Cournoyea's term as premier (1995: 36).⁵⁵ Reviews of Cournoyea within the NWT women's community, both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal, however, remain mixed. Some women argue that Cournoyea's liberal perspective on gender relations and her unwillingness to acknowledge that women faced structural and attitudinal barriers to achieving full equality with men diverted attention away from gender-based oppression during her term of office (Personal interview Arlene Hache, 29 February 1996). Cournoyea has stated, for example, that she is unconvinced that special obstacles face women politicians (Illnik 1990: 40). Other feminists concur that, while Cournoyea was a "good role model" for NWT women, she "was never an advocate for the concerns of the [Advisory] Council" and "didn't have much sensitivity to women who weren't as strong as her" (Confidential interview 1 March 1996).

The consensual, non-partisan political system of the NWT offers unique opportunities for political participation unavailable to women in other Canadian jurisdictions such as financial barriers imposed by party nomination processes⁵⁶ and the restrictions of party discipline endured by women politicians elsewhere. Freedom from the constraints of party politics has meant that women, both Native and non-Native, have been freer to mount political candidacies; however, women politicians in the North have

faced other challenges such as cultural stereotypes about the role of women in society and systemic barriers such as a chronic shortage of daycare facilities in the North.⁵⁷ The vast distances involved in travel to Yellowknife impose an additional barrier to women interested in running for political office at the territorial level. In particular, this has affected Aboriginal women's political participation given that the majority of the NWT's non-Native population resides in Yellowknife and, therefore, enjoys readier access to government. As well, poverty and lack of education remain significant obstacles to Aboriginal women's involvement in electoral politics.⁵⁸ The realm of electoral politics still remains somewhat unfamiliar to many First Nations peoples, although the system has incorporated some key elements of indigenous political practices such as consensual decision-making.⁵⁹ For many Aboriginals, the territorial state lacks legitimacy given its roots in colonialism, despite the fact that First Nations peoples currently hold fifteen out of twenty-four Assembly seats. Marsha Argue insists, however, that women in the NWT, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, 'haven't given up on the state.' She points to the notable successes of women's lobbying in the area of anti-violence legislation, reform of the justice system, access to safe abortion procedures and affirmative action programs as evidence that the territorial state has not been impervious to women's equality demands in the NWT (Personal interview, 1 March 1996).

The most pressing issue in territorial politics today is the impending division of the territories set to occur in 1999. For women, the plan to institute dual-sex constituencies in the new eastern Arctic territory of Nunavut is of particular interest. In 1994, Rosemarie Kuptana asserted that women who have been excluded from key roles in negotiating the Nunavut land claim package "are an immense resource for Nunavut" (Bremer 1994:

A15). Arguing that women have been seriously underrepresented in the Nunavut Implementation Commission (NIC), Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) and the Nunavut MLAs caucus,⁶⁰ Kuptana called for guaranteed representation in the Nunavut legislature and volunteered to work on a proposal with other women to show how they can be included in the new legislature. Her remarks evinced strong reaction from other Native politicians. Kitikmeot MLA Kelvin Ng, for example, retorted that if women get guaranteed representation, "what is to stop disabled, youths and elders from asking for the same right" (Bremer 1994: A15). Armed with international research on women and alternative representational systems and rejecting charges that women constitute a "special interest group," Kuptana persisted in lobbying vigourously for some form of guaranteed representation for women, insisting that "[a] Nunavut legislative assembly made up of 50 percent men and 50 percent women would work far more effectively for the people of Nunavut than one made up of a disproportionate number of men and women" (1994: 9). The lobby for dual-member constituencies was taken up also by Pauktuutit (the Inuit Women's Association).⁶¹ Pauktuutit President Martha Flaherty lobbied passionately for the dual-member model, insisting that the creation of Nunavut afforded the Inuit a unique opportunity to "strive for excellence rather than compromise on a modified southern model that does not even meet the needs of many of the residents of southern Canada" (1995: 2). Her appeal was framed around highlighting the importance of maintaining the Inuit family to ensure the future of Nunavut:

Many of the crises facing our communities such as addictions, suicide, violence against women and children, childcare and health issues such as sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS are seen as "women's issues." These are all self-government issues, for until we

have healthy individuals, families and communities, we will not have a healthy future for the Inuit and Nunavut (1995: 2).

When the Nunavut Implementation Commission released "Two-member Constituencies and Gender Equality: A 'Made in Nunavut' Solution for an Effective and Representative Legislature" for consultation in December 1994, it justified the proposal not just on grounds of equality, arguing also that two-member constituencies could solve the problem of an otherwise too small legislative assembly that might be ineffective.⁶²

The dual-member system has generated considerable debate as well among women in the western Arctic who are engaged in constitutional negotiations around issues of governance for the new western territory. Fearing that they were being overlooked in the planning for the western territory, women have organized a series of conferences to advance their positions on constitutional issues. While non-Native women are lobbying vigorously for a system of guaranteed representation to parallel the Nunavut example, ambivalence over the proposal has been voiced by some Aboriginal women. Dene bureaucrat Bertha Norwegian, current Special Adviser to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, expresses doubt that high-profile Aboriginal women would want to run as women candidates under a dual-member system. Citing the examples of Cournoyea, Blondin and even Kuptana, Norwegian speculates that if the system is adopted, these women may, in fact, exhibit little interest in electoral contests in which they find themselves segregated from male candidates and obliged to run solely "as women." Norwegian speculates that within the eastern Arctic, there is more support for guaranteed representation among men

because of concerns about the functioning of the new legislature than there is interest among Inuit women (Personal Interview, 1 March 1996).

Nevertheless, after extensive consultation with women across the western NWT, the NWT Native Women's Association (NWTNWA) in conjunction with the Status of Women Council of the NWT have proposed three different options for guaranteeing 50% female representation in a new Western Territory Constitution Act to the Constitutional Development Steering Committee.⁶³ Western Arctic women have explored multi-member systems that would guarantee women's representation at regional and territorial levels, a direct-election system that would require a quota to ensure women's representation and a dual-member constituency model similar to that endorsed by the Nunavut Implementation Committee. While the dual-member system is the current choice of the NWT Native Women's Association and the NWT Status of Women Council, the need to balance not just gender, but also Aboriginal representation for the Dene, Métis and Inuvialuit populations renders guaranteed representation a much more complex issue in the western territory.

Currently, women in both the eastern and western regions of the NWT are negotiating new relationships with state structures at a moment of profound political transformation. This unique opportunity to be involved in state-building affords women a chance to participate in shaping still uncongealed structures that can accommodate their needs and demands. Throughout the NWT, aboriginal and non-aboriginal women alike currently have little interest in party politics because they recognize the barriers they can place in women's way (Personal interview Marsha Argue, 1 March 1996; Personal interview Bertha Norwegian, 1 March 1996). In fact, the threat of party politics, already well established at the federal level, represents an

additional reason for women's insistence for constitutional guarantees of representation prior to division.

Aboriginal women's future relationships to their territorial states, however, will continue to be defined most fundamentally by the cultural traditions of their own nations. In the eastern Arctic, where a homogeneous Inuit population dominates, women are well placed to argue for a strong voice in electoral politics. The Nunavut proposal for guaranteed representation based on sex should not in any way be interpreted as a radical innovation inspired by the influence of outside influences such as southern feminism; rather, the proposal acknowledges the traditional role of Inuit women in their society and signals a return to established cultural practices. Rosemarie Kuptana explains that "the role of Inuit women in politics is very much in keeping with our tradition" (Devine 1993: 41).

Scholarship on Inuit women confirms Kuptana's remarks. Research by Freeman (1984) and McElroy (1976) evidences that Inuit women have never been excluded from membership in either Inuit councils or organizations. Kroesenbrink-Gelissen (1993) notes that issues such as education and childcare that are of particular interest to women are well integrated as agenda priorities within Inuit politics. Consequently, women have experienced less resistance from their menfolk to their priorities than have their sisters in other aboriginal nations. Until the post-war period, most Inuit lived among their families and extended families in small nomadic camps. It was not until the 1950s and 1960s that the Inuit of the NWT were required to send their children to school. In a survey conducted by Pauktuutit in 1991, Inuit women recalled how they were the traditional decision-makers within the camps.⁶⁴ Once permanent settlements were established throughout the territories, and particularly as women began to enter a wage economy,

women channelled their political participation through local community work where they remained active leaders. The Pauktuutit study found also that women believe that respect for their roles and responsibilities declined once permanent settlements were established and families had access to consumer goods and a market economy (1991: 11). Inuit women expressed satisfaction with the roles assumed by women in local leadership, but were dissatisfied with the participation level of Inuit women at the regional and national level and supported a mandatory 50% representation for women on boards and committees. The widespread support for some system of guaranteed representation in the new Nunavut assembly, therefore, has longstanding roots in Inuit heritage and harkens back to a era still well within the memory of many Inuit women elders.

In the western Arctic, by contrast, the existence of a decidedly more heterogeneous population makes women's demands for representation within a reconfigured state more complex. In the Dene and Métis cultures, the traditional place of women in leadership roles was more restricted than in the Inuit tradition and women do not enjoy the same legacy of a well-defined public role. This different set of cultural norms has been reflected in recent constitutional negotiations as male Aboriginal leaders in particular have resisted women's demands for formal participation in constitutional talks. Support for a system of guaranteed representation for women within a new western territory assembly, therefore, has been more difficult to garner, among both Aboriginal women and men.⁶⁵ The constitutional negotiations, however, have provided an important opportunity for collaborative work between First Nations and white women, and, at least in the western Arctic, may signal a new era of state-centred mobilization that transcends cultural

divisions as women mould state structures and representational practices that demand the presence of women.

4.7 Conclusion

The purpose of this comparative examination of electoral projects was to illustrate the diversity of women's experiences of conventional politics in each of the case studies and to scrutinize the linkages between women's movements and their subnational states through elite political participation. While it was not my goal to analyze the reasons behind the variations in women's representational levels, the evidence does reinforce the point that representation for women is, indeed, "more than an issue of numbers" (Gotell and Brodie 1991). The "success" of the electoral project for women's movements clearly cannot be measured simply in terms of increased levels of female participation. The case of Alberta where representation by women has a long history, calls into question the view that electing more women in official politics is necessarily "good" for women. In recent years, Alberta feminists have found few allies in legislative politics, and the combination of an increasingly hostile provincial state, a state-oriented right-wing lobby and a weak legislative system has translated into few opportunities for feminist influence in Alberta electoral politics.

By contrast, in Newfoundland where women have been virtually excluded from legislative politics, the women's movement appears not to have questioned the strategy of working to elect more women to the House of Assembly, particularly as they have been able to secure some legislative gains for women within a context of limited representation by women. At both the provincial and federal levels, Newfoundland women continue to prioritize the electoral project as an important element of feminist organizing. Only

the experience of a more successful electoral project as realized in the 1996 provincial election may challenge their commitment to electoral politics if further equality gains are not registered as a consequence of the women's increased participation.

As feminists in Ontario compare their experience of the Rae government against the current Harris regime, the extent to which electoral politics at the provincial level is targetted as an important avenue for feminist involvement may well change as the provincial state appears more closed to representation for women than at any time since 1970. The Ontario women's movement currently faces a strategic choice of remobilizing within provincial politics to attempt to reclaim lost ground or training its sights on increased participation in federal politics.

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women in the Northwest Territories confront a completely different set of circumstances. The possibility of designing electoral systems to guarantee equal representation for women has mobilized them to lobby collectively for representation within institutions long ignored by many First Nations women. Although state legislated discrimination against Aboriginals delayed their entry into federal politics until the 1950s and 1960s, for NWI Aboriginal women, their activity as political agents coincided with the political development of the NWI in the 1960s. Consequently, Aboriginal women have been able to make enviable strides in electoral politics within a relatively brief period. The NWI experience of electoral politics for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women throws into sharp relief the barriers imposed elsewhere by party politics.

Taken together, the cases confirm that party ideology plays a minimal role in determining women's electoral and legislative fortunes. Progressive

Conservative governments have proven on the one hand hostile to feminism in Alberta and contemporary Ontario and receptive to women's equality agendas in Newfoundland and, to a lesser degree, in Ontario during the 1970s. As well, an NDP government did not (or could not) deliver on policies sought by the women's movement, despite a critical mass of women in cabinet. Finally, the comparisons reveal also that the openness of premiers or territorial leaders to women's equality demands is crucial in making space for women's movements within subnational politics, since they are more personalized than federal politics. In each case, women's movements have weighed their experiences and opportunities with electoral politics in order to chart further strategic action directed towards the state. In Chapter Five, I compare two additional trajectories of women's movements and their representational projects vis-à-vis subnational states.

4.8 Notes to Chapter Four

¹ On the issue of what constitutes a "critical mass" of women legislators and its impact on legislative politics, see S.J. Carroll (1984, 1992) and H. Skjeie (1997). In the Canadian context, the work of Linda Trimble (1992, 1993, 1997) on the presence of women in the Alberta Legislature is most instructive.

² The idea of the "underrepresentation" of women was introduced by the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing (1991) and refers to extent to which the proportion of women in legislatures is less than their proportion in the population.

³ For further statistical analysis of women's participation in subnational politics, see Arscott and Trimble (1997b) and Studlar and Matland (1996).

⁴ The province's first female federal members were Bonnie Hickey (Liberal--St. John's East) and Jean Payne (Liberal--St. John's West)

⁵ Arscott (1997) notes that like Nova Scotia, Newfoundland did not explicitly bar Aboriginal peoples, either on or off-reserve, from voting

⁶ Arscott recounts the irony of this election in that prior to Lady Helena's election, her husband, Prime Minister Squires, had "vehemently opposed" female suffrage (1997: 322).

⁷ McIssac dismissed the notion that her sex played a role in either her election or performance in the House. "That fact that I was a woman didn't come up ... I didn't play the feminist part I enjoyed every minute of it (the House of Assembly). I had no problems whatsoever. I went there as a member, not as a woman taking on all those men" (Payne 1991: 15).

⁸ Although as I will show in Chapter Five, Peckford was helpful in facilitating the creation of status of women machinery for women in Newfoundland, on the federal stage, Peckford's commitment to women's equality was less resolute. During the constitutional negotiations of 1980-81, Peckford inspired the ire of Newfoundland feminists through his opposition to the inclusion of sex equality in the Charter of Rights of Freedoms.

⁹ Newhook, a former mayor of Gander, was asked personally by Peckford to run while Verge recalls that her decision to run for the PCs was influenced by her first impression of Peckford. "He was [at that rally] so different from the others. I was immediately struck by his superiority and his sensitivity to women's issues" (Gray 1982: 130, emphasis in the original)

¹⁰ It is interesting to note that, in the tradition of Cabinet Ministers like Judy LaMarsh and Monique Begin, Verge declined the portfolio of Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

¹¹ Claire Hoy depicts Verge as "something of Wells's nemesis" (1992: 93). As a former colleague of Wells in a Corner Brook law firm, Verge reportedly left the firm after a conversation with Wells in which he "told me there was no place in the firm for me because I might have babies" (94). She later beat Wells by 138 votes in Humber East in the election of 1989.

¹² In the same report, feminist Dorothy Inglis noted that the Tory government was to be "congratulated on many of [its] proposals and gave Premier Peckford "full credit for being the initiator of many of those proposals" (McKim 1987: A1).

¹³ Dual-member constituencies were used in the Newfoundland House of Assembly to provide for balance between religious denominations. The ridings of St. John's East, St. John's West and Harbour Main were served by two members in 1949, 1951 and 1955. The system has been employed also in Prince Edward Island where constituencies are represented by two members. This system will be abolished with the next provincial election.

¹⁴ Government House Leader Baker argued that to impose legislation that called for dual member ridings would interfere with the democratic process. In a line of reasoning all too familiar to feminists, Baker questioned that if women's representation was guaranteed, how would the House then ensure equal representation for other "interest groups" such as youth and low-income persons (NF House of Assembly *Debates*, 18 March 1992: 257-260). Baker himself was a former Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

¹⁵ See Arscott (1997: 331-332) for a more complete summary of this exchange.

¹⁶ Arscott and Trimble differentiate between representation by women and representation for women. The distinction refers to the number of women holding public office, or representation by women, as opposed to representation for women which can be accomplished by either men or women and signals representation that takes women's perspectives and diverse needs into account. Their position is that feminist representation will most likely occur "when it is undertaken both by and for women" (1997a: 4).

¹⁷ Aboriginal women did not receive the provincial vote in Ontario until 1954.

¹⁸ Agnes Macphail's legacy in Ontario politics is documented in Terry Crowley (1990), Joan Sangster (1989) and Peg Stewart and Doris French (1959). For an account of Luckock's long-overlooked role in provincial politics, see Michael Dawber (1994.)

¹⁹ In her final speech to the Ontario legislature in 1971, Pritchard offered a strong endorsement of the recommendations of Royal Commission on the Status of Women and called on women to support the greater participation of women in politics. "... all women over 21 have a vote [and] a woman's strong support for her intrepid sister will turn the tide and give a better balanced power so badly needed and permit women to play a vigorous part, to serve and be heard in the land" (Ontario Legislative Assembly *Debates* 17 June 1971: 2898). Pritchard's colleague, NDP member Margaret Burwick who sat in the legislature between 1967 and 1971, sustained a strong lobby for the extension of daycare throughout her term at Queen's Park, although did not address directly the situation of women's absence from political life. See, for example, Ontario Legislative Assembly *Debates* 27 May 1968: 3394-3399.

²⁰ In the Cabinet shuffle following the election, however, neither of the two women elected were elevated to Cabinet. Margaret Birch became the first Ontario woman Cabinet Minister in 1973 when Davis appointed her Minister without Portfolio.

²¹ For an account of Fish's role in the passage of Bill 7, see David Rayside (1988). Rayside's discussion of Bill 7 also records the work of NDP MPP Evelyn Gigantes on this issue.

²² See Copps (1986) for an account of her experiences as a provincial MPP.

²³ Jill Conway describes the Ontario Conservative government at this time "truly progressive" and notes that the "legislative committee had refused to vote the appropriations for the University of Toronto unless they were assured that there was a mechanism in place to correct the salary inequities [between men and women] revealed by the university's own salary data" (1994: 187).

²⁴ For a feminist analysis of these reforms, consult Roxana Ng (1980).

²⁵ Davis explained: "We [the Tories] don't object to it in principle at all. I've debated this with my wife at some length ... she has an understanding of the complexity of it. It's not a simple issue" (Hoy 1985: 236).

²⁶ In fact, the Liberal government angered the NDP by introducing a Green Paper on Pay Equity in November, 1985 that laid out for yet another period of debate various options in pay equity legislation. Carl J. Cuneo (1991) documents the key role assumed by Evelyn Gigantes in this debate. See Fudge and McDermott (1991) for a collection of essays on the pay equity issue, many of which address the specifics of the Ontario case.

²⁷ Much anticipation accompanied Hosek's move into provincial politics. See, for example, Rosemary Spiers (1987).

²⁸ The troubles of Peterson's women Cabinet members received extensive press coverage. In particular, Chaviva Hosek's move to the Liberal backbench generated a great deal of media attention, most of it quite critical of her performance. On this subject, consult Gene Allen (1989) and Elaine Carey (1989). Carey reports that "[i]n less than two years, the leading light of the new Liberal regime, the intelligent, articulate women's activist who arrived on the political stage with star billing had flopped" (1989: D1). For an account of the impact of the Patricia Starr affair, see Gagnon and Rath (1991). Hosek's feud with John Sewell, Chair of the Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority, also produced a loss of support for the embattled Housing Minister within the feminist community. The Coalition of Visible Minority Women, for example, reacted angrily to Sewell's firing and the appointment of Jean Augustine. In a letter to Hosek they wrote: "We are appalled that as former president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), you would use a black woman to take the flak for the government's error in judgment. We are afraid that this type of action will fan the flames of racism and create a backlash in the community" (*Rebel Girls' Rag* Vol. 3, no. 1 November, 1988: 2).

²⁹ The Progressive Conservatives' plan was known as WIN '89 and provided funding for women seeking party nominations. The Liberals' Margaret Campbell Fund and the NDP's Women's Electoral Fund makes money available to women candidates. Janine Brodie observes that because of the "growing costs of contesting a party nomination and the fact that electoral financing is partly subsidized with public moneys" the PC plan may be the most effective means of facilitating the increased participation of women in party politics (1991: 37).

³⁰ Among them Evelyn Gigantes, Zanana Akande, Manon Boyd, Jenny Carter, Frances Lankin, Anne Swarbrick, Marilyn Churley, Shelley Martel, Shelley Wark-Martyn, Margaret Harrington, Shirley Coppen and Elaine Ziemba (*Ontario New Democratic Government Caucus Biographies*, 1993).

³¹ Collier (1995) uses this phrase in her comparison of public policy of interest to women in Ontario and Manitoba between 1990-1995. The phrase originates with Skjerv (1991). As I have

documented, there were feminists in the previous Liberal government, but not a critical mass. At the time of the election, Ontario feminists were encouraged also by Premier Rae's pro-feminist positions.

³² The Ontario NDP 1990 election strategy, *An Agenda for People* included many commitments attractive to women on issues such as childcare, employment equity, pay equity, and rent control (Roberts and Ehling 1993: 277-279).

³³ For a post-mortem of the NDP years, and, in particular, the social contract experience, employment equity and public auto insurance debates, see Monahan (1995).

³⁴ See, for example, Paula Todd (1992) and Christina Starr (1992).

³⁵ This sentiment was echoed by Kerry McCuaig of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (Personal interview 8 June 1994). McCuaig expressed great disappointment with the NDP government on the issue of childcare, particularly given the fact that Cabinet Ministers Frances Lankin and Marion Boyd had been directly involved in the Coalition.

³⁶ Aboriginal women in Alberta were denied the right to vote provincially until 1965.

³⁷ It is interesting to register also the long tenure of some of Alberta's women MLAs. Social Credit member Cornelia Wood served as MLA for a total of twenty-three years between 1940-1955 and 1959-1967 and another Social Credit MLA, Rose Wilkinson, held her seat between 1944-1959 and 1959-67.

³⁸ Alberta's Social Credit government was the first province to appoint such a committee.

³⁹ Irene Parlby was Minister without portfolio between 1921-1935; Social Credit MLA Ethel Wilson was Minister without portfolio between 1962-71, Hunley herself was a Minister without portfolio between 1971 and 1973.

⁴⁰ Trimble (1993) cites an 1982 interview for *Chatelaine* in which all six Tory women serving in the Alberta legislature at the time stated that they did not consider themselves feminists.

⁴¹ For example, Marie Laing and Pam Barrett of the NDP identified as feminists and had campaigned on a 'women's issues' platform. NDP Christie Mjolsness displayed a feminist perspective also. Liberal MLA Bettie Hewes was vocal on the issues of childcare and employment equity, women's health, women in the public service and pay equity (Trimble 1997).

⁴² NDP MLA Marie Laing's activist history as a former Executive Director of the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton and member of the Alberta Status of Women Action Committee and the Voice of Women made her a strong advocate for feminist goals within the Alberta legislature.

⁴³ Rebecca Klatch (1987) distinguishes between *laissez-faire conservatism* (or neo-liberalism) that primarily concerns itself with economic issues and *social conservatism* (or New Right philosophy) that is preoccupied with moral values and supportive of religious fundamentalism.

44 AFWUF was established in November 1981, making it Canada's first 'second wave' anti feminist organization. In its initial policy statement, AFWUF argued that "the traditional family (defined as two or more persons living together related by blood, marriage, or adoption) is the basic unit of society and that government policy should encourage strong families to keep a strong nation" (Alberta Women's Bureau Newsletter 3:4 April-June 1984: 3). The sponsoring of American New Right advocate Phyllis Schlafly's visit to Edmonton in November, 1982 as keynote speaker at AFWUF's inaugural conference, suggests that AFWUF saw itself as part of the tide of neo-conservatism that was sweeping North America and parts of Europe at that time. Warning that Alberta women must be "vaccinated against the disease of women's liberation" and charging that "feminist complaints about widespread wife-battering are exaggerated," Schlafly's remarks at that first conference set the tone for AFWUF's agenda that later included stiff opposition to the establishment of an Alberta council on the status of women. (Dedyna 1982: C8)

45 Other organizations such as Lethbridge Family Watch have promoted a strident anti choice, anti-feminist agenda that has permeated Alberta's political discourse. Family Watch's goals include promoting the "wholeness and rightness of the appropriate male and female identity within the family as the healthiest conditions for children" and "establishing a sanctity of life ethic from conception through natural death". Supported by several evangelical churches throughout southern Alberta, their platform includes reform of the public education system through the elimination of child abuse prevention programs in schools, on the grounds that "such material is 'a type of sex education programme and may cause trauma to children'" (Minutes of Organizational Meeting for Lethbridge Family Watch, undated)

46 The extent of Premier Getty's lack of understanding of issues such as family violence has been documented by Denise Savage-Hughes and David Taras: "As he was leaving the room following the press conference, [Premier] Getty in reference to a column . . . in which he had been accused of being a 'secret seat-belt abuser,' made what he thought was a humorous remark 'I may beat my wife, I may whack my kids, but I never abused a seat belt in my life'" (1992: 211)

47 Trimble explains, however, that the shift to the right within the Getty government was not pursued without opposition from within Cabinet. Trimble notes that internal debates over abortion, pay equity, homemakers' pensions and daycare subsidies occurred as a result of the presence of Cabinet ministers McCoy and Betkowski (1997: 144).

48 In articles such as "Can Mirosh stop the gays?" (1993) the Alberta Report praised Mirosh for her efforts in combatting the gay rights movement.

49 This translates into 16 women MLAs--6 Liberals and 10 Progressive Conservatives

50 The Klein government reacted angrily to the Dacks, Green and Trimble research when the article was tabled in the House by the Liberals in March 1995. Trimble (1997) reports that in the legislature, Tory MLA Judy Gordon dismissed the study as an "overly biased and poorly researched political diatribe" while Minister of Advanced Education (also responsible for Women's Issues) Gary Mar ridiculed the work as a "political manifesto" (153)

51 Klein responded to calls from Liberal MLA Muriel Abdurahman that he had launched a "war on women" because of the higher unemployment among women as ridiculous. In the Legislature, he had woman members of his caucus stand to "prove" the health of women in the province: "I see a mighty fine woman sitting right here. She doesn't look like she's been attacked or brutalized in any way at all. I see one over there, too. She looks perfectly healthy,

to me. I see fine looking and healthy women, strong women, hard-working women, intelligent women. I don't see women under attack" (as quoted in Trimble 1997: 150).

⁵² Although the "social conservatism" of the Klein administration has been somewhat less pronounced than under his predecessor, it is interesting to note that in a context of severe budgetary cuts, the Premier's Council on Alberta Families escaped the budgetary axe.

⁵³ On this topic, consult Christopher Dunn (1995).

⁵⁴ Cournoyea vacated the post of Territorial Premier to chair the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, an aboriginal-owned corporation charged with implementing the Inuvialuit land claim.

⁵⁵ The issue of violence is of major importance for NW1 women, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. The zero-tolerance declaration was significant also in light of the conviction of three members of the Legislative Assembly on violence offenses between 1985 and 1991. These included MLAs Sam Gargan, convicted of wife assault in 1985, Michael Angottitauruq, convicted of sexual assault in 1989 and Henry Zoe, convicted of common assault against his wife in 1991. As well, David Nickerson, MP for the Western Arctic also was convicted of wife assault in 1985. Under the zero-tolerance policy, MLAs are required to tender their resignation if convicted of a violent offense against another person.

⁵⁶ Elizabeth Lumblin (1992) quotes northern journalist Marina Devine's research which illustrates that women candidates in the NW1 appear to have an equal chance to men of election in territorial politics, however, they are much less likely to offer themselves as candidates. In the 1995 election, women accounted for 10 out of 84 candidacies in this election, or 11.9% of all candidates.

⁵⁷ Daycare is a priority issue for women in the NW1 as 56% of all Northwest women in the labour force have children under 6 years of age. In 1992, only seventeen communities out of 60 had at least one licenced daycare facility. Childcare needs are pressing, particularly in Aboriginal communities where the average number of children per family can run as high as 3.7 compared to the national average of 1.3 (Fraser-McKay 1991).

⁵⁸ In 1986, 34% of all NW1 women had less than a Grade 9 education; among Aboriginal women, 63% had less than Grade 9. There are also significant economic differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women. Not surprisingly, non-Aboriginal women have significantly higher per capita incomes than their Aboriginal sisters. A breakdown of women's incomes within the Aboriginal population indicates that Dene and, in particular, Inuit women have significantly lower incomes than their Metis counterparts (Fraser-McKay 1991).

⁵⁹ See Jennifer Arnott (1997) for a description of indigenous political structures and their effect on Aboriginal women's political participation.

⁶⁰ The NLC is charged with designing the new government for Nunavut. NII oversees the implementation of the Nunavut land claim. The Nunavut MLAs Caucus refers to the members of the NW1 Legislative Assembly elected in the Eastern Arctic.

⁶¹ Pauktuutit was organized in 1984 after Inuit women splintered off from the Native Women's Association of Canada in 1983. It works closely with the NLC and sits as a full member of the NLC Board of Directors.

62 Under the two-member proposal the Nunavut legislature would have twenty members if existing ridings are maintained

63 For a full discussion of these options and an extremely useful survey of the positions of each major aboriginal nation on the issue of constitution making, consult Kolson (1995)

64 In Labrador, where permanent coastal settlements have a longer history, Inuit women similarly attest to the prominent role of women as the head of households, although the earlier influence of Moravian missionaries appears to have interfered with traditional gender roles (Telephone interview Cathy Ford, 24 July 1993)

65 It is interesting to survey the development of constitutional proposals put forward by women in the western regions over the past three years. In 1993, a joint submission by the Status of Women Council of the NWT and the NWT Native Women's Association called for 50% representation by women on board and agencies, but did not call for guaranteed representation in the legislature (MacQuarrie 1993). By the end of 1995, following the Western NWT Women's Caucus Conference on the Constitution in 1994 and another joint research project in 1995 (Kolson 1995), Native and non-Native women were demanding 50% guaranteed representation in the legislature and advocating a dual member system

Chapter Five

Women's Movements and Representational Projects: Political Representation vis-à-vis the State Part II

5.1 Introduction

In 1995, the closure of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW) after a twenty-two year history drew limited protest from the feminist community. Similarly, the Harris government's decision to disband the Ontario Advisory Council on Women's Issues (OACWI) in 1996 sparked minimal opposition, suggesting that state machinery for women in Canada, at least in certain parts of the country, has been dismissed as of little consequence in contemporary feminist politics. In her discussion of Quebec's Conseil de la statut des femmes, however, Heather Jon Maroney flagged the need for feminists to determine systematically if such institutions "help or hinder the development of women's struggles" (1988b: 29). To expand my examination of women's movements and their representational projects vis-à-vis the state beyond electoral politics, in this chapter I compare the experience of women's movements with subnational state mechanisms charged with responding to women's equality demands.

The discussion that follows responds to Maroney's challenge by comparing two elements of women's policy machinery, specifically advisory councils and government secretariats. By tracing the development of these two structures in each of the four contexts and assessing the ability of the women's community to use these institutions to embed gender analysis into policy agendas of their provincial/territorial states, it becomes clear that opportunities for women's movements to pursue representation through

this channel varies substantially across space and time. In fact, comparison of these two elements of the government machinery reveals distinct differences in the character and performance of these mechanisms in different contexts and reinforces the importance of documenting the diversity of women's interactions with the state. As the evidence documents, in some jurisdictions status of women machinery remains a crucial vehicle through which women's movements channel their activism while in other settings, women's movements have been unable to use these bureaucratic mechanisms to advance their equality agendas.

To complete my analysis of women's movements' representational projects vis-à-vis the state, in this chapter I also probe the character of an additional trajectory of state-centric movement activism. This section explores the extent to which movements sustain a coordinated lobby effort at the provincial/territorial level in each context. My comparison of this strand of women's representational projects vis-à-vis the state reveals that in the immediate post-Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW) era, all four women's movements were quite state-centric, although the level of government targetted differed across and within jurisdictions. As the movements developed in each setting, however, the extent to which they maintained a lobbying effort directed towards the subnational state varied significantly. The chapter ends with an overview of the major findings from my comparison of women's movements and their representational projects vis-à-vis the state.¹

5.2 Women's Movements and their Bureaucratic Projects in Subnational States

In the 1960s, integrating women's interests into state structures was seen by the RCSW as a pivotal element of the overall strategy to end women's oppression. In its Plan of Action, the Royal Commission expressed a belief that new institutional forms were required "to coordinate and expedite" implementation of its recommendations. At the time of the RCSW's research, some governmental units designated to address issues of concern to women were already in place in both the federal and provincial bureaucracies, such as the Women's Bureau within the federal Department of Labour that emerged in 1954.² But in calling for the creation of implementation committees within government, the establishment of human rights commissions and status of women councils at both the federal and provincial levels, the RCSW argued for the potentially positive impact of new structures engaged in research, publication, annual reports, pilot projects, policy development and liaison work with the voluntary sector.³

Since the appointment at the federal level of a Coordinator of the Status of Women in the Privy Council Office (1971), the designation of a Minister Responsible for the Status of Women (1971), the creation of the Office of Equal Opportunity (1971) and the striking of the CACSW (1973), the effects of women's policy machinery have been much debated. Sue Firdlay's (1987, 1988) critiques of the federal state's institutional responses to feminism are central to this literature. Findlay characterizes the emergence of Status of Women Canada and the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women as constituting a "response of the state [that] focused largely on integrating the representation of women's interests into the policy-making process," a strategy which she deems "not only validated the faith of liberal

feminists in the strategy of reform by the state, but constructed a relationship with them that established liberal feminism as the 'public face' of the women's movement" (1987: 31). While providing legitimacy to women's demands, Findlay insists that these mechanisms from their inception were circumscribed by vulnerability to government funding, patronage appointments, and denial of access to decision-making and the policy-making process (1987). Doris Anderson, herself a former president of the CACSW, concurs that such government machinery often had "serious structural flaws" and notes the preference of governments to appoint "safe" women to positions of power within these institutions. Anderson reminds feminists, however, that in many cases such as her own, those "safe" women became "champions" of women's causes (1991: 22-23).

Pessimistic assessments of the limitations and contradictions of status of women government machinery have been advanced by Maroney (1988b), Burt (1994) and O'Neil and Sutherland (1990). These analyses echo Findlay's observation regarding the difficulty in pursuing an agenda for change given the lack of clout of implementation committees and advisory councils within the state's decision-making hierarchy. They also point to the contradictions contained within bodies such as advisory councils that lend expertise and advice to the state while simultaneously attempting to offer representation for women vis-à-vis the state. Findlay and O'Neil and Sutherland, however, identify moments at which opportunities for influencing the state through bureaucratic channels emerged. Findlay's (1988) analysis of the Women's Program at Secretary of State, for example, shows that during its early days, the Women's Program was effective in part due to its invisibility within the state bureaucracy. She notes also that responsiveness on the part of the federal state was limited to brief periods and primarily was due to converging

political forces at a particular moment rather than reflecting any rational commitment to women's equality. O'Neil and Sutherland offer a similar observation. While they conclude that "[i]n-house organizations without access to government's authority and administrative base will be mostly epiphenomenal to social and political development," an exception occurs when the government machinery "is well calculated to the machinery of central agencies and cabinet of the time" as they argue was the case at one point for Status of Women Canada (1990: 31). Findlay too concludes that arms-length mechanisms such as advisory councils can be useful in certain circumstances, for example, "in the absence of machinery within the bureaucracy to advise the government on women's issues ... [or] ... in the absence of a strong independent feminist organisation" (1988: 90).

Although crucial in advancing our understanding of the role of the "women's bureaucracy," these analyses have focused almost exclusively on the performance of federally-oriented administrative apparatus, leaving the experience of the subnational machinery largely unexplored. O'Neil and Sutherland note that the RCSW envisioned that the parallel provincial and territorial mechanisms would exist in a hierarchical relationship led by the federal Advisory Council. They observe also that this would have been an odd arrangement in the world of federal-provincial relations where the federal government is generally understood to hold parallel functions and responsibilities (1990: 19). As I will show, the story of these mechanisms unfolded quite differently in the four contexts studied.

5.3 Case Study: Newfoundland

The historically weak presence of women in the Newfoundland House of Assembly (until very recently) has been compensated for to some degree by

a strong feminist presence within the bureaucracy that has been pivotal in ensuring representation for the women's movement within the state. Women's demands have been integrated successfully within the Newfoundland bureaucracy, despite the near absence of elected women's voices, creating a small, but well-entrenched femocrat⁴ presence. The roots of this presence date to the election of Brian Peckford as Premier in 1979. The Peckford government brought with it a "commitment to the equality of opportunity for women and men," and in 1985 adopted the policy of appointing women to 50% of the government board and commission positions.⁵ At the same time, a Women's Policy Office (WPO) was added to act as a focal point for responses to the increasing demands of the women's movement.

Feminists recall that the lobby for the Women's Policy Office was relatively brief and facilitated greatly by pressure from inside the Premier's office. Luanne Leamon, a former lobbyist and later a social policy advisor within the Premier's Office, handled "women's issues" for Peckford at that time, but recognized the need for a government body within the state to address women's concerns. Leamon, in conjunction with the Advisory Council, lobbied the Premier to create a bureaucratic mechanism similar to that in place in other provinces. A feminist herself, Leamon believed that the time had come to stop relying exclusively on lobbying by women's groups. She believed that the women's movement required an "internal mechanism" that would give them "someone on the inside that knew a little bit about these issues" and could provide the research, analysis and expertise necessary to ensure that women's policy needs were adopted and implemented (Personal Interview, 16 August 1992). Leamon recalls that

Peckford was supportive of the idea and that “several key people in government” also endorsed the initiative.⁶

When the Women’s Policy Office was organized, Leamon became the Assistant Deputy Minister of Women’s Issues. At the same time, the Conservative government appointed its first Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. Initially, the Women’s Policy Office was housed in the Department of Career Development and Advanced Studies. After pressure from the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the government upgraded the office in 1988, making it part of the Executive Council and “enabl[ing] it to liaise more effectively with all departments to advise on and assess the impact of their policies and programs on women” (Newfoundland WPO Newsletter 1:3 July 1988: 1). Acting now as a central agency, the WPO remained accountable to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

Initially, Leamon suspects that women’s groups were doubtful about the role of the new agency, in part because “they perceive[d] us as taking over their role” (Payne 1991: 12). Leamon knew that if the office was to meet the needs of Newfoundland and Labrador women effectively, staffing the positions with feminists was crucial. She attributes the success of the Women’s Policy Office to permission from the Newfoundland Association of Public Employees to conduct open hirings which allowed the Women’s Policy Office to draw expertise directly from the feminist community.⁷ The office recruited high-profile feminists such as Dorothy Robbins (WPO Director), a former administrator with the Provincial Advisory Council and a founding member and former president of the Labrador West Status of Women and Beth Lacey (WPO Researcher), a former St. John’s Women Centre Coordinator and well-known lesbian activist. The pattern to-date has been

that these women tend to stay with the WPO, rather than use the WPO as a springboard to other bureaucratic positions. The hiring of feminist activists with solid ties to the feminist community, Leamon maintains, quickly legitimized the government agency within the women's community, thus ensuring its ongoing grassroots support.

Additionally, the Women's Policy Office consolidated alliances to local women's organizations through the publication of a quarterly newsletter and the generation of original research. The book reviews, notes on local feminist events and information on new legislation of particular interest to women contained in the newsletter help to link feminist work at the local level to the provincial bureaucracy. An important part of the WPO's functions is original research and the sponsorship of seminars on topics such as effective lobbying as well as travelling seminars on various issues of women and economic development.

Leamon explains that the WPO "doesn't get a lot of direction from within government" and therefore enjoys the freedom to hold consultations with women's groups around the province to identify the issues Newfoundland women wish to address (Personal Interview, 16 August 1992). The WPO also works in close collaboration with both the Advisory Council and the women's movement in addition to fulfilling its primary functions of providing information and advice to the Minister, monitoring government policies for their impact on women and ensuring that policies actually get implemented. An integral part of the Women's Policy Office function is to canvas for women interested in assuming public office and to monitor progress on the government's policy of appointing women to every second discretionary appointment made to boards, commissions and crown corporations until the level of female representation reaches 50%. The WPO

also operates a tiny grants program available to individuals or groups interested in conducting projects that will enhance the status of women.

Leamon describes the ability of the WPO to make progress on women's issues within the bureaucracy as quite encouraging: "We haven't always been able to get exactly what we want--but you get what you need if you try hard enough" (Personal Interview, 16 August 1992). Leamon and other staff members emphasize that the relatively small size of the Newfoundland provincial bureaucracy allows the WPO to maintain close personal contacts in every government department and to have easy access to necessary information within a bureaucracy that is quite informal and largely unconcerned with protocol. This also facilitated the direct recruitment and retention of feminist personnel.

Staff members admit that the work of the WPO became more difficult under the Liberal government of Clyde Wells which exhibited a decidedly less progressive position on many of the Newfoundland women's movement's priorities than his PC predecessors (Confidential interview, 1992). The WPO was subjected to the deficit reduction program of the Wells government, and faced a 12% budget cutback in 1991 that forced a curtailment of certain aspects of its agenda. Nevertheless, under Wells, the WPO benefitted from the appointment of a feminist, Patricia Cowan, as Minister Responsible for the Status of Women (Personal Interview Luanne Leamon, 16 August 1992).

The campaign for a provincial advisory council in Newfoundland was an "easy struggle" accomplished over a couple of years. Ann Bell, a past president of the Corner Brook Status of Women Council, recalls that feminist organizing in Newfoundland in the seventies concentrated on three issues: matrimonial property rights, the representation of women on committees, boards and agencies, and the creation of a provincial advisory council

(Interview, 15 July 1988). Organizing for the council began formally in 1978 when several women's groups, including the Newfoundland Status of Women Council, the Women's Institutes, the Canadian Federation of University Women and the Human Rights Commission met under the direction of Iris Kirby from Secretary of State to discuss the potential role of an advisory council for the province (Pope and Burnham 1993: 209). Bell admits that much of the interest in gaining a council was motivated by the desire to have a council "because everyone else had one" as Newfoundland feminists believed themselves to be lacking important representation that women elsewhere had achieved (Interview, 15 July 1988).

While a proposal was developed and presented to the government, no immediate action was achieved. But the direct access to provincial politicians that would be exploited periodically by Newfoundland women throughout the second-wave allowed Newfoundland feminists to sustain pressure for their council through face-to-face lobbying with provincial politicians. At a provincial women's conference in Corner Brook in 1978, participants decided to interrupt a PC rally at a nearby hotel in order to lobby for their three target issues. Bell relates that "we realized we had to have a political intervention" and so twenty women crashed the PC meeting to confront Premier Frank Moores about his commitment to women's equality. Bell recalls meeting with then Minister of Mines and Energy Brian Peckford who appeared open to their concerns. The women secured a meeting for the next day with Moores and Peckford that gave them the opportunity to present their case for an advisory council.

Bell argues that the achievement of feminist goals was facilitated by the fact that the province was "in a state of political flux at the time." Premier Moores's decision to retire from politics prompted a leadership race in which

Peckford made clear his intention to integrate feminist demands into his platform. Ann Bell explains that she and Lynn Verge "realized that the Tories would get back in so we wanted to have some input" and so both women became delegates to the PC leadership convention and supported Peckford. When Verge later captured the PC nomination in Humber East, Bell remembers that some elements of the feminist movement didn't publicly endorse Verge because of their own partisan allegiances or their desire to remain outside of partisan politics. Nevertheless, Bell states that Verge's candidacy and eventual victory was a "real shot in the arm" for feminism in Newfoundland (Interview, 15 July 1988). In the 1979 election campaign, Peckford promised that legislation on matrimonial property would be the first piece of legislation tabled in the House and that Newfoundland and Labrador women would be granted an advisory council.

Feminists were elated when Peckford made good on his promise of matrimonial property legislation. Premier Peckford also honoured his campaign pledge to the women of Newfoundland and Labrador by establishing a Provincial Advisory Council in June, 1980 and appointing the first members in November of that same year. The draft legislation prepared for the advisory council, however, dissatisfied the Newfoundland women's community. Feminists had advised that the council be modelled after New Brunswick's council to ensure that it would have a public role and autonomy as an independent agency. Instead, the government proposed that the council model follow that designed for the Nova Scotia advisory council which had no public mandate. Bell was invited to review the proposal and argued successfully for the desired amendments. The 1980 Act creating the council allowed for a public role for the new body, guaranteed that members would retain their positions following expiration until new appointments are made

and, perhaps most importantly, contained no sunset review clause.⁸ When the advisory body was created, the Newfoundland Status of Women Council was asked to submit names from their membership of women willing to serve as Council representatives. Once appointed, the eleven-member council was also successful in demanding that the council be allotted funds for full-time staff, which was not part of the initial \$40,000 budget. Peckford then appointed Bell as the Advisory Council's first president, a position she held for nine years.

The goal of establishing an advisory council also meshed perfectly with the overall vision of the Peckford government. By framing their requests in terms of the need for Newfoundland women to have the same opportunities and protections as Canadian women elsewhere, Newfoundland feminists tapped into the neo-nationalism of the Peckford government that saw Newfoundland and Labrador as a disadvantaged partner within Confederation and in need of institutions that would empower its citizens. Similarly, the ease with which the Women's Policy Office was established in 1985 may be attributed to the overall modernization of the provincial bureaucracy undertaken by the Peckford government to bring the Newfoundland and Labrador bureaucracy into line with other provincial administrative structures and to establish mechanisms that would strengthen its position in relation to the federal state. Here again, feminists were able to pressure successfully for the replication of structures in place for women elsewhere in Canada.

The Advisory Council fulfills its mandate in a number of ways including research and the presentation of briefs, the distribution of information, the publication of a regular newsletter, and consultation with individual women, women's groups and other community organizations."

In 1992, the Council initiated a policy of meeting with two MHAs each month to discuss issues of interest to women. Wendy Williams, Council president between 1990 and 1996, targetted increasing women's political representation as a central task of the Council: "Just trying to get women into boards and commissions ... getting women to run, getting women to take political appointments, getting women to see that their unions should be pushing on their issues, for me, that's where it's all at" (Personal Interview, 15 August 1992).

While the Council's formal mandate includes advising the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and producing annual recommendations for the Premier, the Council also fulfills an important informal coordinating role for local women's organizations around the province. Unlike its counterparts in other provinces and territories, the Newfoundland and Labrador Council serves as the largely accepted leader among the province's local status of women councils.¹⁰ For some feminists, the existence of a 'reputable' and effective Advisory Council has made unnecessary any call for greater provincial integration through an umbrella organization. In 1995-96, for example, the Advisory Council sponsored a series of conference calls for women's organizations around the province designed to facilitate information sharing and networking. Like the Women's Policy Office, the Council's provincial reputation has been bolstered by appointments of women who "mostly identify themselves as feminists" and "see their loyalties to the women's community, not to political parties" as well as the appointment to staff positions of women with strong feminist credentials (Personal Interview, 16 August 1992).¹¹ With respected leadership, and also continuity of leadership, (the Council had only three presidents between 1980-1996) the Advisory Council has cemented its

relationship to grassroots feminism around the province. Williams proudly describes the relationship between the Advisory Council and the Women's Policy Office as "the best in all of Canada" (Personal Interview, 16 August 1992). Although forced to compete for budget resources, representatives from the Council and the WPO agree that their relationship has been mutually supportive and has facilitated a greater cohesion within the women's movement. The relationship between the Provincial Advisory Council and the Women's Policy Office appears to have been coordinated strategically because of the ties of both agencies to the feminist community thus allowing a small but cohesive feminist presence to be institutionalized.¹⁰ Following the election of Brian Tobin in 1996, the Advisory Council faced a staggering budget cut of 35%; yet, with this fiscal restraint came a restructuring plan that reaffirms the ongoing commitment of the Newfoundland government to the Council. While the Council board will continue to have eleven members, seven of the seats will now be reserved for representatives from the seven status of women councils across the province. These councils organize feminist activity at a grassroots level across Newfoundland and Labrador; therefore, the government's decision to integrate nominated representatives from the councils who are "expected to have a history of involvement with the status of women council and experience in working within the community to advance women's concerns" will inject an even more explicitly feminist presence into the status of women machinery. ("Council Board, Staff restructured" *Tapestry* Vol. 7 No. 1 Summer 1996: 1). As well, the appointment of Joyce Hancock, a well known feminist activist from the Bay St. George Status of Women Council and a former NAC representative, signals the provincial state's continued commitment to women's equality.

3

PM-1 3" x 4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
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In general, the femocrat presence within the state was easily entrenched because of the smaller size and relative informality of the Newfoundland bureaucracy which made space for the focused articulation of women's demands. This opportunity was unavailable in jurisdictions with larger, more formalized bureaucracies where a lack of coordination, marginal location, and frequent competition between or among multiple agencies thwarted a coherent femocrat strategy. The cohesion of at least the women's movement of the cultural and racial majority in the province meant that the "rootedness" of Newfoundland's femocrats in the women's community continued and has not resulted in a loss of effectiveness because of a lack of knowledge or inexperience with government. Instead, the openness of government processes has permitted the institutionalization of an "old girls" network of bureaucrats drawn from the women's movement to secure enough gains to keep the movement state focused despite, until very recently, repeated electoral disappointments. The importance of this government machinery is amplified too by the absence of a Newfoundland provincial women's organization which could eclipse the pivotal role now assumed by the Advisory Council. Presently, the Council effectively fulfills this function and is identified by feminists across the province as a key institution of the Newfoundland movement.

Throughout the "second-wave," the women's movement in Newfoundland and Labrador has remained quite focused on the project of increasing women's political representation through the provincial state, building an effective program of pro-statist activity that distinguishes it from its counterparts in Alberta and, to a less extent, Ontario. Feminists sustained a cohesive focus on the provincial state, utilizing a strategy which has concentrated on the direct participation of feminists through political

candidacy, work to entrench feminism within the government bureaucracy and, finally, lobbying the state to influence policies that affect women's lives (Pope and Burnham 1993: 207). The lobbying project of the Newfoundland women's movement dates back to the election of the Progressive Conservatives in 1972. The change in government coincided with the founding of the St. John's-based Newfoundland Status of Women Council. Women were quick to exploit the opportunities available to them under this new regime and immediately identified lobbying for women's equality demands as the cornerstone of its agenda. One of the initial projects of the Council was to poll MHAs regarding their positions on several issues of particular concern to women. The Council then compared the results against a poll conducted with federal MPs in order to ascertain where to begin their provincial lobby efforts.¹³ At the same time, the new group also campaigned for amendments to the provincial human rights code for protection on the basis of sex and marital status and the appointment of a Human Rights Commission (NSWC Newsletter, May 1974: 5).¹⁴

Other groups focused on the electoral project. Women in Public Life began as a 'ginger group' of the Newfoundland Status of Women Council in 1972, initially working on the question of women and jury duty and later turning to the issue of women's involvement in electoral politics. In 1973, two members of the group, Fran Innes and Barbara Walsh, ran in the St. John's municipal election on a reform slate known as "Five for Change." Pope and Burnham (1993) report that while both bids were unsuccessful, their efforts help Innes win a council seat in the following election. In 1977, after Premier Moores stated publicly that he didn't know of any qualified women to serve on the provinces boards and commissions, the Newfoundland Status of Women of Council issued a press release challenging the Premier's

statements and encouraging women to submit their names to the government for possible appointments. As a result of their action, Moores received over 5000 replies from Newfoundland women which forced the Premier to admit in the House of Assembly that his government had been negligent in not appointing women to these positions (NSWC Newsletter June/July, 1977: 2; August-September, 1977: 6). In 1977, Women in Public Life sponsored a conference titled "Women, Where are We in Community Action?" that was targeted towards increasing women's political participation.

The state-centric character of feminist organizing in Newfoundland is evident most clearly in the existence of a provincial women's lobby. First held in 1984 around the theme of Women and the Constitution, the lobby is an opportunity for local status of women councils to meet with provincial government officials and address specific issue areas. Following the precedent of the NAC lobby, status of women councils from across the province prioritize specific questions for provincial politicians and then invite members from each caucus to participate. Preparation for the lobby relies on teleconferencing facilitated by Memorial University that allows women from across Newfoundland and Labrador to debate issues of common concern and prepare briefs on particular topics.¹⁵ A meeting is then held immediately prior to the lobby at which groups generate specific questions for the MHAs. The lobby has no single official spokesperson; instead, active participation by all groups represented is encouraged.

The participation of government at these events has been quite good. At the 1987 lobby, for example, thirty-seven MHAs were in attendance. Subsequent lobbies have been held in 1989, 1991 and 1992 with the government of the day offering formal replies to the questions posed.¹⁶ The

1992 lobby, held outside St. John's for the first time, included representatives from about forty women's groups and was preceded by a group session on lobbying techniques conducted by NAC president, Judy Rebick. Wendy Williams explains that "the lobby gives many women a chance to get involved for the first time in influencing the political process" (Personal interview, 16 August 1992). Lobby organizers also publish a report of the event, allowing women's groups to have a record of party positions on various issues. Under the Wells administration, the lobby's role as a key tool of the provincial women's movement, however, was somewhat undermined. At the 1991 lobby, for example, Premier Wells invited Deputy Ministers to the lobby to field questions, a tactic feminist organizers saw as deflecting responsibility away from Cabinet. The extent to which the Newfoundland women's movement continues to prioritize representation in formal politics as a key goal is revealed in the fact that women's participation in decision-making was targeted in the lobbies of 1987, 1989 and 1991.¹⁷ In 1996, the lobby is planned in conjunction with the annual provincial conference of women's groups, coordinated by the provincial Advisory Council.

Women's underrepresentation in elite politics has been addressed also by a group known as the 52% Solution. Following a 1986 workshop presented by Gundrun Agnarsdottir, MP from the Women's Alliance of Iceland, Newfoundland feminists formed another organization to explore other possibilities for increasing women's political representation. As founding member Dorothy Inglis notes, Newfoundland feminists "realize the need to talk to one another across party lines" (Interview, 4 June 1987) in order to press for the increased representation of women within elite electoral politics. To generate support for their initiative, the 52% Solution organized a cross-

province, multipartisan bus tour in the summer of 1987 that travelled the province, visiting many outports in an effort to increase awareness of the need for women to seek political office. In 1992, the 52% Solution threw its support behind the NDP's efforts to introduce proportional representation into Newfoundland politics.¹⁸

Several events in the history of the contemporary women's movement in Newfoundland suggest that the women's community has been influenced by the activities of feminists elsewhere. Newfoundland women's participation in Toronto's Women in Politics conference in 1973 and an invitation by the YWCA Social Action Committee to well-known radical feminist Bonnie Kreps to visit St. John's for a two-week visit in 1973 are two examples of the substantial interest in the early 1970s on the part of Newfoundland feminists in the activities of feminists elsewhere in Canada. In focusing on provincial politics, however, Newfoundland feminists also were reflecting strains of the province's political culture that would later be characterized as "having a strong sense of localism grounded in ... isolation and insularity from the rest of Canada" (Lyck 1991: 54), a significant attachment to their provincial identity and a weak sense of a Canadian identity (Bickerton 1994: 428). Indeed, Newfoundland feminists share the well-entrenched sense of place associated with the province's political culture. Examinations of women's political culture in the Newfoundland document a rich history of independent organizing.¹⁹ Marilyn Porter's study of Newfoundland outport women characterizes women there as a "tangly bunch" with a strong culture of political and economic independence that has fostered a keen "sense of place" in which women demand an equal say in political decision-making (1985). Similarly, social histories of the tradition of Jubilee Guilds in the province document how Newfoundland women's

voluntary organizations played a key role in state formation (Cullum 1995). In recent years, the Newfoundland movement has been influenced by the experience of feminists in Iceland and Norway in their construction of state-oriented, electorally-focused activism (Inglis 1988). Against a backdrop of a sparse population in which the Newfoundland state and provincial politicians are seen as closer to the general population than the federal state, a strong sense of political efficacy among Newfoundland women towards their provincial state continues to flourish.

5.4 Case Study: Ontario

Bureaucratic machinery and lobbying strategies assume a somewhat different role in the Ontario women's movement. The Ontario Advisory Council on Women's Issues had the longest history of the four councils under examination. Created in 1973, the Ontario Status of Women Council was formed out of the provincial government's Green Paper on Equal Opportunity and coincided with the creation that same year of its federal counterpart, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. Many of the Ontario feminists who spearheaded the drive for the federal advisory council were active simultaneously in pressuring the Davis government for a provincial advisory body. The overlap in these two lobbies reveals the fusion between federal and provincial issues that has characterized southern Ontario feminism throughout its contemporary period of activism. In 1971, the Toronto-based Ontario Committee on the Status of Women (OCSW), probably the first status of women committee in Canada, organized to press for the implementation of the RCSW Report recommendations. The OCSW also was one of the founding groups involved in the 1972 'Strategy for Change' conference at which NAC was created; two members of the founding

coalition, Kay Macpherson and Moira Armour, were active in OCSW. (In fact, five of NAC's future presidents were OCSW activists.²⁰)

While NAC saw the establishment of the federal advisory council as its first lobbying success, the formation of an Ontario advisory council was one of the early successes for the OCSW. Laura Sabia, chair of the 'Strategy for Change' conference and NAC's first chair between 1972-1974, also served as the Ontario Status of Women Council's first chair until 1976. Sabia, a former radio journalist, past president of the Canadian Federation of University Women, municipal politician, outspoken critic of the Roman Catholic Church and, much later, unsuccessful provincial Progressive Conservative candidate, was a high-profile choice for council chair following the national attention she had garnered with her leadership of the Committee on Equality and her role in NAC's formation (Black 1993). Sabia recalls that while the women's movement lobbied vigourously for the Council, the Conservative government too was anxious to establish a provincial women's council:

... you could tell right away that Bill Davis wanted it as a showpiece. He want to be able to say to everyone who came to him: 'We have a council on the status of women. Therefore go to them and they'll look after your needs and your wants'... I think that government had got tired of all the women's groups ... all these women were making points to the government ... And so they thought, we're fed up with this, let's get a council like the feds have and see what happens and appoint nice people to it ... All they wanted was a good, visual perspective and that was it! They wanted the rest of Ontario to think: here we are. We're the Conservatives, we're Bill Davis and we're having a status of women council" (Grant 1987: 4).

The Council¹ was created through an Order-in-Council and its initial mandate called for it to advise the government of Ontario through the Provincial Secretary of Social Development on matters pertaining to the status of women in Ontario and to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the

recommendations contained in the document, "Equal Opportunity for Women In Ontario: A Plan For Action." Like its federal counterpart, however, the Council could neither establish nor implement policy decisions, but rather was limited to an advisory and public education role.

After four years as chair, Sabia resigned her post in 1976, expressing great frustration both with the powerlessness of the Council and the expectations of other feminists. Her disillusionment prompted a public airing of her views on the trials of "femocracy":

Councils, both federal and provincial advise the numbskulls [male politicians] while they contemplate their navels. Council lowers the boom, politicians take it under advisement and on and on into the night of oblivion. From 'Royal Commission' to 'Councils' we have been kept busy pushing paper (Sabia 1976: 43).²¹

With Sabia's departure, a string of appointments as chair of women with neither a high profile in the women's movement nor particular expertise in women's equality demands began. These appointments highlighted the vulnerability of the council to patronage. Consumer affairs journalist Lynne Gordon succeeded Sabia, holding the job until 1982 when the most controversial Council appointment was made. The selection of Sally Barnes, former press secretary to Bill Davis for seven years, as the new Council chair angered the women's movement and seriously undermined its fragile legitimacy.²² Not only did Barnes lack any connection to the women's movement, but in her first public statement, she expressed doubt about the wisdom of equal pay for work of equal value legislation, an issue which had occupied much of Council's energies throughout its first decade (Bashevkin and Holder 1985).²³ Judith Grant (1987) notes that Barnes's stand against equal pay led to public feuds with Doris Anderson, then President of the

National Action Committee on the Status of Women and with the Equal Pay Coalition.²⁴ Barnes resigned after only eighteen months in office, unable to establish any credibility with the women's movement. Her term, however, did coincide with the creation of the Ontario Women's Directorate in 1983 within the Ontario bureaucracy and the appointment of a Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, two initiatives actively lobbied for by the Council and, in particular, by vice-chair Linda Silver Dranoff.²⁵

After the Barnes resignation in 1984, the government waited eight months before naming Sam Ion, a Toronto Sun columnist, again with no linkages to the women's movement, as her successor. Bashevkin and Holder note that Ion "began her term by rejecting equal pay for work of equal value at the same time as a government bill proposing to strengthen the equal pay provision of the Employment Standards Act was before the legislature" (1985: 286). Ion showed herself seriously out of touch with Ontario feminists when, as one of her first acts, she wrote to the NDP House Leader asking for his party's cooperation in allowing the bill to pass in its original form without any changes at the same time as opposition parties were lobbying hard for amendments to the legislation sought for by the women's movement (Bashevkin and Holder 1985: 286).

In accordance with the Council's sunset clause, the organization's mandate was reviewed in 1984. The advisory body was renamed the Ontario Advisory Council on Women's Issues and charged with responsibility for advising the government through the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women on matters pertaining to the status of women, and educating and increasing the awareness of the public on women's issues, needs and concerns. Among the recommendations made by the Council and endorsed by the Ontario Standing Committee on Procedural Affairs at that time was

that the Council required a full-time president, permanent support staff, more assertiveness in communications and that women's organizations and other groups should be offered the opportunity to participate in the selection process for appointments.²⁶

The Council's history reveals that its influence on policy development has been dependent largely on its relationship with the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. Council members and staff recall a positive working relationship with certain Ministers, (for example, Liberal MPP Ian Scott) but at other times, problematic relationships curtailed the Council's functioning (Personal Interview Elayne Ciefert, 12 April 1994). During Liberal Cabinet Minister Greg Sorbara's term in the portfolio, for example, the rift between the Council and the Minister became public. Cuts to the Council's budget, vacant Council seats, and a serious lack of access to the Minister underscored the extent to which the Council could be marginalized from decision-makers. In the press, Council members and staff charged that Sorbara was thwarting their efforts deliberately. Council member Lydia Oleksyn speculated that

He [Sorbara] wants to control us and he's doing that by cuts and other means--like telling us we're no longer to go directly to other ministers (to Health Minister Ilmor Caplan, for example, on women's health matters), because everything is to go through him ("Minister is not on the ball, women complain" Toronto Star August 13, 1988, D4).

In fact, Sorbara's arrogance towards his portfolio was revealed in his response to a question in the legislature on sexual assault. Sorbara answered an opposition query by getting up and announcing the baseball score from the previous night.²⁷ Following this incident, Sandra Kerr, a former special

assistant to the Minister on women's issues, assumed the presidency retaining the position until 1991 when she was succeeded by Amy Go

During another sunset review in 1990, the newly-elected NDP government initiated a new Council mandate. This revised mandate, in place from May 1991 to December 1991, again stressed the necessity of improving the Council's communications role. Specifically, the Council was to discover how best to facilitate communication between Ontario women and their provincial state (Personal Interview, Flayne Ceiferts 12 April 1994). The process involved a questionnaire distributed to 11,000 Ontario women and 70 consultations in 20 centres around the province. The result was a full scale review of the Council that, in turn, produced yet another new mandate beginning in July, 1992.²⁸ One of the most significant aspects of this revised mandate was reform of the appointment process—a source of conflict and frustration for the council throughout its history. For the first time, appointments were to be made following a recruitment mailing throughout the province. Members were then appointed through nominations by individuals and groups within six regions and staggered in one, two or three year terms, in order to sustain continuity on the council and avoid the situation of seat vacancies. Another change in the evolution of the Council was that very little research was to be undertaken, as opposed to past councils in which research and publications were a central function.

During the NDP's term of office, the Council understood its role basically as community outreach. Executive Officer Flayne Ceiferts explained that the council presented the government with three potential models for the Council: research, advocacy and community outreach; advocacy and research; and community outreach. The consultations, however, suggested that what those Ontario women who were consulted desired was a

community outreach approach by the Advisory Council that emphasized meetings at the community level to determine issues and design strategies. The new Council was cognizant of the role it played as an intermediary between the grassroots women's movement and state. Ceiferts explained that the size and complexity of the women's movement in Ontario and the budgetary limitations of the Council at that time meant that "in many ways, lending support is all [the Council] can do" (Personal Interview, 12 April 1994). Also problematic was the limited profile the Council had throughout the province. Ceiferts notes that liaising with women's groups across the province was perhaps the Council's most important function but the challenge of fostering relationships with diverse constituencies stretched the Council's resources.²⁹

One of the positive changes that the Ontario Advisory Council experienced between 1992 and 1995 was increased access to the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues and a marked improvement in communication with the Minister. Additionally, the Council in February, 1994 met with provincial Cabinet for the first time in the Council's nineteen-year history. Ceiferts admits that the Council was "effectively dead in the water" between the sunset review of 1988 and acceptance of the new mandate initiated by the NDP government (Personal Interview, 12 April 1994). With the appointment of well-respected Ottawa feminist Jacqueline Pelletier in December, 1992 and a slate of new appointments in January, 1993, however, the Council appeared to be entering a new phase of activity. The Council was scheduled to face another sunset review June 30, 1995 which coincided with the election of the Harris Tory government. The OACWI fell victim to the Harris "Common Sense Revolution," however, and was closed in 1996. In announcing the Council's closure, Minister Responsible for Women's Issues,

Dianne Cunningham stated that she would retain one-third of the Council's \$307,000 budget to continue its consultation function herself in priority areas such as violence against women and economic independence for girls and women through better education in math and science (Monsebraaten 1996).

The blurring of provincial and federal agendas during the Davis years produced simultaneous campaigns for bureaucratic structures to meet women's equality demands at both levels. The Ontario state was anxious to replicate structures being created within the federal government and willing to create an advisory council through which to funnel the demands of women's groups. But because of the overlap in this campaign at the two levels of government, it appears that little theorizing occurred about whether or not the bureaucratic structure would indeed meet the needs of the Ontario context. In fact, Ontario feminists might have gained a structure through which to channel women's policy concerns directly into the central bureaucracy and cabinet. The character of the progressive conservatism displayed under Bill Davis, and the Conservative women involved in the lobby itself might well have produced a cabinet advisory office of the type developed in Australia (Sawer 1990).

Instead, the Council emerged as a weak administrative structure bogged down by a series of ineffectual appointments. Although the Ontario movement achieved the Ontario Status of Women Council with relative ease, the mechanism's structure made clear the limited role the Tories foresaw for it. By the mid 1970s, the Ontario women's movement had largely abandoned the Council as a site for feminist activism while groups like Women for Political Action (WPA) exhibited interest in gaining a representational foothold in federal politics. At the same time, women across Canada were being courted as clients by the federal state largely because of the

integrative role the women's movement was thought to play with respect to national unity. As I have outlined, Ontario, and in particular Toronto, feminists were central actors in this process.

In 1996, Dianne Cunningham signalled her intent to develop a mechanism to evaluate all government policies and initiatives for their impact on women, a goal that potentially calls into question the future of the Ontario Women's Directorate (OWD) (Monsebraaten 1996). As I outlined in Chapter Four, by the late seventies and early eighties, a feminist presence was visible at Queen's Park and in an effort to extend at least symbolic support to a women's equality agenda, the Tories agreed to the creation of the Ontario Women's Directorate and the appointment of the province's first Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, Deputy Premier Robert Welch in 1983. Functioning as a central agency, the OWD has served as the women's policy secretariat within the Ontario bureaucracy since that time, reporting directly to the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues and working with other ministries and agencies to identify gaps in existing programs, to point out policies and practices which may inadvertently disadvantage women and to develop programs which actively assist women in their equality-seeking.

The OWD was designed originally to coordinate the development, delivery and communication of programs and policies to enhance equal opportunity for Ontario women. It absorbed the Women's Bureau of the Ministry of Labour, which had been in place since 1963 to deal with women's labour force participation and the Women Crown Employees Office, established in 1974 to coordinate affirmative action initiatives for the Ontario Public Service. Under the NDP, the OWD had a staff of approximately eighty-five and maintained a branch office in Thunder Bay to serve the needs of northern women. In addition to coordinating programs administered by a

variety of government departments,³⁰ the OWD maintained its own programs, including a community grants, educational workshops, consultation services for employment equity and a role model program.

The OWD emerged within Canada's most complex and highly institutionalized subnational bureaucracy, however, and unlike Newfoundland, the link between feminist bureaucrats and the women's community was ruptured quite early as the routinization of hiring, mobility and promotion prevailed. (The staffing of the Advisory Council also quickly became routinized with patronage capturing prominent positions and civil service career advancement practices influencing the staffing of the other positions.) In the Directorate, staffing was initially based on secondment from other ministries with the intention of rotating staff on a regular basis to generate expertise on women's issues throughout the bureaucracy (Alboim 1990). As a result, the OWD trained many women who later moved on to senior posts within the civil service.

The consequence of this strategy, however, was frequent OWD staff turnovers and a lack of organizational continuity. More recently, the Directorate, like the Newfoundland WPO, has relied more on permanent staff recruited from the women's community. While this broadened its range of issues and made it more rooted in women's politics, the consequences are different in Ontario's huge, formal bureaucracy than in Newfoundland's much smaller, less formal version as it created a staff less knowledgeable about how government functions and the machinations of the provincial bureaucracy. An expanded agenda also blurred the functions of the Advisory Council and the Directorate and exacerbated the sense of competition between the two agencies.

Bashevkin, Holder and Jones (1990) argue that the creation of the OWD complicated the role and purpose of the Advisory Council in terms of its relationship to the new directorate and the Minister. Certainly, the relationship between the OWD and the Advisory Council was complex and sometimes problematic. Communication between the two was sometimes strained and cooperation on strategies was difficult at times, particularly as the Advisory Council adopted a new mandate and attempted to carve out a more public profile among women's groups.³¹ Bashevkin, Holder and Jones argue further that, over time, the OWD's role shifted "from one of active coordinator to more passive advisor" (1990: 304). Their explanation for the weakened position of the OWD at the end of the eighties was the emergence of other new agencies such as the Pay Equity Commission, the Human Resource Secretariat and the Women's Health Bureau all of which served to fragment work on "women's issues" within the provincial government through the diversion of resources and policy profile.³² The consequences of a fragmented femocrat project has rarely been debated in feminist activist or academic circles. It is unclear, however, if the division of femocrat activism into several major agencies weakens the femocrat project through fragmentation and competition, or reflects the maturation of the project. In any event, the creation of more specialized agencies and the Directorate's distance from the Cabinet centre of power also call into question the Directorate's place in the government machinery.

An important issue for the Directorate throughout its history has been how to develop its expertise within government bureaucracy, while at the same time, maintaining a profile within the women's movement. The OWD served as an excellent training ground for women who later moved on to senior positions throughout the Ontario civil service. The drawback of this

practice, however, was that the OWD faced a frequent staff turnover and suffered from a lack of organizational continuity. In the wake of the OACWI's closure, the future of the OWD is also uncertain. The staff complement has been sliced in half and staffers admit that there is a great deal of uncertainty about their mandate (Confidential interview).³³ In 1996, the Women's Issues portfolio was cut by \$3.5 million and another \$1.4 million will be cut in 1997. The OWD budget is scheduled to sustain a \$2.1 million reduction over the next two years (Monsebraaten 1996).

Beyond status of women machinery, the state-focused projects of the Ontario women's movement more generally have been impacted significantly by the tendency of Ontario feminists to direct their state-directed activism towards federal politics and the overlap in "national" and provincial political agendas. Bashevkin and Holder have speculated that because the movement lacks a provincial umbrella organization, Ontario politicians "have felt little pressure to discuss women's issues either during or between election campaigns" (1985: 287). While the history of women's activism in Ontario supports this claim, it is misleading to suggest, however, that the Ontario women's movement has ignored provincial politics completely during feminism's second wave. As in other contexts, a number of organizations formed in Ontario in the early seventies to address the issues raised in the RCSW Report. The OCSW, for example, pursued a combination of research and lobbying on a broad range of topics at the municipal, provincial and federal level.³⁴ Applying pressure for the appointment of women to Ontario boards and commissions and actively supporting women political candidates such Liberal Aideen Nicholson were among OCSW's early goals. Yet, while the OCSW addressed a wide range of provincial issues,

its focus, particularly throughout eighties was overwhelmingly Toronto-centred.³⁵

In 1972, Women for Political Action (WPA) was founded in Toronto “to increase female political participation and political education at all levels of government” (Bashevkin 1993: 19). WPA was the brainchild of a group of feminist activists including Moira Armour and Kay Macpherson from the Voice of Women and OCSW’s Aideen Nicholson who were interested in creating an organization devoted to advancing women’s participation in formal politics. Bashevkin argues that the multipartisan group came to serve “as the focal point for an emerging network of politically active feminists” (1993: 24).³⁶ Women for Political Action monitored the position of parties on issues of interest to women, and held workshops on how to run campaigns, make speeches, and write press releases and campaign literature. Kay Macpherson (1994) recollects that unlike the municipal focus of the Association of Women Electors, WPA committed itself to the election of women at every level of government.

In June 1973, the WPA sponsored a Women in Politics Conference in Toronto that brought together women from across Canada to debate the best ways to integrate women into the political process.³⁷ Throughout the decade of their existence, the organization sponsored numerous workshops for women candidates.³⁸ Bashevkin notes that the WPA was divided over strategy, however, with some members favouring independent candidacies and others partisan politics. She explains also that the unsuccessful campaigns of Kay Macpherson and Aline Gregory as independents in the 1972 federal election, led many women “in the direction of traditional partisanship”, particularly towards the NDP and Liberal parties (Bashevkin 1993: 24).

Efforts to build a provincial women's organization surfaced in Toronto once again in 1979. In response to funding cutbacks to the Women's Counselling, Referral and Education Centre, a group of feminists representing thirty groups decided to create a network of women's groups modelled after the B.C. Federation of Women. The Ontario Federation of Women (OFW) was conceived of as a way to "provide a mechanism for the continuing development of a feminist perspective, promotion of educational activities, communication and mobilization" (OFW Statement of Purpose, undated). John Cleveland (1984) explains that as a result of publicity for the meeting in the media, however, a large number of women attended who wanted an organization that they could join as individuals and, as a result, the proposed group-based federation was voted down. Cleveland recounts how OFW initiators such as Angela Miles were "more successful in working with other ex-WAVAW (Women Against Violence Against Women) people in establishing the Feminist Party of Canada ... with support from liberal feminists active in groups like Women for Political Action and NAC" (1984: 29).

The initial meeting of the Feminist Party of Canada (FPC) was held in February 1979 when a group of women met at the University of Toronto to discuss the founding of a political party that would address the "growing dissatisfaction with the lack of impact women had made within and outside formal structures, the scant attention paid by politicians to women's concerns, and the very small number of women in elected office" (Zaborszky 1988: 256). At their first public meeting in June of that year, 600 women gathered to discuss the poor representation of women in political life and listened to speeches by Laura Sabia, Margaret Evans, Angela Miles, Mary O'Brien and Maryan Kantaroff. The FPC was adamant that "the lack of a feminist

perspective in politics can no longer be tolerated" (Feminist Party of Canada Newsletter July 1979: 2) but as Bashevkin (1993) argues, the project of creating a political party with a feminist perspective was complicated by the party's internal coalition between radical feminists and Progressive Conservative status of women activists.³⁹

By 1984, the OCSW and seven other organizations identified the need to coordinate future lobbying at Queen's Park and formed a Women's Lobby Coalition. In December of that year, the Coalition met with members of all three provincial caucuses, although that appears to have been their only major lobby effort. The absence of a provincially-focused umbrella organization that could coordinate provincial actions perpetuated the continuing prioritization of federal politics over provincial issues. Certainly, the development of the NAC and its high visibility in the Toronto feminist community offered Ontario feminists a key institution through which to focus their activism. NAC's concentration on federal politics, however, drew much of the energy of Ontario feminists away from provincial matters.

A more recent attempt to create a provincial women's lobby group was the Ontario Women's Action Coalition (OWAC) that held its founding conference in 1989 in Sault Ste. Marie. The OWAC was conceived as an umbrella organization that would "shape a provincial women's action group" and could "provide research resources, respond to provincial government initiatives and issues ... and facilitate communication and community action campaigns among women's groups in Ontario" (OWAC leaflet, CWMA files, undated).⁴⁰ The founding of the Ontario Women's Action Coalition during the Peterson majority government suggests that at least some Ontario feminists saw this period as one in which women needed to be more vigilant about provincial affairs in light of the failure of the

Liberals to deliver their 1987 election commitments. OWAC organizers noted the plethora of feminist organizations involved in lobbying Queen's Park, but lamented the lack of any collective impact because of limited coordination:

Our traditional focus for political action on the funding powers of the Federal government overlooks the important role of the Provincial government in the delivery of programs and services in nearly every aspect of our daily lives. Without continuing pressure, the Government of Ontario seems to show little initiative of its own to honour the commitments made to women in the 1987 election ...Women in Ontario need to focus on provincial issues which are not necessarily a high priority within NAC (OWAC leaflet, undated).

Although also Toronto based, the OWAC attempted to overcome the historic Toronto-centredness of the Ontario women's movement by organizing itself into geographic regions and ensuring adequate representation from the Franco-Ontarienne community. It attracted support from the Ontario Federation of Labour, the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, the Federation of Women's Teachers, DAWN Toronto and the Union Culturelle des Franco-Ontariennes. Once again, however, the difficulties associated with organizing provincially in Ontario surfaced. Despite the founding conference being held in Sault Ste. Marie, northern Ontario women were resistant to the idea of another Toronto-based umbrella organization. In North Bay, women felt that "they were trying to set our agenda for us and we weren't ready for that" (Interview Marsha Greenfield, 5 November 1992). The Northwestern Ontario Women's Decade Council, centred in Thunder Bay reacted similarly:

We didn't get really involved in that [OWAC] because we felt that energy and resources here were scarce and we felt that organizing regionally worked best for us. We suggested to them that they help other regions organize ... They didn't choose to go that route and we

wished them well and said "I'm sorry we only have so much time and so much energy and we're focusing it here" (Personal Interview Leni Untinen, 18 May 1993).

The quick demise of the OWAC speaks to the perennial difficulty of sustaining provincially-focused organizations within the province and the disjuncture between location and jurisdiction within the province.⁴¹ A vital, well-organized Northern Ontario women's movement has remained more focused on provincial action and determined to maintain its autonomy from the Toronto-based movement. Feminists in northern Ontario cite a different agenda, their unique "northern culture" (Personal interview Margaret P'hillips, 19 May 1993) and a sense of alienation from Toronto-based organizations as accounting for their long history of separate organizing. Nancy Adamson's (1995) recent work on the women's liberation movement in Thunder Bay echoes this theme. In Adamson's interviews with northern feminists, women shared their strong sense of place:

'When we talk about Northwestern Ontario, I come from Northwestern Ontario, I don't come from Thunder Bay, and there're real ties to communities in terms of people's roots' ... Another woman said, 'There's something about the geography; we're not part of Ontario, you know' (1995: 275, emphasis added).

While efforts to sustain a lobby coalition that would address provincial matters proved elusive in southern Ontario (the OWAC appears not to have been active after 1991), northwest Ontario women have sustained a regional organization since 1976. Northern women first mobilized in 1973 at the Northern Women's Conference when 600 gathered in Thunder Bay. The energy generated at that event fuelled the formation of a host of grassroots organizations throughout the region that although encompassing both liberationist and equal-rights perspectives, shared a strong sense of needing to

organize to address the particular situation of women in northern Ontario that they felt southern feminists failed to understand (Personal Interview Margaret Phillips 19 May 1993). Following the "Where Do We Go From Here Conference?" in Thunder Bay in 1976, the Northwestern Ontario International Women's Decade Coordinating Council (later the Northwestern Ontario Women's Decade Council) formed as an umbrella coalition of area women's groups and services in Kenora, Fort Frances, Atikokan, Red Lake, Geraldton, Sioux Lookout, Thunder Bay and communities along the north shore of Lake Superior.⁴² While the agenda of the Decade Council targets action at all three levels of government, the bulk of its activities have centred on municipal and provincial issues (Personal interview Leni Untinen, 18 May 1993), fostering a strong sense of place among northern Ontario women.

5.5 Case Study: Alberta

The difficulty in achieving equality measures for Albertan women through legislative politics has been paralleled by similar difficulties within bureaucratic structures. Prior to the establishment of the Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues in 1986, the sole bureaucratic mechanism for addressing women's concerns was the Alberta Women's Bureau. Created by the Social Credit government in 1966, the Women's Bureau commemorated the 50th anniversary of the enfranchisement of Alberta women. In establishing the Bureau, the provincial government made explicit that the office's mandate was to serve as a public information vehicle. The Bureau was assigned:

to collect and compile information, opinions and other material on matters of particular concern to women, including information,

opinions and material on the cultural, social, legal, public and other rights, responsibilities, interests and privileges of women in Alberta; to make such information, opinions and other material available to women, women's organization and others and to provide such other services and perform such other functions as may be designated by the Minister (ASWAC 1976: 40).

In addition to having its potential for effectiveness seriously curtailed by limited resources, the Bureau also "did not have the statutory mandate to elicit the demands and concerns of the women's movement and communicate their concerns to government" (Trimble 1992: 228). A decade after its founding, the women's community complained that with "its very low profile ... lack of funds and insufficient staff, it is unlikely to make much impact either within government or with the women of Alberta" (ASWAC 1976: 41). Nonetheless, into the early eighties, the Bureau fulfilled its public education function through the publication of the Women's Bureau Newspaper that offered Albertan women a feminist voice. Articles appearing on issues such as women and pensions, prostitution, planned parenthood, pornography, and regular updates on feminist organizations such as ASWAC, NAC, the Canadian Coalition Against Media Pornography and the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, kept Albertan women informed about the activities of Canadian feminists throughout the province and across the country.⁴³ In 1983, the Women's Bureau expanded into grass-roots organizing by facilitating consciousness-raising groups around the province, and lending expertise to new groups to initiate discussion on topics such as sexual harassment, sexual assault, wife battering, poverty and Aboriginal issues.

The following year, a newly-created Women's Secretariat absorbed the Women's Bureau, a move that eventually muted women's voices within the

provincial bureaucracy. At the same time, the government struck both an Interdepartmental and a Cabinet Committee charged with addressing women's issues. (The tenure of this Cabinet Committee was to be short-lived, however, as it was disbanded after Don Getty became premier.)

Absorbing the Bureau's public information and educational duties, the new Secretariat was given the additional tasks of policy analysis and coordination with other departments to critique and assist in the development of any policies affecting Albertan women. When legislation was introduced in 1986 to repeal the Women's Bureau Act, the parameters of the new structure were to:

identify, analyze and make recommendations about Government policy, programs and legislation that affect women ... maintain coordination and liaison with Government departments to ensure that women's concerns are reflected in legislation and policy and program development ... conduct research and collect data on women's issues ... promote public and Government awareness of issues of concern to women and ... undertake any activities that the Minister considers appropriate (Bill 20).

The Secretariat reported to the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, an informal portfolio that had been created in 1979 and which initially floated from one Cabinet Minister to another.

Although the Secretariat appeared to be a meaningful response to the demands of the Alberta women's movement, Monica Blais argues that the reconstitution of the Bureau into a Secretariat was not the benevolent act of a Conservative government suddenly attuned to women's priorities. Blais speculates instead that "Lougheed created the Secretariat because the proponents of the [advisory] council were becoming too vocal, and consequently, the government was receiving too much bad publicity in the

local newspapers" (1992: 48). She concludes that the "government saw the Secretariat as a means to appease the women, and [thought] that therefore, the Committee [on the advisory council] would disband" (48).

The Secretariat did not serve as a welcome olive branch to a women's community angry over the government's refusal to strike an advisory council. Publishing neither a newsletter nor an annual report and conducting no primary research to identify the specificities of women's status in the province, the Secretariat did little to gain the respect of the Alberta feminists. Consequently, feminist activists were quick to express doubts about the viability of the new structure. The Secretariat was perceived as "a public relations firm for the Minister ... [with] some women fear[ing] that the Secretariat would be used as a buffer to circumvent direct contact with the ministers" (Blais 1992: 68).

Trimble's analysis of the Women's Secretariat under the leadership of Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, Elaine McCoy between 1987 and 1992 reveals that McCoy did relax restrictions on the Secretariat such as a ban on referring to 'equality' and 'equity' in Secretariat publications (1992: 237). Nevertheless, the Secretariat's credibility was further undermined with feminists both within and outside of the legislature when in 1989 it produced Person to Person: An Alberta Dialogue on Economic Equality for Women. The study, criticized by the NDP as amounting to little more than a "gathering of information that had already been widely known for over ten years" (Blais 1992: 73), faced stiff opposition from the women's movement and was dismissed for its suspect methodology.⁴⁴

In the Throne Speech of 1986, the government announced that the Secretariat would henceforth be guided by a Plan of Action that would serve as a framework for the Secretariat and the government as a whole on

women's concerns. Specific initiatives were to be announced that, in turn, would be implemented under the Plan. The first installment of Alberta Plan for Action For Women: A Proud History, A Bright Future was released in July, 1989. In the introduction, Premier Getty announced that the document "reflects priorities expressed by women and men through the Province (emphasis added) and added that "we firmly believe that improving the status of women will ultimately lead to stronger families, strong communities, and a strong Alberta" thus making it explicit that action on women's issues was expected to fall within the framework of the family values philosophy that guided the Getty government's overall position on social policy. The Plan pledged government-wide action in six major target areas: women and the family; women in the workplace; women in education and training; women and health; women in the community; and women in the public service. It also set out goals and objectives but omitted policy commitments.

The Plan for Action For Women is interesting in that it reveals the conflicting views within Cabinet towards women's equality. As Trimble observes, in contrast to Getty's remarks, the

plan allowed [Minister] McCoy to assert the progressive faction's view of women and the family, which recognized "the diversity of family structure" and the need to "promote economic equality for women in the home." Such phrases, vague as they were prompted AFWUF to complain that the traditional family was being undermined (1992: 237).

The programs initiated under the Plan were educational in nature and involved no substantive policy change.⁴⁵ A report card on the progress of the 1989-90 initiatives released in 1990 included praise from women's groups for increased funding to shelters, but the bulk of programs such as those designed

to 'enhance nurses' jobs,'⁴⁶ media campaigns highlighting women's roles in the province and mentoring programs for women within the public service held limited interest to women's groups.⁴⁷

In 1992, the breadth of the Women's Secretariat's agenda was curtailed sharply to encompass only family violence issues. Following the transfer of the Conservative leadership to Ralph Klein, the Women's Secretariat was subsumed within the Ministry of Community Development with the Executive Director now reporting to the Deputy Minister rather than directly to Minister Responsible for Women's Issues. This reorganization marked a serious limiting of the Secretariat's role as defined in 1984 when it had been understood to involve providing advice to the Minister. The move evidenced the Klein government's continuation of the Alberta PC agenda of halting progress towards women's equality in Alberta. With the recent collapse of the Women's Secretariat into the Alberta Seniors' Secretariat (Trimble 1997) and a significantly reduced funding base, the Women's Secretariat has an even more severely restricted role.

The stormy history of the Alberta Council on Women's Issues reveals not only the constraints on bureaucratic mechanisms as vehicles for progressive change for women in Alberta, but also helps account for the emergence of a largely anti-state feminist movement as I will profile later in this chapter. Linda Trimble (1992) and Monica Blais (1992) both argue that the decision to create the long-sought-for advisory council was taken in 1986 not as the fruition of years of lobbying by ASWAC and the Provincial Committee for Women's Affairs,⁴⁸ but as a politically expedient measure by leadership contender Don Getty to win support from Tory women. By the time of Don Getty's rise to power, Alberta feminists were disillusioned with their provincial state. Nonetheless, in the late 1980s, the legislature did address

issues of women's equality because a cohort of women opposition members "were willing to speak and act for women in three ways: by articulating women's unique experiences; by taking gender into account when discussing public policy of all types; and by demanding policies designed to eliminate sex-based discrimination and promote the status of women" (Trimble, 1993: 104). Trimble depicts the Getty administration as the "women's issues" phase of contemporary Alberta politics, citing the 1986 creation of the Advisory Council on Women's Issues, the transformation of the Women's Bureau into the Women's Secretariat, the appointment of a women Minister Responsible for Women's Issues and reforms in the areas of education and daycare as evidence of a new interest in women's equality demands in the late 1980s (1992: 232).

The struggle to gain a provincial advisory council stretched over fourteen years before legislation to create the Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues was tabled in 1986. By the time the Council was created in 1986, the Getty government was firmly committed to a 'family values' philosophy which conflicted with ideas of women's equality as understood by Alberta feminists. Initially, the government introduced legislation that would have made the council a "citizen's advisory body" that would be part of the Women's Secretariat and would lack any autonomy. When this piece of legislation died on the order paper following the election call, the issue of an advisory council was shelved. The revised Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues Act tabled in August 1986 removed the stipulation that the Council would be under the Secretariat and instead called for a fifteen member council, appointed by the cabinet, to report to the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues. The Council remained curtailed by the absence of a research mandate, by patronage appointments, and by the

presence of a sunset clause that allowed for the expiration of the council on December 31, 1996.⁴⁹

As in Newfoundland, the initial argument for an advisory council was predicated on the grounds that Alberta was lagging behind other provinces in its tangible commitments to women's equality measures. The Alberta women's movement was less united in the struggle for an advisory council, however, as witnessed by the withdrawal of support for the Provincial Committee lobbying for an Alberta Council on Women's Affairs by the Alberta Status of Women Action Committee (ASWAC) in 1980. Monica Blais (1992) argues that ASWAC turned away from lobbying for AACWI when it saw what was going on in other provinces. By the time of the Council's formation in 1986, thirteen years after the founding of the Ontario Status of Women Council, much more debate had occurred within the feminist movement about the wisdom of pursuing bureaucratic machinery for women, and the prospect of such machinery being effective for women if achieved. Even though by 1986, ASWAC had rejoined the lobby for a council, support for an advisory structure was fragmentary. Additionally, the U.S. feminist emigrés active in the Calgary area questioned the validity of pursuing a state-oriented agenda of any sort. Within this context, then, women's political activism was both fractured and disorganized by debates over orientation and strategy. The existence of ASWAC and the Calgary Status of Women Action Committee (SWAC) presented attractive alternatives through which to pursue feminist activism.

From its beginnings, the Council was mired in controversy. The appointment of the first council chair reflected the government's lack of commitment to representing the interests of the women's movement. Indeed, in the House, the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, Dick

Johnson responded to a question regarding the hiring criteria of the first Council "chairman" Margaret Leahey in the following manner: "It's important I guess, that the person should be a woman. Although that wasn't a 100 percent requirement, I thought that the chairman should be a woman, and I think we satisfied that criterion" (Alberta Legislative Assembly Debates, 9 April 1986: 102). The appointment of Leahey, a former broadcast journalist and legislative reporter, sparked an angry protest from the feminist community. In her initial media interviews, Leahey suggested that she wanted "a very strong male" such as business executive Peter Pocklington to serve on the Council. Leahey, with no experience in women's groups, defended the government's decision to deny the Council a research mandate, insisting that it should not duplicate the role of the Women's Secretariat, refused to endorse affirmative action and when asked if she defined herself as a feminist, responded that "I've never labelled myself a woman. I label myself a person" (Smishek 1986).

The initial reports of the Council in 1987 and 1988 were criticized by the women's movement as poorly researched and unrepresentative of the movement (Trimble 1992: 235). The Council's credibility with the women's movement was eroded further by the government's blatant efforts to dictate the Council's agenda. In 1987, then Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, Dennis Anderson, stated that in Alberta the abortion issue was "too emotional and non-productive an issue for the Council to take on." Anderson suggested that the Council is "best advised to concentrate on issues where they can effect change" and he further discouraged the council from holding public meetings that "would be expensive and likely have little value other than discussion of general topics" (Tretheway 1987).

By 1989, however, Leahey's redeemed herself in the eyes of the women's movement somewhat when she told the press that she believed the government was planning to absorb the council into the newly announced Family Council. The statement succeeded in generating support within the feminist community for the vulnerable Council but also led to Leahey's resignation. Her replacement, Calgary educational consultant and Tory party worker Elva Mertick was better received by the women's movement. Along with Mertick's appointment, Minister Responsible for Women's Issues Elaine McCoy filled eight council vacancies, some with women who had legitimate ties to the women's movement (Trimble 1992: 237). Mertick's tenure saw a consolidation of the Council's role and a concerted effort to establish communication with the women's movement and change the perception among the feminist community that the Council was "a bunch of Tory wives" (Personal interview Laurie Blakeman, 23 June 1993). The Council moved into research, producing briefs and recommendations on issues such as constitutional reform, employment equity and reproductive technology. It also made a commitment to incorporate anti-racism into its mandate.

The recent history of the AACWI has been described as "a systematic death of a thousand cuts" (Personal interview Laurie Blakeman, 23 June 1993). From June 1992, when Mertick's term expired, to May 1993, the chair's position remained empty, undermining the operation of the Council and sparking a public protest. In an open letter to the Cabinet, Women Looking Forward, a coalition of women's groups, charged that the government's lethargy in appointing Chairs of the Advisory Council and the Human Rights Commission was jeopardizing the ability of the two organizations "to redress the historic inequalities faced by women, aboriginal people, immigrants, people of colour, people with disabilities and gays and lesbians" (Jeffs 1992:

B1).⁵⁰ The difficult period following Mertick's departure was spent in "trouble-shooting and crisis management" and in "developing, postponing and finally, abandoning projects" (AACWI Newsletter 5:3 June 1993: 4).⁵¹ Along with the Women's Secretariat, the Council was informed by Women's Issues Minister Dianne Mirosh that it would now report to the Deputy Minister of Community Development instead of to the Minister herself, thus further marginalizing the Council and curtailing its ability to fulfill its mandate. Eventually, a retired public servant from the Women's Bureau, Catherine Arthur, was appointed to the chair for a three-month period without input from feminist groups, a move that staff members feared signalled the imminent demise of the Council (Personal interview Laurie Blakeman, 23 June 1993). At the time of the controversial appointment, only five council members remained and the Klein government announced that no new appointments would be made.

The fate of the council has been sealed with Premier Klein's announcement in 1994 that as a cost-saving measure, the women's advisory council would be allowed to lapse, consistent with the sunset clause. When questioned in the House by Liberal MLA Colleen Soetaert about who would speak for women if the council is abolished, Klein called her remarks offensive and, echoing the comments of Hugh Horner at the time of the initial lobby for a council, retorted that "If I were a woman, I would be highly offended ...What the hon. member is saying is women are not capable of speaking for themselves" (as quoted in Trimble 1997: 151).

The Advisory Council has not shied away from controversy as it enters its final days. In October 1995, the Council published Differential Impact and the Alberta Advantage, a stinging analysis of the devastating impact of Alberta's approach to economic restructuring on the province's women. The

Council also initiated a public consultation with the women of Alberta and submitted recommendations to the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, Gary Mar, on how best to ensure appropriate levels of representation for women within the Alberta state. As I have documented, the creation of an Advisory Council and a Women's Secretariat were symbolic victories at best and may have facilitated an even stronger anti-feminist backlash. Both the Alberta Advisory Council and the Secretariat were of limited use to the women's movement, however, because of their marginalization within the bureaucratic structure and the interference and manipulation of their agendas by the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues. Today it is painfully apparent, however, that the tenuous spaces for feminist ideas and discourse within the Alberta state long pursued by Alberta women have been effectively eliminated and the prospects for meaningful representation for women within the Alberta bureaucracy are dim.

Unlike Newfoundland or Ontario, the Alberta movement achieved a provincial umbrella organization, although lack of government response did make it hard to sustain a provincially-oriented lobby. Inspired by International Women's Year, an Edmonton-based women's group called Options for Women approached the Secretary of State in 1975 for funding to hold a series of regional workshops on the status of Alberta women. Drawing representatives from Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Calgary and Lethbridge, ASWAC was organized and in 1976 held workshops across the province, discussing strategies "to achieve the full integration and participation of Alberta women in the economic, political, cultural and social process of their province" (ASWAC 1976: 1). The document generated from these workshops tracked Alberta's record on "women's issues" in comparison to other provinces and territories and argued that the Alberta government was lagging

behind the rest of Canada in terms of establishing effective structures for the achievement of women's equality. A liberal and reformist philosophy informed the document. ASWAC's demands were grounded in the belief that "the route to change is one of joint initiatives between the individual on the one hand and the government on the other" (1976: 3). The report set out a three-year plan that called for the creation of a combination of state and voluntary sectors responses including the creation of a Cabinet Committee on Equal Opportunity, the appointment of a Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, the creation of a Secretariat to the Cabinet Committee on Equality Opportunity, a permanent, sex-specialized agency which would absorb the Women's Bureau and the appointment of a citizen's council on the status of women.

Despite its moderate approach, the government's reaction to the report was decisively negative. Deputy Premier Hugh Horner, insisted that

To create a Ministership responsible for the Status of Women would be an act of discrimination and an act of discrimination not against men, but against women! Such a Ministership would suggest that women are incapable of looking after themselves and would suggest that they need special protection. My understanding of the aspirations of women in Alberta is one which indicates to me that they do not want "special status" but equality! Further I believe that women can take care of themselves and that they do an excellent job of getting their views across to all segments of society, including government (Trimble 1992: 229).

Mobilized by the government's hostility and inaction, ASWAC' was to function as a provincial feminist organization providing leadership for the women's movement in Alberta as well as coordinating activism with feminists elsewhere on federal issues. ASWAC' members assumed that representative democracy was the legitimate vehicle for change. Between

1976 and 1979, ASWAC tailored its agenda according to the initiatives identified within Joint Initiatives. But by 1979, with no progress achieved, the ASWAC Executive launched a strategy review, determining that since the government appeared set on ignoring their demands, lobbying should be reduced and education and organizational efforts accelerated, particularly with a view towards extending regional representation because at this time, ASWAC was still predominantly an Edmonton-based organization. At the 1980 conference "Reaping the Whirlwind," ASWAC decided to largely abandon its lobbying role in favour of becoming an umbrella body for women and women's groups and a referral agency for women's services now prioritizing decentralization and internal restructuring. ASWAC declined to support the Provincial Committee for an Alberta Council on Women's Affairs, announcing that traditional lobbying was often futile and doubting the ability of a provincial advisory council to raise the status of women (Trimble 1992: 231). Julie Anne Le Gras explained that "ASWAC's nature has changed drastically from a fairly liberal organization committed to working with the existing systems to a pressure group in opposition to the government's overall policy on and approach to women" (Interview, 19 February 1990).

This shift was not without internal debate, however as some women saw this "inward-looking phase" as tailored to meet the needs of the membership rather than women in general (Blais 1992). Pat Rasmussen, Director of the Women's Program Resource Centre of the University of Alberta remembers that "the emphasis shifted away from lobbying and the structural analysis of women's oppression to a focus on personal development" [and] "the work became the feminist analysis but the analysis wasn't translated into political action" (Blais 1992: 4). Monica Blais's study of

ASWAC reveals very little contact between ASWAC and partisan politics between 1980 and 1992, although ASWAC did participate sporadically in campaigns around issues such as the Matrimonial Property Act, pay equity, child care, reproductive rights, the Widow's Pension Act and Maintenance Enforcement (83).

By 1992, however, ASWAC began shifting back gradually towards its original mandate (Personal Interview Moyra Lang, 23 June 1993). This move is attributable to the increasingly intolerable political climate now experienced by many Albertan women under the Klein administration. More specifically, the renewed interest in returning to a more state-focused approach to feminist organizing has been spurred on by the embattled history of the Advisory Council. The ASWAC Project Coordinator admits, "if they [the Advisory Council] fold we're in big trouble" (Personal interview Moyra Lang, 23 June 1993). Because interaction between the organized women's movement and the Alberta Women's Secretariat is rare, ASWAC realizes that closure of the Advisory Council combined with the sharp decline in a feminist presence in the legislature following the 1993 election, leaves the women's movement virtually shut out of state decision-making.

ASWAC's return to a lobbying strategy at the provincial level, however, has been complicated by the refusal of either the Premier or Cabinet members to agree to meetings with ASWAC representatives. In May 1993, ASWAC organized a provincial women's lobby day. ASWAC coordinated a coalition of groups representing approximately 20000 Albertan women and invited each of the three parties to spend forty-five minutes answering questions on women's concerns in the areas of justice, the economy, health care, human rights, poverty and employment. The Lobby effort was part of ASWAC's new Political Action Campaign, the goals of which were to

encourage women to vote, educate themselves about the issues, work in constituency organizations, and generally become more involved in electoral politics. Although the Conservatives initially declined to supply either policy positions to ASWAC or to attend the Lobby, media pressure was successful in gaining their eventual attendance. ASWAC decided to make this an annual event.

Lobbying the provincial government also was to occupy a major portion of the Calgary-based SWAC founded in 1975, although the history of SWAC reveals an even earlier turn away from lobbying towards a politics of cultural feminism. When ASWAC was founded in 1976, SWAC women assumed positions on the ASWAC Board of Directors. Work on passage of the Matrimonial Property Act that became ASWAC's the first coordinated lobby effort drew in several of SWAC's founding members who left their organization's Board to concentrate on ASWAC lobbying.

By 1977, SWAC became influenced by several key members politicized in the United States by the civil rights movement of the 1960s who brought to Calgary a well-developed feminist consciousness and a knowledge of and commitment to radical/cultural feminist politics (Personal interview Karen Lodi 24 June 1993). The rejection by this cohort of a state-focused reformist approach to change precipitated a split within the SWAC Board as members committed to organizing around issues such as reproductive rights, violence against women and lesbian oppression faced opposition from other SWAC members who argued "who cares about violence against women? That's not a mainstream issue" (Personal interview Karen Lodi 24 June 1993). With the move of this U.S.-educated contingent into the leadership of SWAC, however, the turn away from state-focused activism began.

While SWAC retained a membership within ASWAC, a problematic relationship between the two organizations developed that continues to the present day. Initially, there was considerable cooperation between SWAC and ASWAC because of the overlap in membership from both organizations described above. As Karen Lodi observes, "things got muddy later on [between ASWAC and SWAC] especially when no one wanted to do lobbying" (Personal interview, 24 June 1993). When ASWAC also virtually abandoned lobbying and transformed itself into an educational group, its claim to be a provincially-representative organization was subject to debate: "It [ASWAC] was provincial because it lobbied the government but it served the purpose of a local status of women group for Edmonton and so they were busy enough fulfilling that role" (Personal interview Karen Lodi 24 June 1993). In Calgary, the opening of an ASWAC branch office in 1985-6 triggered debate as to the role ASWAC would assume within that city's feminist community. Murtriba Din, SWAC project coordinator, admits that "what's annoying for me is that they are not recognizing that they are a lobby group and that they should focus on that" (Personal interview, 24 June 1993). Indeed, ASWAC's interest in pursuing an educational and cultural agenda that mirrors that of the longer-established SWAC has resulted in a series of "territorial skirmishes" over the duties of each group with both organizations reluctant to assume a leadership for the provincial women's movement vis-à-vis a hostile provincial state.

5.6 Case Study: Northwest Territories

The most recently established status of women machinery of the four cases under comparison exists within the Northwest Territories, although attention to "women's issues" within territorial politics has a history

extending back to the early seventies. In 1973, the Government of the NWT (GNWT) first struck an internal Status of Women Committee chaired by Carolyn McCabe, an officer of the Executive Secretariat. The Committee reported to the government in 1976, identifying several issues of concern to NWT women. The GNWT established an Ad Hoc Interdepartmental Committee in 1978, again chaired by McCabe, to respond to the UN Plan of Action and develop a plan of action for the Territories. This committee lobbied the Territorial Commissioner for the appointment of an advisor on women's issues and requested that such a person be drawn from the committee membership. Citing financial restraints, the Commissioner denied approval of the Interdepartmental Committee's plan of action the following year.

In 1981, the NWT Executive Council finally created a portfolio for the Status of Women. Marina Devine reports that then-NWT government leader George Braden admits that the GNWT was motivated to set up the portfolio as "a deliberate political strategy to establish the NWT government as a presence in the federal-provincial arena" (1992: 11). Braden himself acted as the first Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and in 1982 hosted a conference in Yellowknife on the Status of Women designed to provide NWT women with an opportunity to make recommendations on issues concerning women. In 1984, the Assembly passed the NWT Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act. The enabling legislation for the Council contained no sunset clause and set a broad mandate for membership.⁵² At the same time, a Status of Women office (also known as the Women's Bureau) was set up in the Department of Justice. The first Advisory Council on the Status of Women was appointed in 1984 with well-known Loucheux activist Bertha Allen (founding President of the NWT

Native Women's Association) as its first president. That same year, the Status of Women office within Justice was replaced by a Status of Women Secretariat (which became known as the Women's Secretariat in 1986) created within the Department of the Executive. In an unusual arrangement, this Secretariat provided staff, administrative and financial support to the Advisory Council from its budget.

In 1985, the GNWT participated in the Nairobi Conference to mark the end of the UN decade for women and released Equality for Women: a Five Year Plan of Action that outlined fifty-three recommendations for reforms on wide variety of issues⁵³ and acted as a blueprint for women's equality needs until 1989. That same year, MLA Douglas Patterson assumed the role of Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. Patterson gained national attention as the first Minister Responsible for the Status of Women in Canada to encourage his government to make public the discrepancies between its legislation and the Charter of Rights and to take action on changes necessary to comply.⁵⁴ In its early years, the Advisory Council concentrated on issues such as violence against women, childcare and educational reforms. As the Advisory Council became more active, conflict of interest concerns within the position of Executive Director began to show. Under the original structure, a single Executive Director served both the Council and the Secretariat which placed enormous strains on that staffperson who was expected to serve both the Minister and the advisory body responsible for critiquing government policy.

A serious rift between MLA Jeannie Marie-Jewell and the Advisory Council occurred in 1988 after Marie-Jewell became Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and commissioned a review of the roles and relationships of the Women's Secretariat and the Advisory Council. This

study (known as the Roberts Report) was never made available to the Council or tabled in the Assembly. Also in 1988, Marie-Jewell publicly chided the Council for failing to lobby the government aggressively enough and levelled the blame for the government's lack of progress on the five-year plan of action at Council's doorstep (Welbourn 1988). Yellowknife lawyer Katherine Peterson, then Council president, responded angrily that "what we have become is a lobby or pressure group instead of an advisory council" because of the poor communication between the Minister and the Council and the failure of the government to release to the Council's biannual reports on the progress of the Action Plan (Welbourn 1988). The Council and other women's groups clashed further with Marie-Jewell in 1988 over the Minister's failure to make appointments to vacant seats on the Council or address administrative problems within the Secretariat. Controversy escalated after the Minister funded a local anti-daycare group's attendance at a R.E.A.L. Women's conference in Ottawa that same year (Devine 1992: 19-20).

In 1989, Marie-Jewell announced plans to create a more independent Council and to disentangle its operations from those of the Women's Secretariat. After the re-organization in 1990, the Advisory Council became the Status of Women Council. A new nine-member Status of Women Council was struck and the decision was made to provide separate funding to the Status of Women Council. Once again, the Council criticized Jeannie Marie-Jewell's decision to appoint an entirely new Council, despite the recommendations of the sitting Council. Outgoing President Katherine Peterson mused "[o]ne wonders whether the government is reacting to past criticism that the Council has from time to time leveled at it ... One wonders whether that is coming back to haunt [us]" (Ross 1990: A3). In the 1990s, the Council became more active in justice system reforms and constitutional

issues. In 1995, the Council participated also in the environmental assessment review of the potential impact of the BHP Diamond Mine Proposal.⁵⁵

The Council continues to maintain a very active research agenda and links women across the territories through the outreach work of a Community Development Officer and the publication of a newsletter. It concentrates heavily on smaller communities and works less with women's groups within Yellowknife. Council researcher Marsha Argue explains that the Council's work is geared towards an emphasis on families and holistic community development, not just on the needs of women (Personal Interview, 1 March 1996). Argue maintains that the Council's credibility throughout the Territories has been aided by the decision to focus on providing support for local women's initiatives.

The re-organization of 1990 replaced the Women's Secretariat with a Women's Directorate which assumed the following responsibilities:

- to promote and administer the Women's Initiative Grant Program; to provide funding to women's projects;

- to provide financial contributions to the Status of Women Council and work jointly with the Council when appropriate,

- to prepare briefings/correspondence and speeches for the Minister, and to provide advice and information to her on women's concerns on press coverage and on federal/provincial/territorial activities;

- and to do research, analysis and program and policy development in areas of concern to women and to work with other departments doing similar work.

Staff was cut from five to three, while the new Status of Women Council was allotted four paid positions. During John Ningark's brief term as Minister responsible for the women's portfolio, however, the Women's Secretariat was

downsized to a single position of Special Advisor. Argue speculates that when the Minister was forced to decide where to make budget cuts with the women's portfolio, he opted to spare the Council "because he thought we were doing useful stuff and that our resources needed to be preserved" (Personal Interview, 1 March 1996). The Council protested this change in the status of women machinery, insisting that it "makes it more difficult to ensure policies are reviewed from the perspective of women's equality, to begin new inter-departmental initiatives to promote the equality of women, or to participate fully in national initiatives around women's equality" (Status of Women Council of the NWT Undated: 10).

The Special Advisor functions as a liaison between the government, women's groups and the advisory council and admits that she "takes her lead on issues from the Advisory Council" (Personal Interview, Bertha Norwegian 1 March 1996). Part of the Special Advisor's role is to oversee the Women's Initiative Grants program which distributes \$100,000 annually to territorial women's groups. Since the dismantling of the Directorate, and given the absence of a territorial status of women committee, the Advisory Council fulfills the role of being the main watchdog on territorial state and currently enjoys good access to the Minister, Assembly members and key bureaucrats. Whether or not the Council will survive the profound restructuring underway to prepare for the division of the Territories, however, remains to be seen.

NWT women's lobbying efforts date back to 1970 when a Status of Women Action Committee was formed in Yellowknife to push the new territorial government for implementation of the recommendations of the RCSW. In 1975, a splinter group of the Status of Women Committee founded Options for Women, a women's liberation group that focused instead on

consciousness-raising and community development (Devine 1991). Status of Women continued to meet until 1978 until the government struck the ad hoc committee to respond to the UN Plan of Action. The Native Women's Association of the Northwest Territories had organized in 1976 to represent the needs of Aboriginal women to government as well as to assist and encourage native women to organize locally to address a range of social, economic and political problems. By the early eighties, it became clear that the mandate of the Native Women's Association of Canada diverged from the needs and goals of Inuit women and in 1983, the National Inuit Women's Committee formed in Frobisher Bay.

In February 1983, women gathered in Yellowknife at the Northern Women's Coalition Conference. The Conference was designed to forge links between women in Native and non-Native communities and attracted seventy women representing fifteen communities. Dene Chief Cece Hodgson McCauley had tested the idea of a territorial-wide coalition in Inuvik in April 1982. McCauley then brought together fifty women, First Nations and non-First Nations in Yellowknife to discuss the possibility of forming a political organization that would represent the interests of women of the North. McCauley, at that time the only woman chief in the Mackenzie Valley, pointed to the issue of Native women's rights, education, training and daycare as priorities that required the concerted efforts of all NWT women. The Coalition's founders envisioned the organization as an umbrella structure for the NWT's women's movement that would connect groups across the territories and affiliate with pan-Canadian women's organizations. This represented the first effort to forge formal organizational ties among non-Native, Dene and Métis women. Although some interest in the

Coalition was expressed by women in the eastern Arctic, distance and lack of funding prevented their involvement.

Coalition founders Pat McMahon, a city of Yellowknife politician (and later Mayor), Chief MaCauley and MLA Eliza Lawrence argued that a women's coalition was necessary as a lobby and research group to act as a watchdog on the GNWT. While the Coalition's broad goal was to act as a forum for the women of the NWT and facilitate participation by women in all aspects of life in the NWT, the immediate goal was to influence the proposed legislation for the Advisory Council.⁵⁶ At the conference, women pledged their support for encouraging and assisting NWT women to involve themselves in the all aspects of the political process and targeted daycare as a key area in which the GNWT was lagging seriously behind other jurisdictions (Mitchell 1983: A7). The Coalition was to act as a conduit of information between grassroots groups and the Advisory Council in order to overcome the particular difficulties of distance, transportation costs, and isolation that challenge coordinated organizing in the territories. Initially, the Coalition generated a significant amount of interest among women in smaller communities as local coalitions appeared in Inuvik and later Hay River. In 1984, the Coalition opened a resource centre and began publishing a newsletter that contained information on feminist activities throughout the country.

Despite these efforts, the Coalition itself was short-lived. The local groups that formed as part of the Coalition survived, however, and helped spawn grassroots women's groups throughout the western regions. At the "Visions by Women" Conference in Rankin Inlet in 1988 sponsored by the Advisory Council and the Women's Secretariat, forty-eight women attended from twenty-two communities. Among the participants were the NWT

NWA, Inuit Women's Association, Immigrant Women's Association, Association Culturelle Franco-Tenoise, Métis Association, Dene Cultural Institute and the YWCA. A focus on community development and equipping women to assume leadership roles in their own communities shaped the agenda.

In 1989, NWT women gathered in Hay River at a Conference called "Looking Forward: Women in the 1990s." Once again, women acknowledged the need for a strong, visible lobby effort and better communication and coordination among groups. In particular, they noted the failure to utilize the Advisory Council as effectively as they might have as a focal point for organizing (Welbourn 1989: 4). While the issue of a territorial organization was broached, women voted to continue an ad hoc approach to coordinated lobbying.

Throughout the eighties, the Native Women's Association experienced its own internal debates over an appropriate lobbying role. When Métis Susan Enge replaced founding president Bertha Allen as NWT NWA head in 1985, she asserted that the Association needed to involve itself more visibly in the political development of the NWT. Enge pledged to strengthen ties between the NWA and the Dene Nation and Métis Association in order to facilitate a stronger presence of women in the leadership of aboriginal organizations (Begalki 1985: A9). Two years later, however, the NWA's membership passed a resolution to limit political activities to grassroots and local community issues. Founding president Bertha Allen argued that the NWA should "get back to the basics and get out of politics," insisting that the NWA had been mistaken in its bid to secure a seat on the Dene/Métis land claim negotiating team (Smellie 1987: 3). Her position was that the NWA's agenda should concentrate on social issues such

as daycare and health. If women chose to participate in territorial development issues, Allen maintained, they "can easily do it as an individual, but they shouldn't be doing it as a woman or a women's group" (Smellie 1987: 3). As I will describe in Chapter Six, efforts to build coalitions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women in the NWT and among Aboriginal women in the eastern and western regions of the Territories historically has proven difficult. Nevertheless, as I argued in Chapter Four, the recent issue of constitutional development in the western Arctic appears to have initiated a new era of cooperation between the Advisory Council and the Native Women's Association as Native and non-Native women have met repeatedly to discuss their constitutional concerns and develop joint submissions to the government's Constitutional Development Steering Committee.

Clearly, the context in which NWT women mobilize either around status of women machinery or in extra-parliamentary lobby efforts is dramatically different from that of Newfoundland, Ontario or Alberta. In a jurisdiction encompassing over 3.4 million square kilometres, three time zones, a population of only 62,000, eight official languages and eleven language groups, women face formidable physical as well as cultural barriers to coordinating their representational projects vis-à-vis the state. Women of the NWT experience daily an environment in which a huge and highly complex state renders government "omnipotent and omnipresent" in their lives (Personal interview Marsha Argue, 1 March 1996). As I outlined in Chapter Three, however, the GNWT was created according to southern, non-Aboriginal norms and values that precipitated a crisis of legitimacy for the state among First Nations populations. For many Aboriginal communities (particularly the Dene), therefore, the GNWT represents the continuation of

colonial ties to the federal government and the displacement of indigenous leadership. As well, the “cultural glass wall” identified by Gilles has meant that the state has been largely an employer of non-First Nations personnel: “[a]s a consequence, rather than managing their own affairs, natives in many respects have come to be at the receiving end of a costly government ‘welfare state’” (1993: 40). Under the current system, therefore, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women are differently located vis-à-vis their territorial state. Thus, while Aboriginal women have been long “engaged” with the state, most often that relationship has revolved around their reliance on government programs. At the local and regional levels, Aboriginal women continue to face state structures that are predominantly male, and, as one moves to the territorial level, overwhelmingly non-Native. For most Aboriginal women, therefore, their political participation has been directed towards Aboriginal organizations, local community work and band councils where they have assumed important leadership roles in First Nations organizations and have concentrated on working for change around issues of particular interest to their communities. Nevertheless, the appointment of Aboriginal women to act as the first two presidents of the Advisory Council, and the appointment of a First Nations woman as Special Advisor to the Minister Responsible for Women’s Issues demonstrates that First Nations women are present and active within the state in the area of women’s equality.

The openness of GNWT leaders such as George Braden to the creation of status of women committees and, later, status of women machinery suggests that women, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, have at times have been able to wrest significant concessions from the state. Argue notes also that despite its cumbersome size, the NWI bureaucracy is still informal

enough to be open to women's lobbying efforts. As women's movements ascertain that space does exist for women's involvement with the state to yield results, cooperative lobbying between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women is increasing.

5.7 Conclusion: Comparing Women's Movements and Representational Projects vis-à-vis the State

This comparative examination of women's movements and their representational project of the state confirms Susan Bassnett's thesis that "the public organizing of women's movements reflects the social context in which they emerge" (1986: 172). Clearly, women's movements in each of the four cases have had different experiences with their subnational governments and exhibit distinct orientations to the state. The women's movements in Newfoundland and the Northwest Territories remain engaged with their subnational states, albeit in somewhat different ways. The Ontario movement continues a somewhat ambiguous orientation to its provincial state, although recent events may alter that orientation in the near future. The Alberta women's movement currently remains disengaged from its subnational state. These divergent patterns of orientation appear to be influenced by several variables which together reinforce the importance of taking issues of space and place into account when analyzing movement behaviour.

My comparison of the electoral project shows the unevenness of women's participation in electoral politics in subnational settings. The ability of women's movements to exploit electoral politics as a useful venue for pursuing equality objectives varies significantly across contexts and is related to variables such as political culture, the ideological spectrum of the system,

the impact of the Premier or Government Leader, and the role of party politics. In each case, women's movements have weighed their experiences with the electoral project in order to chart their course of action vis-à-vis their subnational state. The evidence presented with respect to the relevance of state machinery for women suggests first that women's representational projects vis-à-vis the state can have effective avenues other than electoral contests and party politics. In smaller, less formalized bureaucracies, status of women agencies can play a lead role in women's equality struggles as in Newfoundland. Where women have seized opportunities to influence the structures and practices of such machinery, advisory councils and/or policy secretariats have proven to be valuable focal points for women's activism, particular in the absence of provincial or territorial umbrella lobby organizations. An important variable, therefore, is the degree of formality or institutionalization of the state which affects the influence to be derived from occupying positions within the system. Findlay (1987) and O'Neil and Sutherland (1990) point out that moments arise at which opportunities for influencing the state through bureaucratic channels occur, however, is illustrated even in the case of the marginalized Alberta Women's Secretariat during the period in which they were able to pursue a more overtly feminist agenda during the tenure of Elaine McCoy as Minister Responsible for Women's Issues. Indeed, the histories of government machinery in all four cases reinforce the importance of having a Minister assigned to the portfolio of women's issues who is supportive of women's equality projects and has clout within Cabinet. This was true in the case of Ontario also with the difference between Robert Welch and Gregory Sorbara and in Alberta between Elaine McCoy and Dianne Mirosh. With feminists in Ontario and Alberta entering an era in which these mechanisms have disappeared or are

extremely vulnerable, it remains to be seen if their absence will precipitate any re-thinking of the strategies of either movement vis-à-vis their subnational states, particularly as opportunities to influence federal politics through state machinery for women are also significantly fewer.⁵⁷ In the case of Ontario, the elimination of competition among bureaucratic mechanisms could potentially yield greater strength under a future, less regressive provincial government.

My survey of the profiles of women's movements' lobbying projects suggests that, when movements have been successful in making inroads with the state and act within a political culture that supports such activism, women tend to pursue a strategy of engagement with the state. Alternatively, women's movements disengage from the state and choose other forms of strategic action when their opportunities for influencing the state are minimal either because of a hostile political culture or the availability of other seemingly more productive avenues of organizing. The nature of the jurisdiction's province- or territory-building efforts also significantly affect women's ability to influence state action. When women have been able to capitalize on the state's efforts to solidify its own position vis-à-vis the federal state, more fruitful linkages between women's movements and provincial and territorial states have resulted. Clearly, there are moments of transition within individual locales and larger jurisdictions such as in the NWT during division when women are able to shape the political opportunity structure to their own advantage. As we are witnessing in the case of the Northwest Territories, women's place within their cultural communities can also affect their ability to create new representational opportunities.

Overall, it appears that in contexts where there is less of a disjuncture between locale and jurisdiction such as Newfoundland (but not Labrador),

movements display a more unified orientation. In Newfoundland, the attention to provincial politics on the part of feminists and their commitment to building a cohesive provincial movement, on the island at least, stems partially from their acute sense of distance and alienation from feminists elsewhere. The women's movement in Labrador, however, suffers alienation both from the 'mainland' and from the island. In Ontario, a lack of fit between locale and jurisdiction has spawned a movement with a much more ambiguous orientation toward the subnational state. The sense of alienation and isolation articulated by feminists in Northern Ontario toward the women's movement in Toronto stems from an unshakable sense of place and "rootedness" in a particular geographic space. Southern feminists, especially in Toronto, by contrast, have a much weaker sense of place, often collapsing federal and provincial agendas.

The impact of geography is also pervasive in the case of the Northwest Territories where the realities of great distances and a harsh physical environment have posed enormous challenges for women's organizing. At a fundamental level, therefore, the comparison also shows that just as women's socio-economic and political location affect the practice of the movements they build, so too do women's physical locations and their sense of place which also influence their movement organizing. In conclusion, the pattern of women's movements' approaches to their subnational states both within specific locales and in larger jurisdictions depends on the structural, ideological and spatial characteristics of the specific political environments in which they act, their experiences with their state and their calculation of their potential for influencing state outcomes. In the following two chapters, I consider whether similar variables account for differences in how women's movements structure their representational projects of diversity.

5.8 Notes to Chapter Five

¹ Clearly, another important element of women's movements and their representational projects vis-à-vis subnational states, but one which is beyond the scope of this thesis, is the judicial project and feminist efforts to gain equality measures through the courts.

² For a brief history of the Women's Bureau, consult Linda Geller-Schwartz (1995).

³ Consult the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada (1970) Chapter 10 for a complete explanation of the role envisioned by the Commission for these new mechanisms.

⁴ The term 'femocrat' was coined by Australian feminist political scientists to describe those explicitly feminist women employed as administrators and bureaucrats in positions of power within the state. See Marian Sawer (1990), Sophie Watson (1990) and Hester Eisenstein (1991) for discussions of the femocrat experience in the Australian context.

⁵ M.L.A Lynn Verge reviews the history of this policy in the NF House of Assembly Debates, 18 March 1992: 269.

⁶ This is not to suggest that women did not face conservative attitudes regarding their roles from within the Peckford administration. For example, Minister of Social Services, Charlie Brett made headlines with his remarks that if mothers would stay at home and look after their children there would be fewer juveniles in correctional institutions. Brett stated: "We need more conscientious mothers to sacrifice their careers and stay home to take care of their children" ("Stay home, Moms: Brett" The Evening Telegram 4 June 1987: A1).

⁷ Sue Findlay (1987) argues that this was the case briefly at the federal level.

⁸ A sunset clause refers to an assessment of an agency's purpose and relevance. Agencies established with short-term, clearly defined mandates have a termination date in its constituting instrument. Sunset reviews can result in renewal, revision to the agency's mandate, structure, termination, or amalgamation with another organization.

⁹ For example, the Advisory Council also participated in 1990 in the establishment of a Women's Enterprise Bureau designed to promote interest among women to see themselves as entrepreneurs and to provide business counselling for women.

¹⁰ Status of women councils exist in seven communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. They coordinate feminist activism at the local level, and usually maintain a women's centre as their major project. There are councils in St. John's, Corner Brook, Stephenville, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Gander, Port-aux-Basque and Labrador City.

¹¹ Wendy Williams represents such an appointment with her long history of feminist involvement in the province. Her impressive activist resume includes participation in the St. John's Status of Women Council, the Kirby House shelter, Newfoundland Aids Committee, NAC, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women and Planned Parenthood. She has been described also as "the most outspoken person in the province on the issue of abortion" (Personal Interview: Beth Lacey, 16 August 1992).

¹² Indeed, Sue Findlay (1987) argues that this ability to hire "experts on women" also legitimized the federal Women's Program in its early years.

¹³ The poll replicated one conducted by Chatelaine the same year and covered issues such as attitudes toward wages for housework, pensions for homemakers, the establishment of advisory councils on the status of women, day care, abortion, etc.. The Council notes also that out of 24 replies received, one only Liberal M.H.A. responded (Newfoundland Status of Women Council Newsletter, September 1972: 4-6).

¹⁴ These amendments to the Newfoundland Human Rights Code were passed in December, 1974. The Council also called for the appointment of an ombudsman within the Human Rights Division to work exclusively in Labrador on women's rights and reforms to the section dealing with equal pay for equal work (Newfoundland Status of Women Council Newsletter, June 1975: 5).

¹⁵ It is important to understand the key role of technologies such as teleconferencing and computer networks as an integral tool of feminist organizing in Newfoundland and Labrador

¹⁶ The provincial lobby covers a diversity of issues. In 1987, the question areas included pensions for part-time workers, accessible quality day care, wages for domestic workers, and appointments to boards and commissions. In 1989, poverty, sexual orientation, violence against women and children, funding for transition houses, child care, substance abuse and mental health, housing and women's participation in public decision-making were covered. In 1991, topics broached included budget cutbacks, poverty, community resources for women, family violence, child care counselling, and women in decision-making. At the 1992 lobby, the main issues were violence against women and children; cuts in the health-care system, community based counselling and the inclusion of sexual orientation in the Human Rights code. For an account of an early lobby, see "Women meeting politicians to talk over their concerns" The Evening Telegram March 23, 1987 A3 and Dorothy Inglis (1987).

¹⁷ As part of the 1989 provincial election campaign, lobby member groups designed pamphlets for distribution to women's groups throughout the province and distributed 10,000 to women's groups around the province in order to educate women about provincial politics and encourage their participation in the electoral process.

¹⁸ On the 52% Solution, see Dorothy Inglis (1988)

¹⁹ Women's political culture in Labrador has been less documented and so my remarks on this subject refer only to island women.

²⁰ These include Lorna Marsden, Kay Macpherson, Lynn McDonald, Chaviva Hosek, and Jean Wood.

²¹ Sabia also admitted: "I've become disillusioned with women. They depend on councils and structures too much... they don't stand on their own two feet enough. They always defer" (Blackadar 1976: 8).

²² For examples of the negative response among feminists to Barnes's appointment, see "Barnes storming" Broadside 4:1 (October 1982). 2. Broadside reports sarcastically that "We have had it so good, in fact, that [Barnes] believes it will be part of her job to dismantle what little help the government has provided: the Women's Bureau, the Women Crown Employees' Office, the Affirmative Action section in various ministries and such like frills."

23 The Barnes appointment is discussed in Orland French (1982). French reports that Barnes's rejection of equal pay legislation was based on the belief "that such legislation would involve a cumbersome bureaucracy and would be almost impossible to enforce".

24 The Equal Pay Coalition was founded in the 1970s as an umbrella lobby organization working on the issue of equal pay for work of equal value. It currently has a membership of 45 groups.

25 Admitting that "amazonian efforts have not moved governments much at all," Dranoff called for a structure "to coordinate the development of programs and policies for women" and "one minister who would be held ultimately responsible for the status of women and who would coordinate government policy" (1982: C1).

26 A summary of the review is contained in the OACWI 10th Annual Report 1983-94.

27 "Too busy for meeting, Sorbara tells House" Globe and Mail, 2 June 1988: A5.

28 The Council's revised mandate was: "to advise the government through the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues on matters pertaining to the achievement of economic, social and legal equality for women, to respond to requests from the Minister Responsible for Women's issues, to hold regional meetings with the purpose of gathering the views of women in issues of concern in the regions; to meet annually in Toronto at which time members will have the opportunity to meet with the Premier and other Cabinet members."

29 For example, during the consultation process of 1991, the Advisory Council hired community workers to conduct information sessions in Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Filipino and Greek. Elayne Ceiferts admits that providing accessibility for women to become involved in the review process was a major challenge that, had funds been available, could have been better met (Personal Interview, 12 April 1994).

30 One example is the coordination of the 22 programs administered by 13 ministries on the issue of wife assault.

31 For example, while conducting its province-wide consultation with women's groups, the Advisory Council heard commentary on the role of the OWD. When the Advisory Council passed on this information to the OWD, it was greeted with some hostility as the OWD interpreted the report as critical of its performance and beyond the mandate of the Council's review (Confidential interview, 12 April 1994).

32 Consult Bashevkin, Holder and Jones (1990) for a fuller account of the impact on the OWD of the Pay Equity Commission. Additionally, their analysis notes how the limited ability of the directorate to either develop or oversee policy has been called into question on occasion.

33 In June 1996 I requested an interview with the OWD to discuss the closing of the Advisory Council and the future role of the OWD. I was informed that staff "couldn't talk about those issues" and that any request for information would have to be made in writing to the Assistant Deputy Minister on Women's Issues.

34 Marjorie Cohen (1993) recalls that the OCSW was an "overtly political" group that refused to take government funding in order to maintain its autonomy.

35 Based on my survey of the OCSW's newsletters.

36 WPA defined its roles as "to further the participation of women in all aspects of the political process, to educate women in the nature of political power, to help women gain recognition within the structure of the party of their choice, to assist women in running for election and in obtaining appointments to boards and commissions and to implement the recommendations of the RCSW" (WPA files, CWMA).

37 Among the delegates to this important conference were eighteen Newfoundland representatives, including several women from Corner Brook whose attendance inspired them to form the Corner Brook Status of Women Council (Kealey 1993: 242).

38 For an insider's account of the WPA, see Macpherson (1994). This interpretation differs from that of Bashevkin who reports that apart from the 1973 conference, the WPA "existed as little more than a Toronto post-office box address" (1993: 24).

39 Bashevkin argues that the FPC "symbolized the continuing attractiveness of independent women's organizations to many feminists, including those who only later recognized their limitations within a partisan, parliamentary system" (1993: 26).

40 The minutes of an OWAC organizing meeting in February 1989 reveals that the OWAC attracted a number of high-profile feminists, including Zanana Akande (later an NDP Cabinet Minister), Moira Armour (Riverdale Women's Action Group), Janet Maher (NAC Executive Member), Kerry McCuaig (Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care) and Fleurette Osborne (Canadian Congress of Black Women) (OWAC file, CWM.1).

41 Even within Ontario organizations that have undertaken significant lobbying, directed at Queen's Park, ties to communities outside of Toronto are difficult to maintain. Carolyn Egan of the Ontario Coalition of Abortion Clinics admits that the Coalition rarely meets outside of Toronto and that clinics in outlying regions generally follow the agenda as set by the Toronto activists (Personal Interview, 12 April 1993).

42 For an overview of this umbrella organization's mandate and membership and an invaluable summary of feminist activism in northern Ontario, consult Karlstedt (1987).

43 The progressive tone of the newsletter was not lost on its readership. One letter to the editor queried: "I am not quite clear on what the aims of this publication are. Is it to be merely the voice of strident feminism?" (Alberta Women's Bureau *Newsletter* 2:4 1983: 8). Book reviews of radical feminist texts such as Andrea Dworkin's *Right-Wing Women* suggest that Bureau staffers saw their role as informing Albertan women about developments in contemporary feminism.

44 The Secretariat was criticized for conducting focus group discussions on women and work with 200 women selected on "advice from community leaders" (Blais 1992: 238). The implication was that the women chosen all had ties to the PCs.

45 For example, as part of the Plan, the Secretariat published a regular newsletter to highlight its "Stepping Stones" programs, designed to act as a mentoring program for young girls to encourage their participation in non-traditional jobs.

⁴⁶ The focus on nurses undoubtedly was in response to the strike by the province's 11,000 nurses in January 1988. For an analysis of this labour dispute, consult Coulter (1993).

⁴⁷ The 1991-2 projects were heavily weighted towards educational programs around employment issues, particularly for middle-class women including support for women entrepreneurs and training programs for women in trades and technologies. Media programs around women's roles in the province and employment rights of part-time employees as well as a pledge to increase awareness of family violence rounded out the second year of the Plan's agenda.

⁴⁸ For an extended discussion of the campaign to establish an advisory council for Alberta, consult Blais (1992). My understanding of the AACWI owes much to her research of this institution.

⁴⁹ NDP MLA Pam Barrett led opposition efforts in September, 1986 to amend several sections of Bill 19. Barrett advocated removal of the sunset clause and wished to have the legislation state that the mandate of the Council included a commitment to improving the status of Alberta women and educating the awareness of Albertans on issues of concern to women. Barrett also lobbied for an amendment that would guarantee that the Council's membership would be women-only. Conservative MLAs resoundingly rejected Barrett's revisions. MLA Greg Stevens argued that, for example, "to limit the opportunity for one or more men to be appointed I believe is totally abhorrent to the way this government established its advisory councils and committees" while MLA Stockwell Day stated that he was "shocked at the level of discrimination that is being put forward by the member" in suggesting that "we legislate against a whole groups of citizens ... of which I happen to be one." For a record of this debate, consult Alberta Legislative Assembly Debates, 8 September 1986: 1512-1517.

⁵⁰ In the same article, Elva Mertick admits the difficulty of getting the government to respond to the Council's work during her term: "[C]aucus doesn't see issues that are of concern to women as issues of concern to them. That was certainly my experience during my tenure ... We had all kinds of doors slammed in our faces ... as we attempted to work with them [Alberta Family and Social Services] (Jefferies 1992: B1).

⁵¹ For a fuller account of this period, see "AACWI in Transition" Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues Newsletter June 1993: 4-5. This edition of the Newsletter also reported the resignation of Council member Patricia Pardo-Dominantschuk in protest of the treatment of the Council by the Klein administration.

⁵² The Status of Women Council of the NWT is mandated to develop public awareness, promote a change in attitudes, encourage discussion and expression, advise the Minister, review policies and legislation and report findings to relevant government departments, provide assistance to the Minister and provide assistance to organizations. Council may receive and hear submissions, undertake research, recommend legislation, policies and practices and publish reports, studies or recommendations.

⁵³ Areas covered by the Plan of Action included employment, childcare, vocational training, sexual harassment, pay equity, craft and cottage industry issues, education, health, affirmative action and literacy.

⁵⁴ See "Feminists Applaud Patterson" News/North November 2, 1984: A12.

55 Status of Women Council of the NWT. Proposed BHP Diamond Mine: Socio-Economic Impacts on Women. Unpublished, 1996.

56 The tabled legislation for the advisory council had disappointed northern women with its appointment process and place within the bureaucratic structure. Conference delegates wanted the Advisory Council to have an autonomous budget and wished the GNWT to consult with women's groups as part of the appointment process.

57 In March 1995, federal Minister Responsible for the Status of Women Sheila Finestone announced not only the closing of the CACSW, but also the collapsing of the Women's Program (formerly of Secretary of State) into the new Social Services megaministry. After less than a year, however, the Women's Program was transferred to Status of Women Canada.

CHAPTER SIX

Women's Movements and Representational Projects: Projects of Diversity Part I

6.1 Introduction

In her analysis of emancipatory social movements, Iris Young identifies a commitment among movements of the oppressed to developing political practices that reject the concept of a "universal citizen" and embrace instead the idea of a heterogeneous public (1989: 264). Young notes how ideals of liberation grounded in the elimination of group difference recently have been challenged effectively by movements organized around group specificity and cultural pride (1990: 157). Similar tendencies are apparent within contemporary feminist movements. The vehement rejection of abstract and universalizing theories popular in the 1970s which articulated the commonality of women's oppression has meant that today "[t]he specious claims of feminism to represent equally all women [and] to speak with one voice, have been rapidly demolished" (Barrett 1987: 30). Lively debates over the theoretical and practical consequences of difference and "identity politics" currently animate much contemporary feminist discourse.¹ Perhaps the most fundamental challenge has been what Donna Haraway summarizes as the process through which white women have been "forced kicking and screaming to notice ... the non-innocence of the category 'women'" (as quoted in Crosby 1992: 131).

The implications of a politics of difference for feminist praxis remain contested ground. Writing in the context of British feminism, Jenny Bourne argues:

Identity Politics is all the rage. Exploitation is out (it is extrinsically determinist). Oppression is in (it is intrinsically personal). What is to be done has been replaced by who am I. Political culture has ceded to cultural politics (1987: 1).

Chandra Talpade Mohanty cautions that feminist scholarship informed by such a perspective has generated treatments of diversity and pluralism "which are grounded in an apolitical, often individualized identity politics" (1992: 75). Clearly, women have both interests in common as well as interests in conflict. Feminists such as Australian Jan Pettman (1992) call for a retention of some measure of commonality among women and the possibility of shared representational voices.

Despite concerted efforts to acknowledge and accommodate identity-based oppression within feminism, women's movements have become atomized into now-familiar categories such as Black, Latino, lesbian and working-class feminism. The pressing challenge for feminist activists and academics alike involves discovery of how women's lives are shaped by various differences and diversities and investigating intersections of multiple oppressions. The current wave of feminist mobilization wrestles with how to weave together this panoply of identities and build what Pettman (1992) terms a "politics of coalition" that can represent yet withstand diversity. Although some feminist writing has explored how best to rehabilitate coalition politics, Canadian sociologist Mary Louise Adams is correct in noting that as yet, "affirmation and validation [of difference] are far more entrenched in the community than either the theorizing or any resultant organizing for change " (1989: 25).²

As these difficult issues have propelled feminist theory in many countries, however, the debate has evolved from an understanding of difference that accepts formal equality as an adequate response to women's

distinctiveness from men to a conception of substantive equality which requires the incorporation of difference to ensure equal respect for group-based differences as the ultimate goal of feminist struggles (Young 1991).³ Many such analyses of diversity and difference grounded in an understanding of substantive equality are often decontextualized and argued as if space and place do not shape our experience of the "big categories" of, for example, race, nation, and class (Pettman 1992). Minority women have begun to demonstrate, however, that their various locations (whether defined in terms of race and ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, ability, age or geography) vis-à-vis majority women of the dominant culture means that they may be differently affected by public policies, programs and entitlements and, therefore, may be differently connected to the state.

Women who are part of dominant racial and cultural majorities have been urged also to recognize that minority women may well have different positions on key or "bottom line" issues. Gemma Tang Nain (1994) documents how, for example, the views of white and black women on matters of reproductive choice differ in the U.S. and the U.K., both of which are white majority contexts. She notes that as a black woman raised in a black majority context in Trinidad, she did not share these views which she concludes are not essentially linked to race but to race experienced in the context of a minority status, marginalization and oppression. The lessons of identity politics for feminism, then, must extend also to issues of accommodation; majority feminists must not just work towards the inclusion of minority women into feminist movements, but also accept that the experiences of differently located women may lead to alternative positions on certain sets of issues. Nor may we consider that such differences are something minority women may just "tolerate." Indeed, true

acknowledgement of difference requires recognition of our positions of power over other women and of conflicts in interests.

Feminists in Canada have only begun to consider the impact of differences on our agendas, on the prospect of alliances with women who are differently located and on differences in policy positions. Linda Cardinal reminds us that it has been feminists from non-dominant groups who have assumed the "task of theorizing about the importance of nationalism and ethnicity, immigration, race, class and language in relation to women" (1995: 281). In Canada, for example, the experiences and expressed needs of francophone women within Québec are quite distinct from the experiences and needs communicated by francophone women outside Québec. As Vickers (1994a) explains, the central difference between the two communities is a result of context. Francophone women in Québec, while part of a population minority in Canada and North America, form a majority within the jurisdiction of Québec. In their organizations (eg. the FFQ) and in relation to the Québec state they act as a majority population (de Sève 1992). Their needs and identities, therefore, are expressed and shaped as part of the national, cultural and linguistic majority of Québec which is why most francophone feminists within the province support the devolution of power to the Québec state if not always sovereignty for that state (Busque 1992).

Francophone women outside of Québec experience their lives and express their needs both as a minority in Canada and North America. Consequently, their views on many issues are consistently different from their francophone sisters within Québec (Cardinal 1995). Recent conflicts across Canada between majority and minority women over issues raised by the Royal Commission on Reproductive Technologies and the Parliamentary Taskforce on Violence Against Women suggest that feminists must develop

strong analytic tools to explain how and why women who are equally feminist in their goals differ in their views on issues previously thought of as “base line” for all feminists.

In Chapters Six and Seven, I address the character of the representational projects of diversity within women’s movements in the four contexts compared here. This discussion traces two threads of identity politics and compares how the movements in each of the four settings pursue these “identity agendas.” Specifically, in this chapter I investigate how issues related to ending discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation were prioritized and strategized in each context and analyze the impact of space and place in each case. Chapter Seven considers the manner in which women’s movements have responded to the issues and priorities identified by racialized women and compares the experiences of women’s movements in incorporating anti-racist action into their agendas.

This comparison of diversity projects within women’s movements confirms that while differences “may be perceived categorically” they are, in fact, “lived relationally” (Moore 1994: 88); that is, the evidence reveals that the locales and jurisdictions within which differences are constituted and politicized remain highly relevant. The case studies reinforce the point that the transfer of insights and theories from place to place without analysis of the context of women’s lived experiences may impede our ability to understand how differences are framed across space and time.

In treating these two strands of identity politics independently, I do not dismiss the crucial work of feminists in identifying the interrelationships and intersections of multiple differences (Khayatt 1994; Mahtani 1994; Stasiulis 1990). My analysis, in fact, acknowledges the intersections of cleavages around race and ethnicity, class and sexual orientation. Nevertheless, a

separate treatment of these diversity agendas facilitates an exploration and comparison of the political strategies of women's movements across space and place and the experience of differently situated women within similarly located movements.

6.2 Women's Movements and the Place of Lesbians

The visibility accorded lesbian issues within women's movements has been contentious throughout the development of contemporary feminism. While we can assume that lesbians have been present always in women's movements,⁴ they remained largely closeted and silent about their own particular experiences and needs until the revival of feminist activism in the 1960s. In reaction to the sexism encountered by lesbians in gay movements and marginalization within feminist organizations, lesbian feminism emerged in the 1970s as a philosophical derivative of radical feminism. Lesbian feminists offered a critique of heterosexuality as an institution perpetuating women's oppression, but anchored their struggle within the larger feminist movement.⁵

As Adamson, Briskin and McPhail note, "[t]he acrimonious debates in the U.S. organization NOW [National Organization of Women] over lesbianism and its place in the feminist agenda, and the subsequent division between lesbian and heterosexual feminists, are now part of feminist legend" (1988: 58). NOW president Betty Friedan's attempts to purge the "lavender menace" in the early 1970s because she feared that lesbians threatened NOW's public profile have been well documented.⁶ In the aftermath of that struggle (which Friedan lost), NOW adopted a 1971 resolution "acknowledg[ing] the oppression of lesbians as a legitimate concern of feminism" (Abbot and Love

1972: 134) which signalled a new visibility for lesbians within the U.S. movement.

Within Canadian women's movements, feminists scholars admit that the "ease with which heterosexual feminists and lesbians have discussed these issues has varied across the country" (Adamson, Briskin and McPhail 1988: 60). In Canada, the "deep lesbian/straight splits that characterized the American movement [during the 1970s] continued to be avoided, perhaps because so many lesbians were prepared to go unacknowledged as such both within the women's movement and without" (Adamson, Briskin and McPhail 1988: 73-4). Nevertheless, as Adamson et al. admit, "many confrontations took place between lesbian and heterosexual women over the issues of homophobia and heterosexual privilege" (73). The conflict over a lesbian presence at the founding conference of the British Columbia Federation of Women (BCFW) in 1974 was one such case in point. As Julia Creet (1990) documents, the initial conference ignored lesbian issues. When a Lesbian Caucus presented a proposal to the Interim Standing Committee of the BCFW, their agenda was met with hostility as the organizers wished to make the Federation an option for all women, including housewives, who they feared would not join if lesbians were prominent. Becki L. Ross reports that the BCFW standing committee received vehement protests against the inclusion of lesbians which charged that "'left unchecked ... the lesbians would bring the organization down to their gutter level'" (1995: 30). Following a painful struggle, however, the BCFW did pass a series of resolutions on lesbian rights in 1975.⁷

As lesbian and gay liberation movements developed in Canada parallel to women's liberation, two sets of issues confronted women's movements.⁸ As with the case of the BCFW, lesbians active in feminist organizations

sought commitments regarding lesbian rights such as human rights code protection, access to services, child custody rights, and non-discrimination in housing and employment within feminist agendas. They further demanded an end to homophobia within women's movements. The discussion that follows investigates the treatment of lesbian rights and homophobia within women's organizing in each of the four case studies. These narratives confirm the accuracy of Eve Zaremba's comment that "choosing to live as a lesbian is more 'possible' in some societies than in others" (1982: 89). It also tests the thesis that women's movements across Canada have had varying commitments to incorporating issues related to sexual orientation into their agendas.

6.3 Case Study: Newfoundland

Lesbian and gay liberation in Newfoundland began tentatively in 1974 with the organization of the Community Homophile Association of Newfoundland (CHAN) in St. John's. The group started with thirteen members who met following a discussion of gay and lesbian issues on a local open-line radio show. CHAN primarily served a social function, "providing lesbians and gays [with] an opportunity to meet and socialize but took on very little political action and kept a low profile" (Stone, 1990: 95).⁹ One of the group's successes, however, was the formation of an off-shoot group in Corner Brook in 1975 and the publication of the newsletter Aboutface. In 1977, the vulnerability of gays and lesbians to workplace discrimination was made clear when eight women stationed at Newfoundland's Canadian Forces Base Argentia were dismissed because of alleged lesbian behaviour.¹⁰ At the time, the Armed Forces forbade CHAN members from making contact with the women charged in the incident. CHAN remained active until about 1980.

In the late 1970s, the Gay Association in Newfoundland (GAIN) was founded by a lesbian caucus. A decade later, the Memorial University of Newfoundland Gay and Lesbian Association (MUNGALA) was convened in 1986. Together, these organizations involved themselves primarily in lobbying for amendments to the province's 1969 Human Rights Code and fundraising for AIDS education. Both groups maintained a loose affiliation with the Newfoundland Status of Women Council (Stone 1990: 95). Despite their mobilization, lesbian activists state that mounting political action in Newfoundland around matters related to sexual orientation was always difficult because gays and lesbians, many of whom were either public servants or employees of denominational school boards, risked job loss if their sexual orientation was made public. Even on the university campus, organization was difficult because so few people were willing to identify themselves publicly as gay or lesbian (Personal Interview Tania Dopler 20 January 1993).

As status of women councils organized around the province during the 1970s and into the 1980s, there is little evidence that lesbian issues were prioritized as part of initial organizing discussions.¹¹ Sharon Gray Pope and Jane Burnham's history of feminist organizing in Newfoundland reveals, however, that recollections about the position of lesbians within Newfoundland feminism during the 1970s vary greatly:

Barbara Doran said that lesbianism never actually became an issue with the St. John's [Status of Women] Council. "The development and acceptance of lesbian women came through a very slow, quiet process that was almost an internal thing. Both sides knew there wasn't going to be any public attention drawn to it, and somehow both sides lived with that." Yet, Diane Duggan recalled that, when she moved back to Newfoundland in 1976 ... and became involved in the St. John's Women Centre, lesbian rights were not taken up as an issue. "It's a very scary issue for a lot of women's centres, they're afraid of scaring people away" (1993: 215).

Pope and Burnham's research evidences how perceptions of the treatment of lesbian issues depended on one's identity location within the movement.

The issue of legal protection for lesbians eventually was taken on publicly by the Newfoundland women's movement in the context of the pan-Canadian debate over the inclusion of sexual orientation protection in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In 1981, at the provincial conference of women's groups held in St. John's, lesbian issues were raised formally. The St. John's Status of Women Council took the lead in lobbying the provincial state to support the inclusion of sexual orientation in Section 15 of the Charter and in 1985, the Council presented a brief to the Parliamentary Committee on Equality (Boyer Committee) in which they called for the extension of legal protection for gays and lesbians.¹² In 1986, the provincial conference of women's centres passed a resolution calling for "[t]he need to recognize the many facets of discrimination against lesbian[s], [and] to be aware of homophobia and heterosexual privilege" (*Web* January 1987: 13).

Although lesbian issues had made it onto the feminist agenda of the St. John's Status of Women Council, Newfoundland and Labrador feminists as a group did not formally recognize lesbian rights as part of their provincial lobby slate until 1987. At that lobby, feminists urged the provincial government to include sexual orientation as grounds for non-discrimination in the province's human rights code, arguing that because protection existed in parallel legislation in Québec and Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador gays and lesbians deserved a comparable amendment.¹³ Again at the 1989 provincial lobby, both government and opposition members were interrogated about their commitment to sexual orientation protection through human rights legislation. This lobby faced a newly-elected Liberal

government that made explicit its intention not to introduce such an amendment (Provincial Women's Lobby Proceedings 1989: 5).

By 1989, the issue of gay and lesbian rights had new urgency, however, in wake of a homophobic backlash emanating from the Mount Cashel affair. The revelation of widespread physical and sexual abuse of boys dating back to 1975 by the Christian Brothers at Mount Cashel Boys Home and Training School, and the arrest in 1988 of well-known priest Father Hickey on multiple charges of sex crimes scandalized Newfoundland society. Both the Church and the provincial government quickly initiated highly-publicized investigations. In 1989, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. John's established the Winter Commission to coordinate its investigation and feminist Lynn Verge, then Minister of Justice and Attorney-General, appointed the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Responses of the Newfoundland Criminal Justice System to Complaints (commonly known as the Hughes Inquiry) to investigate allegations of mishandling of these sexual abuse complaints.

Scholar Gary Kinsman, who was active in the St. John's gay community at the time, traces how, as the case rocked the very foundation of the Catholic Church across the province, media treatment of the story focused on the "homosexual, or 'deviant' character of the men involved" (1993: 17), Kinsman argues that "[o]nce again, the media was associating male homosexuality with sexual abuse" (17). As televised proceedings of the Hughes Inquiry gripped the province for nine months, headlines in the St. John's daily The Evening Telegram such as "Hughes Inquiry focusing on reports of homosexuality" and "Former Mount Cashel resident knew of homosexual activity" inflamed homophobia and sparked gay bashing throughout the province (Kinsman 1993: 18).¹⁴

Within this context, demands for legal protection of lesbians and gays escalated among some feminists, particularly as the public's blurring of a distinction between homosexuality and pedophilia became more apparent.¹⁵ Feminists like Peggy Keats reiterated the call for the Liberal government to introduce an amendment to include sexual orientation in the Human Rights Code. Keats cautioned that within this hostile climate, "public misconceptions will label this [child sexual abuse] a homosexual crime unless Government takes a leading role in establishing the truth" (Provincial Women's Lobby Proceedings 1989: 25). In October 1989, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women waded into the debate by calling on the Winter Commission to "publicize and reiterate this distinction between homosexuality and pedophilia, because the confusion is creating an atmosphere of intense hostility against Newfoundlanders who are homosexual" (Spokeswomen January 1990: 15).

As the 1990s unfolded, attention within the Newfoundland women's movement to lesbian issues increased dramatically. At the provincial lobby in 1991, Newfoundland women requested once more that the government amend the provincial Human Rights Code to include sexual orientation. Premier Clyde Wells remained adamant that he "had no intention right now of amending the Human Rights Code" (Wells 1991: 8). But while feminist organizations stepped up pressure for the legal protection for gays and lesbians, that same year, feminist organizing within Newfoundland was ruptured internally over the explosive issue of homophobia. Then-Advisory Council President Wendy Williams recounts that lesbian issues, along with abortion, became the "two most divisive issues in the Newfoundland women's community--bar none" (Personal Interview 16 August 1992). The controversy stemmed from a highly-publicized conflict at the St. John's

Women's Centre that saw a complaint of discrimination and harassment in employment based on sex and political opinion lodged against a lesbian by one of the Centre's heterosexual ex-employees. After unsuccessful attempts to resolve the issue informally, the complaint was forwarded to the provincial Human Rights Commission, precipitating a "year of turmoil, pain, accusations, divisions and grief" (Editorial Spokeswomen May 1992: 1).¹⁶

The issue proved fractious for the St. John's feminist community and the Newfoundland movement more generally as feminists, both heterosexual and lesbian, struggled with how to support both women involved in the dispute. Lesbians active at the Centre complained that they no longer felt safe there, particularly given the general environment of increased discrimination towards gays and lesbians throughout the province, and so they began to discuss the possibility of opening a lesbian-only space (Confidential interviews 18 August 1992).

An alternative interpretation is that the controversy which erupted between lesbians and heterosexual feminists had been brewing for some time. Beth Lacey recalls that during her tenure as Coordinator of the St. John's Women Centre, she enjoyed support as an "out" lesbian, "but there was little support for taking the issue on" (Personal Interview, 16 August 1992). Lesbian feminists sensed that heterosexual women saw the lesbian contingent as "taking over" the Centre's activities. The human rights complaint, therefore, "crystallized for the lesbian community that a lot of homophobia existed in people" (Personal Interview Brenda Ponc, 18 August 1992). A year earlier, the lesbian community had assumed a key leadership role in the St. John's women's community during the high-profile protest in 1990 over the federal budget cuts to women's centres. Lesbians politicized during an occupation by feminists of the local Secretary of State office were no longer

willing to accept the arguments of heterosexual feminists that "if we mention the 'lesbian thing' we won't get what we want in other areas" (Personal Interview Tania Dopler, 20 January 1993).

Beth Lacey recalls that in the wake of the human rights complaint in St. John's, a shift occurred across the province in that 'now every status of women council would take sexual orientation on as an issue in that they would say 'yes', it should be included in the Human Rights Code, but I don't know if they'd want lesbians hanging out at their centre" (Personal Interview, 16 August 1992). In the aftermath of the complaint, discussions and public education around homophobia within the women's community were held in St. John's within what one feminist remembers as a "very homophobic environment (Confidential interview, 18 August 1992). Lesbians in St. John's report that some heterosexual women chastised them for drawing attention to sexual orientation issues, insisting that lesbians "quiet down" because they shouldn't "expect women in Port-aux-Basques to take up the issues of lesbians" (Personal Interview Jane Walsh, 18 August 1992).

The conflict within feminist circles was exacerbated by attention from media hungry to report on evidence of homosexual activity within St. John's. With the temporary closure of the Women's Centre in November, 1991 for an organizational review, local media charged that the closure had been precipitated by the human rights complaint and that "straight women were being preyed on by lesbians" (Personal Interview Jane Walsh, 18 August 1992). The story was reported nationally by CBC and locally, a segment of the CBC program "Here and Now" created a flurry of debate when a lesbian travel guide was uncovered that listed the Centre as a place to meet lesbians. As one reporter stated on air: "It's not only at home that the Women's Centre is known as a lesbian centre" (Shiner 1992: 6).

The case had ripple effects throughout the province, creating schisms between St. John's and other women's centres where members feared that their own reputations and work would be undermined by the St. John's conflict (Personal Interview with Tania Dopler, 20 January 1993; Personal Interview Joyce Hancock, 21 August 1992). Mistrust between the St. John's and other councils around the province was heightened when three other councils distanced themselves from the St. John's controversy and told the media that they were not prioritizing sexual orientation because it was not an issue for them. The gap between heterosexual and lesbian women was exacerbated further when the provincial representative to the NAC Executive was quoted as saying that "heterosexual women feel uncomfortable at the St. John's Women's Centre because too much emphasis is put on lesbian issues" (Shiner 1992: 7).

At the 1992 Provincial Women's Lobby, some lesbians credit the presence of then-NAC president Judy Rebick for ensuring that sexual orientation remained on the lobby agenda. Jane Walsh remembers that many women were "pissed off at the exchange with Premier Wells over lesbians;" she believes that without Rebick's intervention, lesbians "would have been absolutely silenced" at that lobby (Personal Interview, 18 August 1992). Other feminists remember that government representatives at that lobby "couldn't even say the word [lesbian] back to us" (Personal Interview, Brenda Ponc 18 August 1992). Advisory Council President Wendy Williams admits that while former Progressive Conservative leader Len Simm "had come a long way on the issue [of sexual orientation protection]," Premier Clyde Wells still "stroked out" at the mention of legal protection for gays and lesbians (Personal Interview, 16 August 1992). In fact, an apoplectic Wells responded to questions from St. John's Status of Women Council members regarding

human rights code amendments by insisting that “if sexual orientation was added to the Code, it would legalize the abuse of boys by priests like at Mount Cashel” (Personal Interview, Brenda Ponc 18 August 1992).

Meanwhile, the Hughes Inquiry’s final report, tabled in 1992, rejected all recommendations made by women’s groups in the course of the hearings for a differentiation between homosexuality and pedophilia. Instead, the Inquiry “allowed homosexuals to continue to be treated as ‘child sexual molesters’ in the media, and in popular understanding” (Kinsman 1993: 19). Then-opposition member Lynn Verge, along with members of Gays and Lesbians Together (GALT) stepped up their demands for sexual orientation protection in the provincial human rights code by submitting briefs to MIAs on the issue and meeting in August, 1992 with new Liberal Justice Minister Paul Dicks. Dicks, himself a former Christian Brother, refused their reform appeals. One GALT representative reported that Dicks argued that

changing the human rights code would contravene Canada’s constitutional guarantee of a denominational education system for this province. Changing the code would mean that teachers, who were traditionally hired with the understanding that they adhere to the religious faith of the board of education, whether Protestant, Roman Catholic, or Pentecostal, would not be able to be fired for breaching this understanding. This understanding included the denial or suppression of lesbian or gay sexual orientations (Ponc 1991: 12).¹⁷

To combat the idea that issues of sexual orientation were of concern only to the feminist community in St. John’s and to aid in the resolution of this crisis within the women’s movement, in 1992 the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women (PACSW) sponsored a needs survey with the lesbian community in Newfoundland. Tensions within the feminist community continued to brew when a heterosexual researcher was assigned to the project. Lesbian feminists argued that this confirmed the lack of concern about the

proper representation of lesbian issues within the women's movement (Personal Interview Jane Walsh, 18 August 1992).

The report documented the vulnerability of lesbians within Newfoundland and Labrador¹⁸ and surveyed the lack of available services. It also highlighted the ongoing strife between heterosexual women and lesbians: "To begin to describe the amount of pain, grief and distress which exists in the lesbian community as a result of apathy, animosity and heterosexism from within the women's community is almost impossible" (Muzychka 1992: 43). Although it tabled twenty-two recommendations, the report acknowledged that some women were "doubtful that concrete action on lesbian issues was possible at this time within the women's community" (1992: 43), much less within the current moral climate of the province. In 1993, lesbians founded a new organization, the Newfoundland Amazon Network, through which to pursue lesbian-only mobilization. Once more, the central goal was identified as the prohibition of discrimination under the province's human rights code. Although the target of their activism remained the same, lesbians now undertook this phase of their mobilization within a context in which issues of sexuality had gained considerable visibility both within the women's movement and Newfoundland society more generally.

The combination of the geographic isolation from other parts of Canada coupled with the sparseness of the province's population means that minority feminists in Newfoundland and Labrador often live and work without a community base of support on which to build their "politics of difference." The homogeneity of the provincial population coupled with neo-nationalism that still prevalent within the provincial culture creates an environment where it is often difficult for the women's movement to

address issues that expose differences within its ranks.¹⁹ Feminist Brenda Ponio's assessment of feminism in Newfoundland is that "we don't talk about our problems ... it's not conducive to living together on an island ... we just don't talk about our dirty laundry" (Personal Interview 18 August 1992).

For lesbians, therefore, the difficulty of making space for their issues on the agenda of Newfoundland feminism relates in part to firmly entrenched religious taboos against homosexuality that permeate the Newfoundland state and social institutions as a consequence of the continued omnipresence of the Church. Wendy Williams states that Newfoundland society offers "no celebration of sexuality in any way," thus complicating the process of tackling matters of sexuality openly within the women's movement (Personal Interview 16 August 1992).²⁰ Church-regulated education which deems homosexuality (and even pregnancy outside of marriage) as grounds for dismissal long silenced many lesbians fearful of losing their jobs. The system of denominational schools and, until recently, the profound influence of the Church in the province's political system²¹ constrained public debate over sexual orientation. Because of the continued vulnerability of many lesbians employed in state and Church-controlled institutions, coupled with the absence of Human Rights Code protection, activism around sexual orientation still represents a serious personal risk. In short, few Newfoundland lesbians enjoy a "postmaterialist" lifestyle in which economic and legal security facilitates their demand for equality-seeking measures.

Despite the resistance of Newfoundland society to discussions of sexuality, the current debate over the place of lesbians within the women's movement suggests that lesbians and sympathetic heterosexual feminists were able, at least in St. John's, to take advantage of a moment of transition within the political culture to insert issues of sexual orientation into the

provincial feminist agenda. As I argued previously, however, this opportunity occurred as a consequence of the conjuncture of several events mobilized lesbian feminists to demand a greater commitment from heterosexual feminists to their priorities. Diane Duggan's suicide in 1989 acted as a rallying point for lesbians outraged at the denial of Duggan's lesbianism in the aftermath of her death. The explosive scandal at Mount Cashel served as a catalyst for a shift towards the secularization of Newfoundland society and, although a backlash against homosexuals in particular ensued as homo-eroticism was equated with pedophilia, the revelations did create opportunities for critiques of the Church's position on matters of sexuality. The Advisory Council provided leadership on this issue by quickly involving itself in the debate.

At the same time, the funding crisis precipitated by the federal government's 1990 announcement of funding cuts to the St. John's Women Centre saw an unprecedented mobilization of feminists within Newfoundland and, as that protest unfolded, lesbians involved in leading protest used the opportunity to make visible their sexual orientation. Feminists involved in that event recall that St. John's mayor Shannie Duff actively supported the protest and was interested in making links with the lesbian and gay movement (Personal interview Tania Dopler, 20 January 1993). In 1992, St. John's city council, led by feminist mayor Shannie Duff (and supported by councillor Wendy Williams) declared a Lesbian and Gay Pride Week in the capital. St. John's was only the fourth city in Canada to do so, an extraordinary achievement given the province's conservative profile and the resistance of the provincial government to gay and lesbian demands for legal protection.

The crisis precipitated by the human rights complaint within the St. John's Women Centre also exposed the disjuncture between feminist organizing around diversity agendas between urban and rural settings. Efforts by other status of women councils to distance themselves from the St. John's situation in order to preserve their reputations within their local communities is a pattern constant in each case study where mobilizing around lesbian concerns proves less difficult in urban surroundings where a critical mass of gays and lesbians can increase visibility within the community and foster a sense of solidarity. By the early 1990s, the close-knit lesbian community in St. John's was no longer willing to participate within feminist activism without recognition of their presence. Lesbian feminists in other parts of the province, however, worried about how the St. John's crisis would affect their place within the women's movement. In settings where lesbians lacked a critical mass, the "fallout" from St. John's was seen as potentially damaging for relationships with heterosexual feminists who they feared might see them as "troublemakers" (Confidential interview, 21 August 1992).

As I argued in Chapter Five, the extent to which movements opt for a state-centric approach to change is determined, in part, by the presence of viable alternative organizations. For lesbians in Newfoundland, the absence of a strong gay and lesbian movement meant that their equality demands were funnelled through feminist groups. The state-oriented character of the women's movement meant that lesbian rights were added to the provincial lobby agenda and Newfoundland feminists looked to the state for action and leadership on this issue; however, efforts to resolve homophobia internally within individual feminist organizations continue to be quite conflictual.

6.4 Case Study: Ontario

In Ontario, lesbians also sought recognition within feminist organizations for their agendas, but the timing and tenor of these debates differed somewhat from other contexts. For lesbian feminists in Toronto, shaping their praxis within a period in which a large gay liberation movement was emerging simultaneously meant that the critical issue of the late 1960s and early 1970s was reconciling participation in the women's movement with involvement in gay politics where lesbian issues were often swamped by a larger gay male constituency.²² Becki Ross (1995) details how by the early to mid-70s, gay activists in Toronto had committed themselves to a civil-rights political strategy.²³ Lesbians worked with their gay colleagues in groups like the Gay Alliance Toward Equality (1973), Gay Youth of Toronto (1972), the John Damien Defence Committee (1975)²⁴ and the Coalition for Gay Rights in Ontario addressing issues such as

the inclusion of sexual orientation in the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Canadian Bill of Rights, the elimination of all references to homosexuality in the Immigration Act, the abolition of 'age of consent laws' and the unequivocal decriminalization of homosexuality in the Canadian criminal code (Ross 1995: 32).

Ross reports that by 1975, many lesbians had abandoned gay liberation projects in favour of lesbian-only and feminist political involvements. Lesbians withdrew from gay liberation groups after experiencing sexism from some gay men, rejecting the materialism of a "rising gay capitalism," and accepting the points of divergence between gay men and lesbians with respect to their respective agendas (1995: 36). Lesbians were alienated by the chauvinism they encountered in male-dominated organizations like the Community Homophile Association of Toronto (CHAT); others rejected gay

men's economic power that provided them with access to the same patriarchal culture against which feminists were rebelling.

Within early "second-wave" Toronto feminist groups, however, lesbian issues frequently inspired tension, confusion and ruptures as heterosexual women feared the negative ramifications of a public commitment to lesbian issues. At a 1970 conference sponsored by the group Toronto Women's Liberation Movement (TWLM), for instance, the issue of lesbianism polarized the event and continued to fracture the TWLM until it disbanded in 1972 (Ross 1995). In other feminist organizations, lesbians were also marginalized. Despite the radical feminist philosophy espoused by the Toronto New Feminists, for example, spokeswoman Bonnie Kreps denied the presence of lesbians to the mainstream press. Ross reports that some lesbians in that group were "eventually instructed by 'the management' to 'get out'" (25). Similarly, in her examination of the Toronto feminist press, Ross finds that an aversion to addressing lesbian issues was also clear in 1970s publications like Velvet Fist, Bellyfull, The Other Woman and The New Feminist (25-26).

Kay Macpherson's recollection of the early days of NAC is that "no one openly questioned the fact of whether lesbians belonged or not ... they were simply included" (as quoted in Vickers, Rankin, Appelle 1993: 263). As in the case of Newfoundland, however, some lesbians perceived their position within NAC quite differently. For example, the issue of lesbian rights was not addressed explicitly at the 1972 Strategy for Change founding conference, inspiring a minority caucus at that meeting to call for the protection of sexual orientation in the human rights code as part of their agenda (Vickers, Rankin, Appelle 1993: 75). Early issues of NAC's Status of Women News also were noticeably silent on lesbian issues.²⁵ Jeri Dawn Wine, a founder of the

National Lesbian Forum, maintains that NAC avoided the sort of split that NOW suffered only at the cost of a decade of silence on the part of lesbians (Vickers, Rankin, Appelle 1993). In fact, it would take until 1985 for NAC to include lesbian issues in its agenda, doing so only after the entrenchment of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and in the context of a high-profile and successful campaign by lesbian activists in connection with the Parliamentary Committee on Equality.²⁶

Throughout most of its history between 1972 and 1989, the Ontario Committee on the Status of Women refrained from addressing lesbian issues.²⁷ It is interesting to note that in 1981, for example, the Ontario Committee on the Status of Women presented the provincial government with a list of proposed revisions to the human rights code that did not include a recommendation for protection on the basis of sexual orientation (OCSW Newsletter Spring/Summer 1981: 1-2). When Bill 7 amended the Ontario Human Rights Code to include protection from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, the OCSW reported Bill 7 as a breakthrough for young women's participation in amateur sport, making no mention of the sexual orientation issue (OCSW Newsletter January 1987: 1).²⁸ Neither did the Ontario Advisory Council on Women's Issues prioritize issues identified by the lesbian community throughout its tenure.

Open conflict over sexual orientation surfaced in groups like Toronto's March 8th Coalition. Debates such as that in 1978 over the participation of men in International Women's Day events saw the withdrawal of most lesbians members and their staging of an alternative march held in protest. Egan (1987), Egan, Gardner, Persad (1988) and Ross (1995) all document how the prioritizing of lesbian rights and the role of lesbians within the Coalition and the International Women's Day Committee repeatedly sparked

vigorous debate. At a 1979 community forum entitled "A Fine Kettle of Fish," sponsored by the Lesbian Organization of Toronto (LOOT), Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) and the International Women's Day Committee (IWDC), organizers hoped to bridge the widening chasm between lesbians and heterosexual women. Despite good intentions, the event "deteriorated rapidly into a session of angry declarations and anti-man-ifestos" (Finkler, as quoted in Ross 1995: 185, emphasis in the original) and did little to ameliorate differences between radical and socialist feminist contingents or to address homophobia.

Because of their significant numbers, however, lesbian feminists in Toronto were able to mobilize separately to form lesbian-only organizations such as LOOT which, during its three-year history between 1976-1980 provided lesbian feminists with an important site for lesbian feminist political and social organizing. Ideological divisions and a loss of organizational direction, however, eventually led LOOT to close its doors in 1980.²⁹ After its dissolution, some lesbian feminists regrouped the following year to form Lesbians Against the Right (LAR) in the wake of the highly publicized bath raids and an escalation of right-wing attacks against the gay community.³⁰ Ross suggests that by 1981, in addition to LAR, lesbians involved themselves in a number of organizations such as Gays and Lesbians Against the Right Everywhere (GLARE), the Gay Community Council, Gay Community Appeal, Gay Counseling Centre, the Lesbian and Gay History Group, Take Back the Night organizing, and a committee to introduce lesbian/gay positive curriculum into Toronto schools (1995: 201).

Throughout the 1980s, lesbians galvanized by the threat of the New Right,³¹ reinvented themselves in gay politics through vehicles like the Coalition for Gay Rights in Ontario which maintained an active lobby agenda

targetting issues like amending the province's Human Rights Code (eventually successful in 1986 after fourteen years of lobbying) and, later, the battle for same-sex benefits.³² In 1987, the organization was renamed as the Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights in Ontario (CLGRO). The following year, CLGRO adopted a new mission statement committing the coalition to "work towards feminism and lesbian and gay liberation ... by strengthening cooperative networks for lesbian and gay activists" (Warner and Donald 1990: 12, emphasis added), a move designed to shore up lesbian participation within the organization. Gay activist and political scientist David Rayside acknowledges that while the campaigns around reform of human rights codes at both the federal and provincial levels were gay-led, support did come also from lesbians and the women's movement more generally: "feminist groups had played a role in raising issues of sexual orientation, although when the issues were first being given widespread publicity, some part of the women's movement had hesitated before taking supportive positions" (1988: 118-119).³³ In the 1990s, the same-sex benefits debate in Ontario over Bill 167 (Equality Rights Statute Amendment Law) precipitated a mass mobilization on the part of gays and lesbians in the province, and persuaded many lesbians to reinvolve themselves in mixed-sex organizations. Brenda Coleman (1996) points to the unsuccessful campaign for Bill 167 as responsible for a resurgence of organizing by the gay and lesbian community in Ontario.

Comments by Adamson, Briskin and McPhail imply that by the late eighties, the often-acrimonious campaigns to establish lesbian issues as an integral element of the feminist agenda were long resolved:

[T]hrough the process of separation and challenge, lesbian issues were integrated into the women's movement, and we now view them as

necessary for the liberation of all women. The struggle to get to that point was a long and often difficult one, but ultimately all feminists have benefited from it (1988: 84).

Indeed, the combination of close to two decades of lesbian-feminist organizing coupled with a well-established lesbian and gay movement that had actively pursued an equal rights agenda did help solidify the place of lesbian rights within the Toronto feminism. Yet, as Ross comments, lesbian issues were not mentioned at the 1986 "Women Say No to Racism" rally at Toronto's International Women's Day causing her to question "the extent to which radical sexual politics had been truly integrated into a class-conscious and anti-racist feminist agenda (1995: 10).

Outside Toronto, lesbian feminists active in smaller Ontario centres still engaged in struggles for recognition within women's movements as their marginalization within feminist activism continued into the 1990s.³⁴ In Windsor, for example, lesbian feminists express significant frustration with the homophobia they still confront within the women's movement. In a community where lesbians admit "it's still not safe" to be gay,³⁵ one Windsor narrator states: "I've heard terrible dyke-cracking jokes [within feminist groups] ... they don't want to identify with lesbians. I can't help but feel separate from them" (Confidential interview, 30 January 1993). In Hamilton, where the presence of lesbians active in the Hamilton Women's Centre was recorded as early as 1973 (Adamson 1995), the city's Lesbian Collective continues to experience marginalization within feminist politics. Although the Collective sponsors dances and donates their revenue to local women's organizations, lesbians are denied public recognition of their role in feminist activism. As one member explains: "[P]articularly some of the organizations we've donated to ... want to keep it low-key where the money is coming from ... I can think of one shelter that is religiously based, and they want it VERY

low key. And the native women's centre ... doesn't want to know of any kind of lesbian presence within their organization" (Interview Deb Jones, 24 June 1993).

In Thunder Bay, lesbians have long been acknowledged within the women's community. Adamson's (1995) research found that lesbianism was covered in the early issues of the Thunder Bay-based Northern Woman's Journal as early as 1973-74. Gwen O'Reilly of the Northern Women's Centre explains that in the context of contemporary right-wing city politics, the "lesbian issue" remains controversial. O'Reilly states that the Women's Centre is often characterized publicly as "just a bunch of lesbians" and admits that "we've heard that ... even from some members of the women's community" (Personal Interview, 20 May 1993). Such charges have never threatened the Centre's survival, however, because of the existence of a very active gay community in Thunder Bay and, in particular, because of the high profile of the well-respected AIDS Committee that has contributed to an easing of anti-homophobic sentiment among the general population. Additionally, a visible gay movement dates back to the 1970s in Thunder Bay when gays and lesbians even mounted a regular television program on a local station (Personal interview Doug Broman, 20 May 1993).

In other parts of the province, the role of lesbians within feminist activism around violence against women has been particularly controversial in places where even the hint of lesbian participation can still threaten funding. In Milton, for example, the Halton Women's Place advertised for a childcare worker in 1992 using an affirmative action ad that included the phrase "applications particularly encouraged from lesbians." The Rotary Club, a potential funder, immediately requested a meeting with the shelter to discuss the ad before finalizing their financial commitment (Lait 1992).

Burlington Alderman Doug Greenaway suggested that public funding for the shelter should be 'reconsidered' in light of the "hidden agenda" the shelter might be pursuing given the appearance of the word 'lesbian' (Longbottom 1992). Teresa Greer, executive director of the shelter, quickly bowed to public pressure and apologized stating that: "We recognized we made an error, we've apologized," and promising that future ads would carry only the wording "We are an equal opportunity employer" (Sumi 1992).

A similar ad for a co-ordinator placed by the Hamilton Sexual Assault Centre generated the same negative response. Hamilton Councillor Dominic Agostino (later an Ontario MPP) stated that the Centre's regional grant was jeopardized, arguing that the sexual orientation issue "belongs in the bedroom, not when you go for a job interview" (Peters 1993a: B1). Dundas Councillor John Prentice stepped up the criticism, stating "What would lesbians know about sexual assault? Who would be assaulting them?" (Peters 1993b: B1). Unlike its Milton counterpart, however, the Hamilton Centre refused to apologize.³⁶ When ruptures at both Hamilton's Sexual Assault Centre and a local shelter occurred, charges of internal homophobia continued to circulate.³⁷ These examples suggest that lesbian issues and homophobia remain extremely divisive issues throughout the women's movement in Ontario outside of the much larger Toronto movement where extensive lesbian-only organizing is possible.

Nevertheless, of the cases examined, Ontario is the site of the most sustained activity within the women's movement around the place of lesbians. This activity began earlier than in other the jurisdictions under study, although there are variations in activity levels between southern and northern Ontario. The early emergence of lesbianism as an issue within the women's movement in Ontario can be attributed to a variety of factors,

including Ontario's large population, level of urbanization and affluence. Mariana Valverde reminds us that the "postwar period offered for the first time in history a distinct homosexual subculture in major urban centres (1995 :19).³⁸ Gay and lesbian communities clustered in cities as a way of protecting anonymity and ensuring greater safety in numbers. Donald W. McLeod's (1996) recent chronology of the lesbian and gay liberation movement in Canada documents the how Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver first emerged as the focal points for gay organizing.³⁹

In Ontario, therefore, the conflicts within the women's movement over the place of lesbians which occurred earlier than in other contexts can be understood by the presence of a relatively affluent gay liberation movement that was making space within public discourse for recognition of gays and lesbians. Although working within gay liberation movements often proved unsatisfactory for lesbian feminists, the strength of Toronto's gay movement bolstered lesbians' demands for incorporation of their agendas within feminism. While this presence pressured women's organizations to acknowledge lesbians within their ranks and tackle questions of lesbian rights and homophobia, the range of organizations available through which lesbians could develop their own political voice at times allowed feminist groups to ignore lesbian issues, particularly when women's movements preferred to distance themselves from gay politics in order to protect their public image. Once again, however, the sheer size of the movement that made possible the founding of groups like LOOT, meant that lesbian feminists could simultaneously pursue lesbian-only organizing and involvement in a range of feminist organizations, a situation unavailable to lesbians feminists in smaller urban centres both in smaller Ontario communities and in centres elsewhere, such as St. John's.

By the mid-1980s, success in achieving legislative reforms such as Bill 7, re-ignited lesbians to participate in gay and lesbian movements and to concentrate on state-oriented organizing. Pockets of support within all three political parties supplied gay and lesbian activists with important linkages to electoral politics. As other state-directed initiatives to overcome discrimination against gays and lesbians in areas such as, for example, adoption, have yielded successful outcomes,⁴⁰ struggles for lesbian rights increasingly have been channelled through state-oriented lobbying in gay and lesbian organizations such as the CLGRO and the Foundation for Equal Families, formed in 1994 in the aftermath of the defeat of Bill 167.

Outside of Toronto, the capacity of feminist organizing to incorporate lesbian concerns has been much more uneven as illustrated by the experiences of lesbians in Windsor, Hamilton and Thunder Bay. Where lesbians have access to a major urban centre with a visible gay and lesbian movement, it appears that they are less able to realize an effective integration of their issues into hometown "mainstream" feminist organizations. Lesbians in Windsor, for example, stress the importance of access to Detroit as providing "a place to be gay" other than in their own community where they experience marginalization within feminist circles (Confidential interviews, 30 January 1993). In contrast, the situation of lesbians within a northern city like Thunder Bay where there is no convenient access to the Toronto gay and lesbian movement, appears to have pushed feminists to accept, albeit reluctantly, lesbian issues as an integral part of feminist politics.

6.5 Case Study: Alberta

In Alberta, feminist attention to lesbian rights and issues of homophobia has been pursued within an exceedingly treacherous environment. Alberta feminist Julie Anne Le Gras has quipped, in fact, that “extending protection to lesbians and gay men is about as popular as inviting the devil into our Alberta souls” (1985: 30). Gay and lesbian organizing in Alberta began in 1971 with the formation in Edmonton of the Gay Alliance Toward Equality (GATE) coinciding with the election of Lougheed government. In 1972, the Edmonton Lesbian Feminists helped establish a women’s centre in the city. As in other provinces, the focus of gay and lesbian activism quickly centered on the issue of legal protection from discrimination. The new movement focused their attention on the province’s Human Rights Commission and the adoption of the Alberta Bill of Rights and Individual Rights Protection Act (IRPA).⁴¹ Although early lobbying efforts by gays and lesbians failed, the Alberta Human Rights Commission recommended in 1976 that the province extend protection to lesbians and gays in its Human Rights Code. This suggestion was met with virulent hostility by the Lougheed government which not only adamantly rejected the Commission’s package of proposed changes, but even refused to make public the Commission’s recommendations. Labour Minister Neil Crawford, who was responsible for the Commission at the time, dismissed the Commission’s suggestions, bluntly stating “that any [Alberta] government that sought to legislate human rights protection for homosexuals was committing political suicide” (Harris 1979b: 2).⁴²

By 1979, responsibility for the Human Rights Commission had passed to Labour Minister Les Young who made no secret of his strenuous opposition to sexual orientation protection. Young castigated homosexual

behaviour as "obnoxious and aggressive," and "constitut[ing] sexual harassment of other members of society." He vehemently dismissed calls for protective legislation, insisting that "gay people are unlike other minorities in that they are not visibly identifiable ... [they] have a choice about whether their sexual orientation becomes known, and therefore don't require protection" (Harris 1979b: 1).⁴³ Young reinforced his stance on this issue by appointing Bob Lundrigan as Commission Chair in 1979, a choice much maligned by activists in the province who argued that Lundrigan "display[ed] an ignorance of the fact that most child molestation is heterosexual in nature" (Harris 1979a: 5). Labour Minister Young's rejection of the demand for inclusion of sexual orientation in the IRPA coupled with his public and unrepentant homophobia prompted both ASWAC and SWAC to take up the issue of lesbian and gay rights which was by this time squarely on the agenda of both organizations. ASWAC and SWAC called on Premier Lougheed to review Young's post as Minister responsible for human rights and met also with Commission members and Young himself ("Community Voices Support" Calgary Women's Newspaper December 1979/January 1980: 15).

For gay and lesbian organizations, however the struggle for amendments to the IRPA, as in Newfoundland, extended unsuccessfully throughout the eighties and into the nineties. In 1985, the IRPA was amended but once again the government rejected the Commission's recommendations around sexual orientation. In 1986, NDP MIA William Roberts introduced a private member's bill to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or mental disability.⁴⁴ Beginning in 1988, Alberta Liberals repeatedly introduced protective legislation through private members bills.⁴⁵ At the provincial Lobby held 1993, ASWAC continued to ask politicians if "your

party [will] change the Individual Rights Protection Act to include sexual orientation?" as part of its slate of questions for each political party.⁴⁶

As they continued to participate in the frustrating process of lobbying to end discrimination against gays and lesbians, women's movements across Alberta, mirroring the situation in Newfoundland, faced internal debates over lesbian rights and homophobia. Lesbian visibility was an issue in Alberta feminism from the 1970s onward. The province's first feminist newspaper, the Edmonton-based On Our Way, tackled lesbian issues during its publication period of 1972-74 and met with some opposition to that decision. In an anonymous letter to the editor, one reader expressed her discomfort with the integration of a lesbian perspective :

I feel that the paper will receive ever diminshing support from the general run of women if it continues on its present course. I have formed the opinion ... that it is bent on appealing to only the select few like lesbians and deserted wives ... (On Our Way July / August, 1973: 2).

Attention to lesbian issues was a relatively early priority within the Calgary Status of Women Action Committee. With the move of the cohort of U.S.-educated and politicized feminists into the leadership of SWAC, the organization's initial liberal orientation was replaced with an analysis informed by radical feminism that embraced lesbian oppression as a core issue. The radical feminist contingent that dominated Calgary SWAC throughout the late seventies and early eighties, offering support to new groups like the Lesbian Mothers Defence Fund,⁴⁷ did, however, face opposition to its prioritization of lesbian visibility.

When the Calgary Women's Newspaper (CWN), the major project of SWAC between 1976-1981, devoted a single issue to lesbianism in 1980, subscribers wrote to cancel their subscriptions publicly while others registered

their strident disapproval of the issue. One reader who described herself as a “promoter and participant in the women’s movement for most of my 45 years” insisted that “[t]he overabundance of articles written about lesbianism or anti-male material ... does not enlighten nor teach the general population” (Mundle 1980: 19). Even more adamant was reader Alison Michiels who wrote:

I think it’s a mistake to involve sexual orientation, at least at this point, in the status of women’s situation ... I’m strongly ‘put off’ by lesbianism and homosexuality ... I willingly and enthusiastically take a stand ‘for women’ but cannot support organized lesbian situations (1981: 14).

Again in 1981, when SWAC sponsored a conference on the the state of the women’s movement in Alberta, the issue of lesbian visibility and their participation in feminist groups provoked controversy. The editors of CWN admitted that:

In the course of planning this issue ... it was proposed that two pages be assigned to lesbianism. Objections were raised by volunteers that lesbian content has been and will be offensive to “middle-of-the road” Alberta feminists and therefore, lesbian articles should be “soft-pedalled”. Other volunteers countered that lesbians are a distinctive part of the women’s movement and deserve a voice. Our choice seemed only to be one of either attracting more new feminists and placating existing ones uncomfortable about the subject or of alienating not only the lesbian-feminist community but all those feminists for whom this is no longer a personal issue (“Dialogue Need Seen”, Calgary Women’s Newspaper April-May, 1981: 4).⁴⁸

The editorial board’s decision to include lesbian content speaks to the commitment of SWAC to pursuing a strategy of inclusion around lesbian issues.

SWAC was not immune, however, from the federal state’s continued homophobia. In 1982, Women’s Program funding for SWAC suddenly was

slashed by fifty percent “apparently because a group had contacted [Secretary of State- Women’s Program--Calgary] and told them that Calgary SWAC was filled with lesbians and they they didn’t feel comfortable there” (Fraser 1987: 1).⁴⁹ While the Calgary feminist community wrestled with this issue over the next few years, the extent to which any attention to the issue of sexual orientation could interfere with the organization’s funding base remained clear. In 1987, Calgary’s celebration of International Women’s Day was picketed by anti-choice and anti-gay protesters. Responding to the protestors, operators of the centre in which the IWD women’s fair was housed ordered feminists to strip all the conference tables of any literature that carried the word lesbian or abortion and threatened to evict the conference participants if any of the literature was replaced. Calgary feminists nevertheless continued to offer support for the lesbian community through participation in bi-annual lesbian conferences that were first staged in the city in 1983.⁵⁰ Despite the efforts made to incorporate lesbian issues into SWAC’s agenda, former SWAC President Lynn Fraser noted with discouragement in 1987 that the work of lesbians within the women’s movement largely had been discounted, “all for the sake of the hypothetical ‘housewife from the suburbs’ who may be afraid to join our movement” (1987: 1).

In Edmonton, when the Newsmagazine for Alberta Women began publishing in 1985, a similar tension over the place of lesbians in the women’s movement was apparent in the initial issues. Sheryl Ackerman challenged the editors to “[b]e clear from the outset about your collective viewpoint regarding the feminist lesbian issues ... Do not fear ‘alienating’ potential readers by skirting the issues” (1985: 5). In the same issue, reader Marilyn Turnley stated that she was “finding the ASWAC newsletter to be very anti-men these days. Please remember not all of your audience are

lesbians and not all want to read about gay topics" (1985: 5). Lesbians raised visibility issues periodically through the history of the Newsmagazine. In 1986, Elizabeth Massiah, for example, chastised the Calgary Association of Women and the Law for producing an 82-page document for women on women and the law in Alberta that did not mention lesbians (1986: 12).

In its early history, the Edmonton-based ASWAC appears to have avoided serious conflicts over either lesbian rights or homophobia. A lesbian caucus emerged within ASWAC in 1986 "to ensure that lesbian issues and visibility become a priority within ASWAC (ASWAC Newsletter October, 1986 8:8, emphasis added). Although it maintained a somewhat less overt commitment to lesbian issues than SWAC, ASWAC also faced right-wing critiques of the organization as lesbian-controlled. Following the 1992 ASWAC Annual General Meeting that included sessions on homophobia within the women's movement, the Alberta Report, a widely read and extremely right-wing newsmagazine, denounced federal funding to ASWAC and subjected ASWAC, which it characterized as part of the "lesbo-witch set" to a barrage of criticism.⁵¹

In contrast to Newfoundland, women's state machinery in Alberta remained silent on the issue of lesbian rights. The Alberta Women's Secretariat studiously avoided lesbian concerns and the arms-length Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues did little more to address the issues of lesbian rights or homophobia within the women's movement. Laurie Blakeman, Executive Director of AACWI describes racism, sexual orientation and reproductive rights issues as "difficult" for Council members and explains that the Council "tried to work for points of agreement" on these issues. Although Blakeman notes that "I personally did my best to make sure that the word (lesbian) appeared in our publications and would make people

put it in," generally the Council was resoundingly silent on the issues related to sexual orientation (Personal Interview, 23 June 1993).

Feminist organizations active outside of Edmonton and Calgary have been markedly less able to work on issues related to matters of sexual orientation. Members of the Womanspace Resource Centre in Lethbridge point to the combination of a more conservative electorate, a pervasive evangelical presence and a smaller population base as making it virtually impossible to address lesbian and gay rights within southern Alberta's so-called "Bible belt." Evelyn Violini characterizes the right-wing presence in Lethbridge as "terrifying" and reports that the largest evangelical church in Lethbridge, Victory Christian Fellowship,⁵² has backed a major campaign against what it terms "The Gay Agenda." Violini and Jacqueline Preyde depict the campaign as "all hate literature and homophobic crap" (Personal Interviews, 25 June 1993). Victory Christian Fellowship has backed a letter writing campaign to lobby politicians against any changes to the Individual Rights Protection Act that would entrench gay and lesbian rights and encourages its membership to donate money to fight against homosexuality. In short, the Womanspace Resource Centre endures tremendous community resistance to its feminist activism, making overt attention to lesbian issues exceedingly difficult and, at times, dangerous.⁵³ Nevertheless, they reported no serious cleavages within the women's movement around lesbian concerns.

An analysis of the strategic action undertaken by the Alberta women's movement around this representational project of diversity demonstrates once again how the specificities of place affect the construction of a feminist politic around diversity matters. Like women's movements elsewhere, the issue of lesbian visibility figured as part of the feminist agenda in the early

1970s; however, the incorporation of lesbian rights into the agenda of Alberta feminism was resisted on familiar grounds that such a move would alienate potential supporters of the women's movement.

As in Newfoundland, Alberta's lesbian community has faced overwhelming religious opposition throughout the contemporary period of feminist activism. This opposition in Alberta, however, has been led by powerful right-wing fundamentalist groups with a significantly higher public profile and a more radical ideology than in either Newfoundland or Ontario.⁵⁴ As I have documented, the rise of the New Right in the early 1980s in Toronto helped coalesce that gay and lesbian community into joint mobilization. For the much smaller gay and lesbian movement in Alberta, however, countering attacks from a large, well-organized right-wing movement has proven enormously difficult. With the retreat of ASWAC and SWAC from a lobbying, reform-oriented strategy by the early 1980s, groups like AFWUL, supported by the rapid growth in Christian fundamentalism since the 1970s, enjoyed considerable political space to propagate their anti-homosexual message. As I argued with the example of Cabinet Minister Dianne Mirosh, the deeply entrenched right wing views within the Alberta government continue to block any appeal to the state for equality protection for gays and lesbians.⁵⁵

The actions of the Alberta government and the right-wing organizations around the Delwin Vriend case, a teacher who challenged the IRPA after being fired from his job at Edmonton Christian College in 1991 because of his sexual orientation, testify to the continued resistance by the state to gay and lesbian rights. When an Alberta Court of Queen's Bench ordered the Alberta government to include sexual orientation in the IRPA because the Alberta Human Rights Code conflicted with equality provisions

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within the Charter, the Klein government appealed the decision. The gay and lesbian movement suffered a major blow, however, when in 1996 the Alberta Court of Appeal reversed the earlier decision, arguing that "judges should not be making decisions that are within the jurisdiction of the legislature" (Laghi 1996: A9).⁵⁶ AFWUF acted as an intervenor in the appeal and along with Focus on the Family and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, mounted a major campaign against gay and lesbian rights (Legge 1995: A1). Their actions demonstrate the state-oriented strategy of the right-wing and their movement's unwavering determination to stop any progress on equality for the province's gay and lesbian population. This unrelenting backlash against gays and lesbians has been encouraged by the virulent right-wing rhetoric of the widely-read Alberta Report that regularly attacks the gay and lesbian movement and acts as a sharp critic of any political figure or institution that appears "soft" on the issue of gay and lesbian rights.

Along with the fundamentalists' castigation of homosexuality on religious grounds, the gay and lesbian community has also endured the discrimination expounded by the Reform Party of Canada, which has argued that protection in the province's Individual Rights Protection Act (and the Canadian Human Rights Code) constitutes "special rights" for gays and lesbians beyond those assured for the population as a whole (Gold 1996: A4). Although, as I outlined in the previous chapter, gays and lesbians periodically have garnered support from sitting Liberal and NDP members of the Alberta Legislative Assembly, the Progressive Conservatives have been intransigent on the question of reforming the IRPA. Murray Billet of the Gay and Lesbian Awareness of Edmonton summarizes the current situation: "We could get 10,000 people on the front of the Legislature and they [the government] wouldn't change their minds (Gold 1996: A4).

Within such an environment, therefore, the place of lesbian rights and anti-homophobia work within the Alberta women's movement reflects the overall decision of feminists to disengage from their state. Given the hostility of the government combined with the inability of status-of-women machinery to offer any leadership on these issues, it appears that feminist organizations in the 1980s chose to concentrate on reconciling lesbian demands within the internal politics of the women's movement, but largely declined to exhaust their resources in public campaigns for lesbian and gay rights. A long-established gay and lesbian movement in both Edmonton and Calgary also offered organizational alternatives unavailable to lesbians in Newfoundland. While the evidence suggests that internal movement debates over matters of sexual orientation were not uncontroversial, years of external attacks on both feminists and lesbians from the right-wing appears to have strengthened feminists' resolve to concentrate on healing internal divisions around this issue.

As noted, the experience of feminists in Edmonton and Calgary as opposed to Lethbridge show again how 'coming out' in support of lesbian rights and confronting homophobia is an action much easier to sustain in large urban settings as opposed to rural areas and small towns. The Alberta case also shows, however, that issues can be prioritized differently across urban locales within shared jurisdictions. Calgary's more aggressive embrace of an anti-homophobia agenda than occurred in Edmonton flags the importance of a movement's ideological orientation as a factor in the prioritization of its agenda. Generally, however, it can be argued that the disengaged position of much of the feminist movement has meant that, although the resistance to equality for gays and lesbians in the province remains formidable, the place of lesbians and their issues within the Alberta

women's movement has been easier to integrate than in the case of Newfoundland.

6.6 Case Study: Northwest Territories

The invisibility and vulnerability of the lesbian community within the Northwest Territories made accessing information about this community virtually impossible. Although Devine (1991) documents the existence of radical, grassroots women's liberation groups in Yellowknife in the mid-seventies, her work is silent on the role, if any, of a visible lesbian presence within these groups. A review of the annual reports and newsletters of the Status of Women Council revealed that lesbians were not mentioned in the Council's newsletter until 1995 when one issue listed a notice of a lesbian writers group, information on NFB films dealing with lesbian topics and an offer from the Council's Community Development Officer to provide information on lesbian issues. Lesbian issues, however, have never been openly addressed as part of either the Council's or the Directorate's agenda. Although there is a lesbian community within Yellowknife, they were described in one interview as "actively non-political" (Confidential interview 2 March 1996). The invisibility of the gay and lesbian community is attributable in large measure to the absence of an NWT Human Rights Code that, as I have illustrated, provided a lightning rod for organizing in other provinces. Gays and lesbians in NWT, however, remain without either legal protection or a document around which to mobilize. As well, Yellowknife's gay population has been devastated by the AIDS crisis. Michael Riordan's study of gays and lesbians in rural Canada reports that "the virus [has] virtually emptied Yellowknife of a thriving gay male community. They went

south in search of more sophisticated health care, or to die in more familiar surroundings" (1996: 144).

In part, the sometimes tenuous relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women has made efforts on the part of the Council or the Yellowknife Women's Centre to reach out to lesbians more complicated because of the resistance to taking on issues of homosexuality within some First Nations groups.⁵⁷ There are tentative indications of groundbreaking progress, however, on this issue. In 1991, the Status of Women Council first proposed a 'Social Charter' in its submission to the Unity Commission. The Council argued that it "recognized the family as the primary collective (in whatever form that family might take) where the individual is nurtured, cared for and prepared for life" (1991: 6). Following from that position, the Council called for a Social Charter as the most effective vehicle for promoting "functional and healthy family development." After a round of research with northern women, a second report omitted sexual orientation from the list of rights that were prioritized as important (Fraser-McKay 1991).

By 1993, however, a joint report of the Status of Women Council and the NWT Native Women's Association on Participatory Models of Government for NWT Women did include sexual orientation among the list of groups requiring protection under a new western territory constitution. In another joint effort on family law, the Status of Women Council and the NWT NWA included an acknowledgement that "[g]ay families, consisting of a couple of the same sex, with or without children ... now exist in the western NWT," although the research document contained no further mention of gay and lesbian issues (Fraser-McKay 1992). The 1995 joint constitutional paper of the NWT Native Women's Association and the Status of Women Council reiterated the support of both groups for the protection of "minimum rights"

for all Western Arctic citizens in a new western territory constitution; once again, freedom from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation was named for inclusion in the proposed Social Charter (Kolson 1995).

The small size of the gay and lesbian community in NWT and a lack of ready access to an urban centre with a visible gay and lesbian movement renders the lesbian community within the NWT extremely isolated. Helen Fallding's writings (1994) on the experience of living as an "out" lesbian in the Yukon offers some insights into the situation of gays and lesbians in other northern communities.⁵⁸ Fallding recalls that when coming out in the Yukon in 1981, "the closest I could get to a community of like-minded women was reading a few books I dug up at the Whitehorse Public Library and the [local] Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre" (1994: 24). Despite her persistent efforts as a "lesbian detective," her quest to communicate with other lesbians in the Yukon got her "precisely nowhere" (24). Fallding's own project of building an accessible lesbian community culminated in the incorporation of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance of the Yukon in 1991, but she recalls "traumatic" experience of "active hostility" from feminists who were lesbian but closeted and what she perceived as the "lesbophobia of some Aboriginal women leaders" which Fallding remembers as "particularly painful" (24).

If Fallding's insights are applicable to the NWI case even partially, the fragility of the lesbian community and their decision to concentrate on solidifying a cultural community instead of a political movement becomes clear. Until such time as a legislation comparable to Human Rights Code protection is introduced, there is little indication that a vocal gay and lesbian community will emerge. Without any alternative organization, however, lesbians must rely on the Status of Women Council or Aboriginal women's

group for representation; therefore, the endorsement by the Council and the NWT NWA of sexual orientation as a prohibited grounds for discrimination in a new constitution for the western territory marks a significant step in integrating lesbian concerns within the women's movement. For lesbians, whether or not both new territories adopt Social Charters that define the rights of minorities will play a pivotal role in directing future activism around diversity questions.

6.7 Conclusion

My comparison confirms that women's movements in all four contexts are attempting to include the needs and priorities of their lesbian members in their diversity projects. In each setting, sexual orientation remains a social taboo, although to varying degrees, rendering activism around lesbian rights and anti-homophobia difficult and, in parts of Alberta, potentially dangerous. The evidence suggests, however, that location figures prominently in accounting for the marked differences in mobilization across Canada around this set of issues. A comparison of Newfoundland, Ontario and the Northwest Territories largely supports the thesis that organizing around lesbian issues is facilitated by the presence of active gay and lesbian movements in urban centres. In the NWT and Labrador, the absence of a visible lesbian presence within the women's movement relates to the sparseness of the population and lack of opportunities to build a strong gay and lesbian community. Nevertheless, the silencing of lesbians within the Hamilton and Windsor women's movements suggests also that ideological climate and religious culture⁵⁹ remains a crucial variable in determining the choices that women's movements will make with respect to activism on this topic.

In contexts where anti-gay rhetoric forms part of the state's discourse, as in the case of Alberta and Newfoundland, women's movements exhibit significant reluctance to lobby the state for reforms. For Alberta feminists already disengaged from their subnational state, their "politics of difference" in this area concentrates on reconciling internal cleavages between lesbian and non-lesbians. By contrast in Newfoundland, the reticence to undertake an aggressive lobbying stance for lesbian rights until significantly later than either Alberta or Ontario may be rooted in the movement's record of working well with the state and having reservations about risking that relationship over controversial issues.

The comparison reveals further that in some cases, support from political elites can facilitate diversity projects. In Newfoundland, support from St. John's mayor Shannie Duff and MLA Lynn Verge made space for attention to sexual orientation on the political agenda and allowed the women's movement to take advantage of a general societal crisis over matters of sexuality. In Ontario, the presence of MPPs willing to speak out in support of anti-discrimination legislation coupled with the volatility of the electoral system after 1985 influenced the success of gay and lesbian organizing and created an environment more open to mobilization on the part of the women's movement around lesbian issues. The stranglehold on provincial power held by the Tories in Alberta, however, meant that support for IRPA amendments from Liberal and NDP MLAs did little to sway Tory legislators. I demonstrate in Chapter Seven that other diversity projects can be affected similarly by the contexts in which they are pursued.

6.8 Notes to Chapter Six

¹ For an introduction to these issues, Gunew and Yeatman (1993) offers an excellent collection of essays covering the terrain of debates on the politics of difference and representation

² On the subject of feminist coalitions, see Bernice Johnson Reagon (1983). For a Canadian example, consult Rebeck (1992).

³ See Abella (1991) for a useful discussion of the limitations of formal equality and the need for substantive equality formulations.

⁴ Consult Duberman, Vicinus and Chauncey (1989) on the subject of the historic invisibility of lesbians

⁵ Lesbian theories also encompassed radical lesbianism and lesbian separatism. Along with lesbian feminism, these positions were all branches of radical feminism and espoused various degrees of separation from both male-dominated institutions and heterosexual women. For an explanation of these various strands, consult Alice Echols (1989)

⁶ See, for example, M. Ferree and B. Hess (1985). The more recent controversy that ensued following NOW President Patricia Ireland's revelation of her own bisexuality suggests that sexual orientation remains a contentious issue within feminist organizing.

⁷ See Ross (1995: 249, fn. 27) for a list of these resolutions.

⁸ At the same time, Canadian gay liberation movements were challenged to confront sexism within their organizations. See, for example, Bill Fields (1983) and Lorna Weir and Eve Zaremba (1982)

⁹ In one of their few public actions, CHAN members did participate in a talk show on St. John's radio in 1977 (Leonard 1977)

¹⁰ The events of this dismissal and the earlier dismissal of Barbara Thornborrow from the Canadian Armed Forces are covered in *The Body Politic* (June; July; August; September 1977)

¹¹ A notable exception is the Bay St. George Women's Council of Stephenville, Newfoundland. At its founding in 1984, this council made a commitment "to inform and educate women and the general public to further the elimination of discrimination on the basis of sex, race, marital status, and sexual orientation" (Newsletter October 1984: 1, emphasis added).

¹² See "Women and Equality: A Presentation to the Federal Committee on Equality" Web (October 1985: 4-12)

¹³ Despite his progressive positions on many aspects of women's equality, Premier Peckford resisted the demands for inclusion of sexual orientation in the province's human rights code.

¹⁴ A full account of the Mount Cashel affair is documented in Michael Harris (1990). For another perspective on these events, consult Lorraine Michael (1995).

¹⁵ See, for example, Rose-Marie Kennedy (1989a) and Peggy Keats (1990).

¹⁶ Other lesbians point to the tragic suicide of well-known feminist Dianne Duggan as also propelling the lesbian community into a new phase of activism. As one lesbian feminist explained: "Her death precipitated a profound moment when people started to say we have to do something ... it crystallized lesbianism as an issue in terms of feminist organizing here" (Personal Interview, Brenda Ponc 18 August 1992).

¹⁷ It will be interesting to follow the Tobin government on this issue in light of the imminent dismantling of the denominationally-controlled school system.

¹⁸ This research project was unable to identify any lesbians living in Labrador who would agree to be interviewed. This experience was replicated in my own research for this thesis.

¹⁹ Jane Walsh remembers that, for example, when Newfoundlander Donna Lovelace was appointed to the Parliamentary Task Force on Violence Against Women, there was "no space" to debate whether or not Newfoundland feminists should be participating in the process (Personal Interview 18 August 1992).

²⁰ Brenda Ponc stresses the conservative character of Newfoundland by complaining that in the province, "even the lesbians are pro-censorship" (Personal Interview, 18 August 1992). The social taboos around discussing sexuality have also caused difficulties for AIDS educators across the province (Personal interview Wendy Williams, 16 August 1992).

²¹ Until 1975, representation in the House of Assembly was to reflect a balance between Roman Catholic, Anglican and other Protestant denominations (United Church, Salvation Army and Penecostal). At least until the election of Clyde Wells, voting along religious lines was firmly entrenched.

²² The tensions between lesbians and gays in terms of political organizing are covered in Lorna Weir and Eve Zaremba (1982). The involvement of lesbian feminists in gay liberation is discussed also by Chris Bearchall (1983).

²³ My discussion of 1970s lesbian organizing in Toronto draws liberally from the groundbreaking work of Becki Ross (1995) and owes much to her historical treatment of this period. See Ross for a detailed discussion of lesbians' experiences within gay liberation groups during this time.

²⁴ John Damien was fired from his position as an Ontario racing steward in February, 1975 because he was gay. He filed an unfair-dismissal suit against the Ontario Racing Commission. When Damien died eleven years later, his case had never reached the trial stage. The case acted as a catalyst for demands for changes to the Ontario Human Rights Code (Herman 1994).

²⁵ An exception is a single mention in an article on women and sport in which the writer speculates whether homosexuality is a problem of female athleticism (Vickers, Rankin, Appelle 1993: 76).

²⁶ It is important to note, however, that NAC got funding for lesbian groups to make presentations to the Boyer Committee. NAC organized extensive representation to the Boyer Committee as did many gay and lesbian groups.

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- ²⁷ A survey of OCSW newsletters between 1972-1989 reveals that the OCSW only started to announce lesbian events in the final years of publication.
- ²⁸ The reference was to Justine Blaine, an Ontario girl who had been refused the opportunity to play on a boys' hockey team.
- ²⁹ See Ross (1995) for an in-depth study of the LOOT experiment.
- ³⁰ For a discussion of LAR's history, see Stone (1991); for a discussion of the bath raids and their impact on gay and lesbian organizing, consult McCaskell (1988).
- ³¹ Ross covers the details of the campaign against anti-gay crusader Anita Bryant's visit to Toronto in 1978 and examines how that event both served to mobilize lesbians to organize with gay men and while simultaneously reinforcing for many lesbians their reluctance to engage in political strategizing with gay men (1995, 157-165).
- ³² The Coalition for Gay Rights in Ontario was founded by nine groups in 1975 and immediately began lobbying for the inclusion of sexual orientation in the Ontario Human Rights Code. For a review of the organization's activities, see Warner and Donald (1990).
- ³³ The details of these campaigns are documented in Herman (1994) and Rainside (1988, 1995).
- ³⁴ Ross (1995) documents the emergence of lesbian-only groups during the mid-1970s in several Ontario centres. LOON (Lesbian Organization of Ottawa Now), for example, hosted a national lesbian conference in 1976 that attracted over 350 lesbians.
- ³⁵ This feeling was articulated by several members of the lesbian community in Windsor who expressed serious reservations about consenting to interviews about their community activities.
- ³⁶ The Sexual Assault Centre was supported by the Justice for Women Coalition ("Politicians should change the myth, stereotypes and prejudices which shore up oppression" *The Spectator* 25 January 1993).
- ³⁷ See, for example, Ken Peters (1993c).
- ³⁸ On this topic, see also Gary Kinsman (1987).
- ³⁹ The appeal of an urban setting for gays and lesbians is reinforced in Michael Riordan's (1996) examination of the challenges associated with being gay and lesbian in rural settings.
- ⁴⁰ In 1995, for example, an Ontario court ruled that a section of the Child and Family Services Act of Ontario which prevented lesbians from adopting was unconstitutional (Geller 1995).
- ⁴¹ The Individual Rights Protection Act (IRPA) was designed to protect individuals from discrimination and constituted an up-dating of the Alberta Human Rights Act of 1966. The IRPA was the first Act passed by the first Progressive Conservative government in Alberta.
- ⁴² It did not prove "suicidal," however, for the PQ government of Quebec which in 1977 became the first Canadian subnational jurisdiction to amend human rights legislation to include sexual orientation.

⁴³ In 1980, Young also decried affirmative action as "reverse discrimination" and "social engineering" and dismissed equal pay for work of equal value as "abstract" and "arbitrary." For an insider's view of the Alberta Human Rights Commission, consult Julie Anne Le Gras (1985).

⁴⁴ Nola Erhardt (1986) describes this effort on the part of the NDP.

⁴⁵ Liberal Party of Alberta, "Response to Alberta Status of Women Action Committee Questionnaire," 1993.

⁴⁶ ASWAC's coalition at this lobby included the Calgary Lesbian and Gay Political Action Guild and the Gay and Lesbian Community Centre of Edmonton.

⁴⁷ SWAC, for example, offered office space for the Lesbian Mothers' Defence Fund after its founding in 1981. The overlap in membership between SWAC and the LMDF accounts for this relationship.

⁴⁸ See Lynne Fraser and Linda Brown Wallace (1981) for a further discussion of this issue.

⁴⁹ Fraser adds that, ironically, if these critics "had been larger than 3 at the time, they could have voted us out and taken over" (1987: 1).

⁵⁰ See Deborah J. Turner (1987) for a description of these events.

⁵¹ For a sample of the Alberta Report's treatment of ASWAC, see Kim Hazelwood (1992). Anti-gay articles appear frequently in the Alberta Report. See, for example, Joe Woodard (1995).

⁵² Victory Christian Fellowship began in Lethbridge in 1979 and today is a network of fifty churches throughout Canada, Africa, India, Thailand and the United States. Victory Christian Fellowship was the main church involved in lobbying the CRIC to allow licensing of religious broadcasters. In April 1995, it was granted a license to mount a religious cable channel. The Church is also a major financial backer of Alberta Cabinet Minister Diane Mirosh.

⁵³ In my Lethbridge interviews, the issue of threatened personal safety was raised repeatedly in the context of discussing activism around gay and lesbian rights or AIDS organizing.

⁵⁴ Sociologist Stanley Barrett depicts the right-wing in Alberta as adhering to an agenda that is "anti-Semitic, anti-black, anti-communist, anti-immigration, anti-foreign aid, anti world government, anti-egalitarian, anti-homosexual, anti-feminist and anti-abortion" (1987: 30).

⁵⁵ While the Minister Responsible for the Alberta Human Rights Commission, Gary Mar, has expressed his personal support for protection of gays and lesbians under the IRPA, his views are in the minority. Homophobia within the Alberta government, however, is not limited to the Tories. Liberal MLA Barry McFarland insists that "They [his constituents] just don't believe God made two men to procreate. They don't believe in homosexuality, and there's no place for it, so why should there be laws protecting it?" (Morris 1996: A19).

⁵⁶ For details of the case, refer to Morris (1996).

⁵⁷ Agnes Grant argues in relation to First Nations culture that "[l]ong before Europeans invaded this continent there was acceptance of a person's sexual orientation as a matter of course and respect" (1994: 57). Aboriginal gay activists insist that the tradition of "two-spirited" peoples was well entrenched in pre-European contact and attribute homophobia among some Elders to the influence of Christianity on Aboriginal culture and traditions (Interview Art Zoccole 29 November 1993). In Yellowknife, however, the issue of sexual orientation was described as "particularly difficult" within some Aboriginal organizations (Confidential interview, 2 March 1996).

⁵⁸ I am not inferring that the situation of lesbians in Yukon mirrors that in the Northwest Territories. Because of the complete absence of literature about gays and lesbians in the NWT, the Fallding article is important in offering at least some insight into the experiences of the community in northern settings. Fundamental difference between the two jurisdictions exist in that gays and lesbians enjoy legal protection from discrimination in Yukon and the Yukon Women's Directorate has addressed the issue of lesbian rights as part of a Yukon government survey of women conducted in 1992 ("Lesbians and Homophobia" *Canadian Woman Studies* Fall 1994: 26).

⁵⁹ Throughout the sets of interviews conducted in Windsor and Hamilton, activists spoke repeatedly of the strong role of the Catholic Church in their cities.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Women's Movements and Representational Projects: Projects of Diversity Part II

7.1 Women's Movements and the Place of Racialized Women¹

As with the case of sexual orientation, the broad outlines of discussions within women's movements in Canada of the experiences of racialized women reflect the contours of international feminist debates. Racialized women in Canada, like their counterparts elsewhere, have challenged majority feminists to recognize racism as "a central determinant of women's experience in advanced capitalism" and to valorize difference as grounds for "the right to equal access to a representational voice" (Bannerji 1991: 81-82). To begin the process of reversing their marginalization within women's movements, racialized women have undertaken the arduous task of exposing the deep-rootedness of "race blindness" within Canadian feminist theory, practice and historiography.² As this "politics of difference" has come to define contemporary feminist politics, however, theorists such as Himani Bannerji have alerted feminists to the ways in which this politics, in fact, "hides in its radical posture a neo-liberal pluralist stance" which

not only avoids naming and mapping out the general organization of social relations, it also reduces the concept of experience from an interpreted, dynamic process of subjective appropriation of the social into a far more static notion of 'identity'. De-emphasizing the social and the historical in the interest of individual uniqueness, expanding at most as similarity of detail, the concept focuses on a content rather than a process and creates knowledge enclosures ... That subjectivity arises in a shared 'social' and mental space is obscured (1991: 84-85).

Bannerji's critique of the static nature of "identity politics" and its tendency to de-contextualize experiences of difference is applicable as well to much

contemporary writing about race and racism which ignores the impact of space and place on the construction and experience of diversity. In the last decade, explorations of racialized women's realities within feminism in Canada have gained great momentum but rarely with attention paid to the context or the location of the experience. In groundbreaking collections by women of colour such as the Issue is 'Ism' (1989) and And Still we Rise (1994) for example, the Toronto-centric contributions of both works leaves the experience of racism within Canada outside of Toronto largely overlooked. Instead, because racism is a world-wide phenomenon, it is assumed to be experienced the same everywhere.

Two important exceptions include writings by Canadians Rosemary Brown and Mariana Valverde. In her insightful autobiography, Being Brown, Rosemary Brown (1989) distinguishes between growing up as a Black girl where Blacks are in the majority as in her birthplace of Jamaica and growing up as a Black girl in Canada where the overwhelming majority of people are white. Brown, like Nain (1994), emphasizes that race is not an essential, intrinsic experience or category; rather, it is contextual and relational. In reflecting on her own identity, Mariana Valverde notes that one's geographic location can determine whether or not you will be considered (or will consider yourself) racialized. Valverde reflects on the fact that as a Latino, she is considered "white" in Canada whereas in the United States she is considered to be a woman "of colour" (1992).³

In this chapter, I describe how issues of race and racism have been constructed and politicized within women's movements in each of the four case studies. The diversity challenges waged by racialized women, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, are reviewed in each context. I analyze the differences among the representational projects of diversity mounted by the

four women's movements and advance explanations for the uneven patterns of mobilization around this set of issues. The evidence confirms once again that the strategic choices of women's movements are shaped by the places in which they act. In each case, movements both exploit existing opportunities and create new spaces within which to pursue a politics of difference.

Women's experiences with their subnational state as well as the "sense of place" articulated by differently located women within similarly situated women's movements combine to produce distinct patterns of activism around diversity agendas.

7.2 Case Study: Newfoundland

In the largely racially homogeneous province of Newfoundland and Labrador, issues of race have been dealt with only cursorily within the women's movement. Here the role of racialized women within feminist organizations has been minimal. In the case of First Nations women, Pope and Burnham admit that "until recently, the women's movement did not clearly recognize what actions could be taken to support native women" (1993: 192). Their analysis attributes the absence of Aboriginal women from the feminist movement partly to issues of geographic isolation: "[N]ative women's groups in Newfoundland [are] centred in Labrador and there has always been a problem in provincial organizations of any type, with effectively including Labrador groups" (192).

Yet, Newfoundland feminists freely admit also that racism "is not as big an issue as it should be--it's not an issue that women are dealing with because racial minorities are not involved in the movement" (Personal interview Beth Lacey, 16 August 1992). Beth Lacey describes how attempts have been made to reach the Native women's community, but she admits

that "We are the oppressor inviting the oppressed to come and tell the oppressor their problems and then we expect them to give us a true answer." Although grants from the Women's Policy Office have been made available to Labrador women's groups with Aboriginal members,⁴ Assistant Deputy Minister Luanne Leamon agrees that "we haven't made contact with native women at all--I think we just don't know how to reach them" (Personal Interview, 16 August 1992). Within the St. John's community, feminists record virtually no input from either Aboriginal women or women of colour. In fact, racialized women's lack of visibility in St. John's "make[s] it difficult to even think about people who are a different colour" (Personal interview Tania Dopler, 20 January 1993).

Elsewhere in the province, majority race feminists report greater communication with Aboriginal women. In Stephenville, feminists have done a significant amount of work with the Innu population, organizing joint demonstrations and arranging prison visits for Innu families at the Stephenville Women's Correctional Centre. The Bay St. George Status of Women Council has prioritized Native women's concerns through activities like devoting a day of the International Women's Day week agenda to the concerns of Aboriginal populations in the area (Personal interview Joyce Hancock, 21 August 1992).

Aboriginal women in the province first organized in 1978 at the Nain Northern Labrador Women's Conference, a meeting sponsored by the Labrador Inuit Association which had been informed that funds were available from the federal Secretary of State for a project involving Native women. The gathering represented a "first attempt to create public awareness of problems faced by women and their concern over the future development and changes which have already taken place in Labrador communities"

(Labrador Inuit Association 1978: 1). Out of that initial meeting, local community women's groups developed throughout the 1980s in communities such as Nain, Makkovik, Hopedale, Port Hope Simpson, Sheshatshit and North West River and quickly cemented a strong tradition of organizing independently. Later, the Labrador Native Women's Association formed to act as an umbrella group for women of northern and central Labrador. In 1990, a women's conference at Port Hope Simpson brought together sixty women from throughout Labrador to attend workshops on women's health issues, family violence, fishing and alternative economic development.⁵

Although Aboriginal women constitute a significant population within Labrador, their participation in the women's movement there has been limited. Aboriginal women have participated in provincial feminist gatherings, however, as in 1982, when women from Davis Inlet, Nain and Hopedale attended the provincial status of women council conference in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Representatives from the Labrador Native Women's Association also attended the first provincial women's lobby in 1984 and Native women have since brought their concerns to subsequent lobbies. Pope and Burnham (1993) suggest that in the wake of publicity surrounding the Oka crisis, white feminists were inspired to discuss what opportunities existed for increased cooperation between Native and non-Native women in Newfoundland and Labrador. The 1990 provincial Status of Women conference featured Marilyn Kane from Kanasatake as guest speaker and included a workshop on First Nations women's issues.

Despite these important efforts to bridge the divide between Native and non-Native women in the province, anti-racist policies have not been adopted widely within the women's movement and serious incidents of

racism have occurred. When the Women's Lobby was held in Gander in 1992, participants recollect that racism towards Aboriginal women was painfully apparent. When a First Nations woman from Nain raised issues such as the lack of running water in northern communities, and the inquiry into the deaths of children at Davis Inlet, observers recall that she was "ignored completely." Jane Walsh remembers that when arguing with other women about the racism that surfaced during that incident, she was told that such issues are "Toronto concerns." Walsh recalls also that when anti-violence expert Linda Macleod conducted consultations in Newfoundland around violence issues, discussions about immigrant women and violence elicited statements

that were so racist, I couldn't believe it. When I challenged women about their views on immigrant women and how communities should be represented, I was again told that those were 'Toronto issues'. We don't have to look to Labrador to see racism, we just have to look within our city [St. John's] (Personal Interview Jane Walsh, 18 August 1992).

One of the most persistent stumbling blocks preventing interaction between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women in Labrador has been the issue of the Innu's longstanding struggle against low-level flying that has divided Labrador along class as well as racial lines. In communities such as Happy Valley-Goose Bay where military bases established during World War II have long been a source of employment and have enjoyed strong support among white residents, it has been difficult for Innu women to generate sympathy for their protests against militarization.⁶ Observers admit that when Native women approached the Mokami Status of Women Council in Goose Bay for support against low-level flights, they were "looked at like they were crazy" (Confidential interview, 21 August 1992). In Stephenville,

feminists report difficulties in persuading non-Native Labrador feminists to join their solidarity marches for Innu women. As one narrator remembers:

They [representatives from Labrador status of women councils] would say things like 'Innu women are in prison because they want to be' ... it's difficult to get them to support Innu women because they're seen as interfering with the possibility of military contracts. We also hear lots of talk about racism towards Native women within women's groups in Goose Bay (Confidential interview, 21 August 1992).

In 1990, women from groups in Happy Valley--Goose Bay and Sheshatshit came together to help ease racial tension between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations. Rose Gregoire, a member of the Sheshatshit Women's group explains: "I don't think people in the [town] realize how much the taunting hurts the Innu people ... We often hear talk of violence. What is this doing to our children?" ("Labrador women band together in attempt to ease racial tensions" The Evening Telegram 26 March 1990: 3).

Other racialized women within the province have cultivated very different relationships to the mainstream women's movement. Despite being a small community, Newfoundland women of colour organized the Multicultural Women's Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador (MWONL) in 1982.⁷ Dipti Dey of the organization observes that the problems facing immigrant women in the province are exacerbated by their small numbers: "[O]ur province doesn't get many immigrants, refugees, or visible minorities. So people don't have to deal with this on a daily basis. This means they don't get used to it" (as quoted in Brown 1990: 6). Although Dey's comments suggests that women of colour in Newfoundland share experiences of discrimination similar to that encountered elsewhere in Canada, the MWONL reflects their unique situation in Newfoundland. Dr. Lan Gien, President of MWONL, explains that the majority of the women in

the organization are professionals. Gien points to the high percentage of out-migration of immigrant populations in the province which means that immigrants and refugees who choose to settle in Newfoundland are most often middle-class and university-educated (Telephone interview, June 2, 1995).⁸ Consequently, Gien argues, issues of poverty and police brutality that are priorities for minority women elsewhere in Canada are not pressing concerns for women of colour in Newfoundland. The MWONL also reports no direct contact with Aboriginal women because of a lack of common objectives.

The disparities between the prioritization of race issues in Newfoundland as opposed to central Canada became clear in 1992 around the criticism of the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women. When NAC and four other national women's organizations denounced the Panel and then withdrew their support because its lack of attention to the realities of women of colour and women with disabilities and its general failure to consult with grassroots women's organizations,⁹ many Newfoundland feminists found NAC's decision difficult to support. Joyce Hancock, the provincial NAC representative at the time stated that her community "was not consulted as to what the experience was in Newfoundland" and that [NAC President] "Judy's [Rebick] statement was not reflective of the experience of the national panel all over this country" (Personal Interview 21 August 1992). While supportive of the criticism that the Panel failed to address the experience of violence within minority populations, many Newfoundland women found it difficult to withdraw support from the panel on that basis. Instead, the visit of the Panel to five Newfoundland communities and the appointments of Donna Lovelace, Project Administrator of Iris Kirby House in St. John's to the Panel and Jennifer

Mercer, Coordinator of the Inter-Agency Committee on Violence Against Women to the Panel's Advisory Committee were seen as an important victory in bringing attention to issues of violence against women and children throughout the province. Hancock remembers that, for many Newfoundland women, the Panel hearings represented the "first time that many women had even been listened to about their experiences of violence" (Personal Interview, 21 August 1992).

Again in 1993, the gulf between the concentration on racism within the Toronto women's movement as opposed to Newfoundland was apparent at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAOW) held in St. John's. Although a contingent of Aboriginal women from Davis Inlet were in attendance and Chief Geraldine Kelly of the Conne River Miawpukek Band served as one of the featured speakers, local conference organizers were criticized by women of colour delegates, mainly from Toronto, for not inadequately incorporating anti-racism as part of the conference agenda.¹⁰ Chief Kelly and other Innu women also spoke about the lack of inclusion of issues useful to them in the conference.

In sum, while Newfoundland and Labrador feminism has evolved to include racialized women, this set of issues has been more difficult to incorporate. Newfoundland remains Canada's most ethnically homogeneous province and has been mostly immune to the rapid changes in immigration patterns that have transformed other parts of the country.¹¹ In 1991, Newfoundland and Labrador's population of 568,474 included only 5200 persons of racial minorities other than First Nations (Gilad 1990). The Aboriginal component of the population stands at 5340, accounting for 0.9% of the province's total population.¹² Such homogeneity has meant that race issues prominent on the political stage in other jurisdictions have had

limited currency in Newfoundland. Indeed, it is still largely the case, as Susan McCorquodale commented in 1978, that in Newfoundland "[s]ocial divisions are not ethnic; they arise from religious and class antagonisms" (139).

The small size of the minority population within the province can be traced in part to a history of restricted immigration and to the province's poverty. Lisa Gilad documents how in the pre-Confederation period, Newfoundland's governors "maintained exclusionary policies which made it almost impossible for immigrants, let alone refugees, to settle on the island, unless newcomers were of British stock (1990: 165).¹³ Patterns of out-migration that have long characterized Newfoundland extend also to the immigrant population. More than half of all immigrant arrivals to Newfoundland leave the province, lured by better employment opportunities, higher wages and the desire to be part of larger and more visible ethnic communities (Gilad 1990: 167).¹⁴ Such a combination of restrictive immigration and out-migration, in turn, has influenced the class base of the non-Aboriginal minority population. Gilad (167) notes, for example, that immigrants are over-represented in the professions because Newfoundland has been seen as a somewhat unattractive location for professionals due to the geographic isolation of the province and its lower salaries. Consequently, immigrants and foreign workers fill many professional positions, and Gilad speculates that their sole motivation for choosing Newfoundland may be that initial settlement in this province facilitates entry into Canada. Many poor, white Newfoundlanders, therefore, experience non-Aboriginal, racialized women as middle-class professionals.

The class base of this minority population, therefore, appears to influence directly the extent to which race is politicized within

Newfoundland feminism. Dr. Lan Gien of the Multicultural Women's Organization admits that if immigrant women landing in Newfoundland aren't professionals themselves or aren't married to a professional, "they're probably on their way to somewhere else" (Telephone Interview, 2 June 1995). Consequently, racialized women in Newfoundland, other than Aboriginal populations, tend not to experience the economic marginalization endured by their counterparts in other contexts. Calls for activism to end the racial oppression of women, therefore, may be interpreted quite differently in Newfoundland than in other locales.

It has been argued also that the small size of the minority population has contributed a "typically not positive" attitude on the part of many Newfoundlanders towards immigrants and refugees. Gilad identifies this xenophobia as extending to other Canadians as well through the custom of referring to newcomers as 'Come-From Aways' (CFA). Part of the Newfoundland culture is a suspicion of "CFAers" and a resistance to the importation of their values and issues. Migrants to Newfoundland are rarely accepted as "true" Newfoundlanders, however long they live there. As Gilad observes, however, the implications of this phenomenon for social relations are "varied and difficult to document" (1990: 167).¹⁵

Gilad offers the important qualification, however that

[x]enophobia does not necessarily mean that contemporary Newfoundlanders are overtly racist. They are more likely to profess ignorance due to centuries of cultural, as well as geographic, isolation. In fact, an hypothesis deserving of study could find that Newfoundlanders' attitudes towards race may differ from that of mainlanders since the relatively greater influx of visible minorities in the past twenty years has been largely a professional migration: Newfoundlanders thus meet people of colour at the upper rungs of the class structure ... Under such conditions, racist assumptions on the basis of intellectual inferiority may be difficult to come by (1990: 168).

Exacerbating the gulf between Aboriginal women and non-Aboriginal women in the Newfoundland women's movement is the physical isolation of First Nations women who are located primarily in remote settlements in coastal Labrador and have minimal contact with island women.¹⁶ Within Labrador, relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women have been complicated by class divisions. Aboriginal women, particularly the Innu, suffer under conditions of severe poverty and the continued disruptions of their physical environment. While issues of language and minority rights generally have not permeated Newfoundland's political discourse, high-profile conflicts with the Aboriginal population of Labrador have catapulted issues of racism and the plight of the province's First Nations peoples onto the political stage. Controversy over NATO's supersonic low-level training flights at Goose Bay that have disrupted the Innu population since 1979 and, more recently, the tensions between the Innu of Davis Inlet and the provincial government over relocation of their community, has brought to light the exclusion of Newfoundland's Aboriginal population from provincial politics.¹⁷

In the case of the protests of the Innu against low-level flights, the economic reliance of communities such as Happy Valley-Goose Bay on the military presence renders it difficult for non-Aboriginal women to support Aboriginal women on this issue. Supplying jobs for 1000 civilians, the air force base at Happy Valley-Goose Bay is the area's main source of employment and Innu protests against what they consider the military occupation of their lands have been regarded quite negatively by many local residents. The extent of the controversy was evident in 1991 when the newspaper The Labradorian carried an editorial in which the editor n de a

direct appeal to Premier Wells to "wage war against the Innu" (as quoted in Henriksen 1993: 20). George Henriksen's study of the Innu observes that

[s]ince the mid 1970s there has unfortunately been a deterioration of Innu-White relations in general. When I arrived in Labrador in 1966, I did encounter some racist stereotypes which some White people in Happy Valley/Goose Bay use when talking about the Innu, but today racist attitudes and statements about the Innu are much more open and widespread (1993: 21).

With the renewal of a ten-year commitment by the participating European nations to continue military training in Labrador, the conflicts with the Innu show little chance of resolution. Additionally, the recent discovery of massive nickel, copper and cobalt reserves at Voisey's Bay, Labrador threatens to ignite further conflicts between Aboriginal communities and non-Aboriginal interests as these deposits are within Aboriginal-claimed territory.

Although women's groups are established throughout Labrador,¹⁸ the role of the Labrador Native Women's Association (first formed in 1977) and the presence of Pauktuutit since 1984 have absorbed most of Aboriginal women's organizing energies and taken precedence over participation in groups dominated by non-Aboriginals. Despite representation from the Aboriginal community on the provincial Advisory Council, the needs of Aboriginal women have not been priority issues within the mainstream Newfoundland women's movement, although the national attention generated around the crisis at Davis Inlet¹⁹ may prove to be a turning point in the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women in Newfoundland and Labrador.

7.3 Case Study: Ontario

By the mid-1980s, the women's movement centred in Toronto had turned to investing considerable energy into confronting racism and analyzing the negative impact on racialized women of a white-defined feminist praxis. Established feminist organizations faced demands from racialized women for attention to their issues, control over their own agendas, acknowledgment of the racism within the women's movement and meaningful anti-racist action. Although organizations of women of colour such as Women Working with Immigrant Women (1974), Women's Community Employment Centre (1974) and the Association of Women of Indian Origin in Canada (1975-6), had been active in Toronto for over a decade, the surge in organizing among women of colour in Ontario occurred in the early 1980s, with the founding of groups such the Congress of Black Women (1983), the Coalition of Visible Minority Women (1983) and the establishment in 1984 of the Toronto-based Sister Vision Press which gave racialized women a vehicle through which their experiences of marginalization and oppression could be communicated.

In 1983, the provincial government initiated a consultation process through the Ontario Women's Directorate and its Race Relations division that led to a provincial conference on racism and sexism. The over 400 women who gathered at that meeting (and formed the Coalition of Visible Minority Women) offered more than 100 recommendations in areas of policy and program development. Christina Gabriel's study of this period documents a series of largely unproductive consultations between women of colour and their state as the provincial state "forced women of colour into institutional exile" (1996: 190).

With the creation of new organizations came debate over the place of Black, First Nations, immigrant and other racialized minorities within a still white-dominated feminist movement. In Toronto, the issue erupted in 1986 around the organization of International Women's Day (IWD) when the theme "Women Say No to Racism from Toronto to South Africa" was selected by the organizing committee. Certainly, this was not the first time the women's movement of Toronto had broached issues of importance to women of colour. The city's 1978 International Women's Day march agenda included "a demand for an end to the deportation of Jamaican women, a demand for full native rights for native women, and full social, trade union, and political rights for immigrant women" (Wall 1982).²⁰ In 1981, groups like Women Working for Immigrant Women and the Coalition Against the Marcos Dictatorship participated within the March 8th Coalition and "spoke out against the single-issue approach to the concerns of immigrant women and women of colour" although the issue of racism "was not seen as a major concern of the women's movement, and certainly not as an organizing priority" (Egan, Gardner, Persad 1988: 37). By 1986, however, Black feminists like Marlene Nourbese Philip (1986) were articulating their isolation and experiences of racism within the feminist community.

Although the feminist newspaper Broadside attributed the selection of the 1986 IWD theme to "the intense activism of women of colour within the feminist community and the ... presence of groups like the Black Feminist Collective, Lesbians of Colour and ... Sister Vision Press," (Editorial, Volume 7:5 March 1986: 2) the decision to highlight the theme provoked an intense struggle between minority and majority women as well as among women of colour, some of whom saw the white-dominated Coalition as organizing Black women and therefore perpetuating their oppression.²¹ The Black

Women's Collective, composed of well-known activists such as Dionne Brand, Grace Channer and Faith Nolan, argued that

Time-old attitudes of directing and programming what they have never gone through, i.e., racism, made it difficult for most of them to accept fully the directorship of Native, Black or women of colour ... white women wanted us to participate in their [IWD] workshop on racism so they could release their guilt. The assumption here was that we would be content with the tokenism of guilt instead of a full grasp of what racist attitudes mean ... even in the Coalition itself. Another assumption was that the theme on racism was a March 8th "event" rather than a mode of life for us, and so we should willingly participate in giving entertainment to lighten the day's gloom ("Sisterhood Must be Struggled For" Our Lives 1:1 1986: 3).

The controversy precipitated a re-evaluation of the organizing, practices and leadership of the Coalition. Black and Aboriginal women called for internal workshops for white women on racism, suggestions they perceived as evoking "much balking and hemming and hawing but no movement" ("Sisterhood Must be Struggled For" Our Lives 1: 1 1986: 4).

In retrospect, Egan, Gardner and Persad admit that "[t]hrough working in the Coalition in 1986, many white women were forced to put away their defensiveness, give up their predominance within the Coalition, and learn that there is a crucial difference between looking at racism as one issue among many and integrating an anti-racist analysis into all the areas taken up" (1988: 43). The leadership provided by the Black Women's Collective and the Native Women's Resource Centre was not unproblematic for some women of colour, however, thus further complicating the organizing and decision-making process. Carol Allen recalls how the cleavages between Black women and other women of colour were "really serious in terms of the anger [and] the mistrust that some of us had towards each other" ("Fighting racism in the women's movement" Cayenne Winter 1987: 14). The progress that had been

made within the Coalition was reflected in the IWD keynote speech the following year when it was declared that "Racism is not an issue;" rather, "an anti-racist women's movement has to include an anti-racist analysis of each and every issue" (Egan, Gardner and Persad 1988: 44). By this time, the Coalition had also shifted from a predominantly white membership to about one-third involvement from First Nations, Black, and Asian women.²²

The adoption of an anti-racist agenda within the March 8th Coalition did not put to rest charges of racism. Conflict around organizing IWD persisted into the 1990s. Vijay Agnew recalls how an article in the Globe and Mail in 1991 which questioned why IWD celebrations were focusing on racism rather than 'women's issues' opened old wounds with feminist circles (1996: 90). After IWD 1990, few organizations remained part of the Coalition and by the fall of 1993, the March 8th Coalition had disbanded. Women Working with Immigrant Women (WWIW), which had been part of IWD since 1978, was contacted by the March 8th Coalition and told that some remaining monies would be divided among women of colour organizations to help sponsor future IWD events. WWIW made plans to organize the annual march and rally for 1994. After much preparation had been made, a newly constituted March 8th Coalition emerged which decided to organize the 1994 IWD fair, the money-generating part of the venture. This left WWIW in charge of the rally and march but without ever having received the promised funding (Personal Interview Salome Loucas, 7 June 1994). The incident served to rekindle old conflicts over how racialized women were represented during IWD events. Vinita Srivastava of the University of Toronto Women's Centre notes further the ongoing cleavages within the Toronto women's movement both between white women and women of colour and also between women of African and women of South Asian

descent which continue to make collaborative work on projects like March 8th extremely difficult (Personal Interview, 8 February 1994).

Although the Toronto women's movement now boasts an impressive range of organizations which address the issues of racialized women,²³ within some Toronto feminist institutions, struggles to confront racism and develop anti-racist policies have proven contentious both for majority and minority women. In 1987, the Toronto Women's Bookstore became the subject of charges of racism lodged by a former Black staff member. When Pauline Peters (1987) publicly aired her grievances and called for a boycott of the bookstore, women of colour on the board and staff vigorously defended their position:

We find it particularly offensive that another group of Black women can sit in judgement and discredit the work of other women of colour on the basis of whether they choose to work with white women. We hesitate to think that because we have chosen to work in racially mixed groups we are automatically branded as sellouts and Uncle Toms. We resent being belittled and being referred to in this way by Black women who do not share our vision of a multi-racial women's movement working together for political change ("Process and Politics" Broadside, December 1987/ January 1988: 6).

The incident acted as a catalyst for further debate within other feminist organizations that were also in the midst of developing anti-racist strategies. In particular, the University of Toronto Women's Centre Collective responded publicly with its own accounts of the often painful and fractious process of pursuing anti-racism educational, cultural and political work.²⁴

The controversy at the Toronto Women's Bookstore coincided with similar debates brewing at the Women's Press. Beginning in the fall of 1987, the Women's Press, a mainstay of Canadian feminist publishing since its publication of Women Unite! in 1972, undertook a process of "ongoing

discussion [which] revealed a general denial of the internalization of racism at the Press and a lack of acknowledgment of what that meant."²⁵ When disagreements occurred in 1987 over a particular manuscript, the process of confronting the question of racism within the Press proved exceedingly divisive. Although the Press did succeed in adopting anti-racist guidelines and new publishing policies, a very public split ensued which precipitated the formation of Second Story Press by eight former Women's Press members.²⁶ In tracing the development of the Press, Gabriel and Scott argue that the early commitment of the Press to the ideas of "the personal is political" and "sisterhood" as well as a "singular view of 'feminist process' and ... 'women' limited the scope of feminist political analysis and constricted the basis for political mobilization and action" (1993: 38-39).²⁷

Further struggles within the Toronto women's movement to deal with racism and formulate meaningful anti-racist practices captured the attention of the mainstream press in 1992. The resignation from Nellie's, a hostel for abused women, of journalist and Nellie's co-founder, June Callwood, once again raised the issue of systemic racism within the women's movement and landed the issue squarely in purview of mainstream media. When staff member Joan Johnson raised the issue of racism within the hostel, Callwood responded angrily, reminding Johnson that she had been a former client. Callwood's resignation from the Board of Directors in May, 1992 was greeted with much sympathy from high profile members of the media establishment such as Pierre Berton and Peter Gzowski. Callwood's many defenders portrayed her as a "battered woman"²⁸ and "the Mother Teresa of Ontario [who] has been victimized" by the "white woman's burden."²⁹ Within much of the feminist press, however, the "June Callwood phenomenon" was seen as having "all the markings of 'the politics of gratitude' in white

women/women of colour relations that stem from our shared historic legacy of colonialism imperialism and racism" (Joan Riggs, as quoted in Pierson 1993: 208).³⁰

In other settings, Jewish feminists allege that at a number of high-profile events held within Toronto's women's community throughout the 1990s, anti-semitism was evident and went unchallenged. The 1992 Anti-Racist Conference organized by Toronto women of colour for CRIAW, for example, included anti-semitism in its original title, which was later removed without explanation. Jewish feminists protested that only three workshops out of fifty-two at that conference were organized "by Jews, as Jews" (Gersh bain and Rubin 1994: 59) and that each only served to perpetuate negative stereotypes.³¹

Diversity questions have been particularly explosive within the shelter movement not just within Toronto, but throughout the entire province. As illustrated earlier, much of the controversy has centred around the role of lesbians within shelters. This cleavage has intersected with challenges by women of colour in the wake of the Nellie's incident for the shelter movement to address its own internal racism. Rita Kohli's account of some women's experiences of "a different kind of war on women of Colour, Jewish and immigrant women" in the anti-violence movement in Toronto echoes the debates that have rippled through the province:

Six months into working in shelters I came face to face with a strange kind of warfare, "Oh, she is demanding, she is manipulative," as poor women and women of Colour asked for what was their to ask ... collective meetings with co-workers saying, "Not another refugee woman to take in again ... Children of Colour ignored ... I questioned the difference in treatment of white women and women of Colour... (1994: 388).

In Hamilton, eruptions within the anti-violence movement that included charges of cultural insensitivity towards women of colour³² spawned the creation of the Culturally Diverse Women's Needs Committee designed to provide information about diversity to the city's five shelters and act as a liaison between the anti-violence movement and the multicultural community (Interview, Doreen Johnston 23 June 1993). Within the Nipissing Transition House in North Bay, Marsha Greenfield states that attention to issues such as racism and homophobia were first broached in that community in the early 1990s as diversity issues became more pressing when immigration to the area increased (Interview, 5 November 1992). Attention to these issues had led other shelters, such as Windsor's Hiatus House to hire a "cross-cultural sensitizer" to cope with the changing needs of shelter residents and staff. More recently, in the wake of the resignation of the Board of Directors of Ottawa's Interval House, questions of the ability of the shelter to meet the needs of minority women were raised as part of the controversy (Miller 1995: C3).

Generally, efforts across Ontario to forge linkages between women of colour and white-dominated feminist organizations outside of Toronto have been somewhat less contentious but have achieved varying levels of success. In northern communities like North Bay and Thunder Bay, feminists report uneven levels of communication and collaboration with First Nations women. In Thunder Bay, organizations like the Northwestern Ontario Women's Decade Council report that Aboriginal women have been involved with the Council on an ad hoc basis, joining to work together around specific issues. The presence of the Ontario Native Women's Association and the existence of a Native women's shelter indicate that Aboriginal women in the

Thunder Bay area tend organize separately (Personal Interview, Leni Untinen, 18 May 1993).

In contrast, the Thunder Bay Immigrant and Visible Minority Women's Organization, sees itself as "very plugged into the overall population" but staff acknowledge that it is often difficult to work as an overtly feminist organization because of the concern over alienating male partners and potentially loosing the participation of women of colour. In a local political climate dominated by right-wing politics, Thunder Bay Immigrant and Visible Minority Women's Organization representative Maria Harley-Powers notes that her group's priority has been to work on an anti-racist program that involves other minority cultural organizations rather than focusing specifically on feminist initiatives (Personal Interview, 20 May 1993). Nevertheless, she reports good working relationships with feminist organizations in the city. A relatively low level of interaction between majority and minority feminists, however, is reported by the Women's Action Committee of North Bay. Marie Marchand explains that while the Action Committee includes Aboriginal representation, other racialized women often decline to participate in the white-dominated organization and instead channel their political work within their own associations (Interview, 5 November 1992). In sum, the Ontario women's movement exhibits a marked variation its action around race questions outside of Toronto. The pattern that emerges is one in which Aboriginal women largely continue to be marginalized from feminist circles while other racialized women participate in the mainstream women's movement on an ad hoc basis.

In the case of racialized women in Toronto, their challenge to the women's movement came as a result of the increase in immigration by racial

minorities to Canada after 1967.³³ Today considered by the UN as the most multicultural city in the world, Toronto is home to 40% of Canada's racial minority population; over 23% of the city's adult population is comprised of racial minorities (Kelly 1996). Dramatic demographic shifts in the past twenty-five years both in Toronto and across the province have required that the provincial state involve itself in matters of race relations unlike the Newfoundland state which has avoided a commitment to race relations or anti-racist action.

Certainly, the "equity agenda" was a key plank in the NDP's 1990 platform. After its election, the NDP set up the Employment Equity Commission and eventually passed employment equity legislation (Bill 79) in 1993.³⁴ Following protests in Toronto in May 1992 over the acquittal in Los Angeles of the white police officers who had beaten Rodney King, the NDP appointed former NDP leader Stephen Lewis to strike a task force on the May "riot."³⁵ Lewis's recommendations led to the expansion of Ontario's Anti-Racism Secretariat which had evolved earlier out of the Ministry of Citizenship's Race Relations Directorate. The Secretariat continued to provide funding for minority groups involved in anti-racism and in 1993, for example, funded groups protesting racist stereotypes in the musicals "Showboat" and "Miss Saigon."³⁶ Following the Lewis report, however, the Secretariat prioritized anti-racist action within Toronto's Black community, although this position caused significant controversy (Walkom 1994). Nevertheless, in the early 1990s, the women's movement in Toronto dealt with racism within a context in which the provincial state, however imperfectly, had placed anti-racism on the political agenda and, in doing so, expanded opportunities for public debate on these issues.

Another crucial difference between the treatment of race within the women's movement in Toronto and elsewhere in Ontario relates to the size of the racial minority population.³⁷ Most racial minority groups in Toronto have numbers sufficient to sustain a strategy of separate organizing. Tolou Rouhani of the North Eastern Ontario Visible Minority Women's Network based in North Bay argues, however, that the conflict among racial minority women's groups and, more generally, between racial minority and majority groups, is exacerbated by government policies that encourage "clannishness" through funding that supports and encourages ethnic and racial groups to form individual organizations. Rouhani sees the situation in Toronto where a "lot of organizations are fighting with each other" as a consequence of a "divide and rule" policy on the part of the state's commitment to multiculturalism. She maintains that such divisions are particularly isolating for women and maintains that in smaller communities such as North Bay where the size of minority groups necessitates greater cross-cultural integration, cleavages around race within the women's movement are less divisive (Interview 4 November 1992). Windsor Women Working with Immigrant Women, for example, boasts successful cooperative work dating back to 1982 between white women and women of colour from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds (Interview, P. Raju, S. Talma, M. Shahrzad and R. Lumpkin 30 January, 1993).

Class divisions also intersect with the racial cleavages within Toronto feminism. Whereas in Newfoundland, the majority of racial minority immigrants occupy professional positions, Toronto's racial minority communities, particularly women and children, too frequently experience poverty. James Stafford (1992) predicts an escalation in racial tensions as urban immigrant populations fill low-paying, service sector jobs in a

restructured economy, producing a “visible underclass in Canada’s largest cities” (1992: 69). Stafford see this problem as exacerbated within a context of cutbacks to social and economic services to immigrant populations.

7.4 Case Study: Alberta

In Alberta, racialized women have played a visible and long-standing role in feminist organizing. Attention to issues concerning Aboriginal women is evident in Alberta feminist publications as early as 1973 when, for example, On Our Way was publishing articles on Native women’s rights. These discussions were framed as part of the “Indian Rights for Indian Women” campaign supported by pan-Canadian feminist organizations such as NAC, however, and excluded any analysis of the overall oppression of First Nations people or the particular conditions of Aboriginal women’s lives.³⁸ Throughout the mid-to-late 1980s, the existence of the Newsmagazine gave Alberta feminists province-wide the opportunity to learn about the activism of a variety of racialized women’s groups. A review of that publication shows that the periodical offered numerous accounts of the work of First Nations women.³⁹

In particular, Calgary SWAC assumed a key leadership role in integrating educational work around race issues into feminist organizing and, more recently, has committed itself to building an anti-racist feminist movement in Alberta. SWAC prioritized anti-racism in the mid-1980s, thanks to the strong leadership of women of colour within that organization. Christine Ceur of SWAC explains that “all our work [at SWAC] incorporates a multi-racial women’s movement as part of our analysis (Personal Interview, 16 June 1993). Representation from SWAC at the UN Decade for Women Conference in Nairobi in 1985 inspired SWAC’s highly successful series of

workshops on women of colour in 1986 that featured Esmeralda Thornhill, an anti-racist human rights educator, Vicki English, founder of the Native Women's Group in Calgary, Lynn Fraser of Calgary SWAC and Glenda Simms, then-president of the Congress of Black Women.⁴⁰

The momentum generated led to the founding of groups like the Women of Colour Collective and Exploring Racism and prompted Alberta feminists to begin a dialogue about issues related to women to colour within the province's provincial feminist magazine.⁴¹ In 1987, SWAC chose "Toward building a Multi-Racial Movement" as its theme for International Women's Day and featured as keynote speakers Toronto writer Makeda Silvera and dub poet Lillian Allen. In 1988, this theme was again prioritized as IWD in Calgary organized around "Continuing a Dialogue Towards a Multiracial Women's Movement."

Mirroring the case of lesbian rights, work on this agenda was undertaken slightly earlier in Calgary than in Edmonton, again suggesting that there can be "time lags" among locales in terms of attention to specific issues. The move of ASWAC into the area of race and racism followed on the heels of initiatives undertaken by Calgary SWAC. After attending IWD in Calgary in 1987, Edmonton feminists reported that "[s]ome of the women in Calgary have been learning a lot about racism and the movement and I have to go there to get a glimpse of the possibility of a multi-racial women's movement" (Wiley 1987: 11). ASWAC began its own campaign to educate its membership about such issues through its newsletter in 1986. Reprints in the ASWAC Newsletter of articles from Toronto-based publications Broadside and Fireweed such as "Women say NO to racism"⁴² and pivotal writings by women of colour such as "We Appear Silent to People who are Deaf to What

We Say"⁴³ allowed Albertan feminists to "get up to speed" on how some women were challenging feminism elsewhere in Canada.

In 1987, Calgary SWAC members held seminars on racism in Edmonton for the feminist community and later that year when ASWAC delegates gathered for their Annual Assembly, workshops on race were facilitated by Calgary SWAC members Lynn Fraser and Murtriba Din. Monica Walker's account of that meeting recalls that there was "tension in the room" when issues of race were broached. Out of a conference of 250 women "less than ten women of color ... most [of whom] were guest speakers" were present at the Assembly (1988: 10). Although difficult, ASWAC has continued since the late 1980s to incorporate racialized women into its agenda more effectively.⁴⁴ ASWAC's first women's lobby in 1993 also included strong participation from minority communities, among them Women of the Métis Nation, Edmonton Immigrant Services, Communication Society for Aboriginal Women, Congress of Black Women, Indo-Canadian Women's Association, and Changing Together (a centre for immigrant women).

SWAC's more overt commitment to an anti-racist agenda, however, has met with some opposition from their funders. In 1987, staff changes at the Calgary branch office of the federal Secretary of State Women's Program produced resistance to the anti-racist agenda adopted by SWAC. Murtriba Din recounts how prior to 1987 "we were consistently getting money from Secretary of State, then we wanted to do work around racism and we were told that 'racism was not a feminist issue'" (Personal Interview, 24 June 1993). When SWAC refused to acquiesce to the Women's Program request that SWAC turn to Multiculturalism for funding, SWAC's budget was cut severely, forcing them to operate without any paid staff. In response to their focus on race issues, some SWAC members formed the Women of Colour

Collective (WCC) which has since been very active in coordinating anti-racism work within the Calgary feminist community.

Despite these activities, Murtriba Din reports that involvement on the part of Aboriginal women both within SWAC and the WCC has been minimal. Din believes that feminists have not made sufficient efforts to work with First Nations women in their communities and, therefore, the contact between Aboriginal women and SWAC or WCC is sporadic: "The biggest problem I see is that we aren't working enough in those communities ... more of us should be working to get things like native women's shelters off the ground ... there has to be mutuality ... we need to ask what women of colour have to gain from our organization" (Personal Interview, 24 June 1993). Din acknowledges too that the middle-class, university educated profile of most SWAC and WCC members may inhibit their ability to attract the involvement of Aboriginal women: "Calgary is an oil city, a rich city, and the women's movement is reflective of that reality" (Personal Interview, 24 June 1993). Din admits also that some immigrant women's associations within Calgary are wary of involvement with SWAC because of its overt feminist positions. By 1993, another Calgary group, Of Colour, had emerged to address issues of racism, homophobia and sexism within the lesbian and gay population of Calgary. Consistent with the overall disengagement of progressive movements from the provincial state, Of Colour has concentrated on cultural activism through events such the Queer Canadian Film and Video Festival.

The experience of feminist organizing in Lethbridge is one of good communication between majority and minority women where cooperation with racial minority women's groups was stressed as part of ASWAC Lethbridge's founding agenda in 1986 (Graham 1986). Networking with the

Multicultural Women's Society and the Native Women's Group have remained important priorities for Lethbridge's Womanspace Resource Centre and members suggest, however, that in an environment so hostile to progressive forces, collaborative work has been somewhat difficult to coordinate as association with feminist groups is unpopular within the general population (Personal interview Evelyn Violini and Jacqueline Preyde, 25 June 1993).

The drive to include racialized women in the Alberta women's community spilled over into the Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues, beginning specifically in 1989 under Chair Elva Mertick. Mertick acknowledges that while representation from Aboriginal and other racialized women on the beleaguered Council was inadequate, by 1989, the Council was "beginning to confront our own prejudices" (Personal Interview, 17 June 1993). Laurie Blakeman recalls that in this second phase of the council "we were able to work with the recognition that racism affected everything we did" (Personal Interview, 23 June 1993). Blakeman notes also that in addition to having key women of colour involved as Council members, the Council was able to forge very strong links with some Aboriginal communities, in particular with Women of the Métis Nation.

As in Newfoundland and Ontario, the place of Aboriginal women within the Alberta women's movement is much more tenuous than for other communities of racialized women. The appearance of articles on Native women's rights in Alberta feminist publications as early as 1973, however, suggests a longstanding acknowledgment on the part of the "mainstream" women's movement of Aboriginal women's oppression. Alberta's Aboriginal women were the first to organize in Canada, having created the Alberta Native Women's Association in 1967 and this early

mobilization may in part be responsible for the notice taken by Alberta's majority feminists of Native issues. Certain First Nations groups, particularly the Women of the Métis Nation, have been open to collaboration with the non-Aboriginal women's movement. Despite their solid commitment to an anti-racist agenda, the inability of SWAC to forge strong linkages with Aboriginal women suggests, however, that this continues to be an area where much work is required. Murtriba Din argues that the lack of communication between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women stems not just from racism, but also from class divisions, particularly evident in affluent Calgary (Personal Interview 24 June 1993).

Nevertheless, attention to the agenda of racialized women and an overall commitment to anti-racism has been a less contentious project in Alberta than the issue of sexual orientation due to the pervasive influence of the right-wing's anti-gay posture. Alberta society is much more racially diverse than Newfoundland and has a First Nations population of 68,445, or 1.5% of the total population.⁴⁵ One key difference between Alberta and Newfoundland with respect to the position of racial minorities within the province has been the tradition of state-sponsored multiculturalism. Garth Stevenson posits that the political power of ethnic communities in Alberta has been enhanced by the Progressive Conservatives who "have been shrewd enough since 1971 to recruit candidates for the legislature and cabinet who represent the ethnic diversity of the province and are largely drawn from within the ethnic elites" (1986: 232). Stevenson claims that these ethnic elites, most of whom are closely associated with the PC party, have supported the government's approach to multiculturalism which "by reinforcing and artificially prolonging ethnic identities, and by drawing attention to inter-ethnic political and historical controversies ... inhibits the development of

cross-ethnic solidarity among the working class'(232). Apart from inhibiting class consciousness, however, the tactic has ensured that successive Progressive Conservative governments have had a "multicultural" face. With the growth of the Reform Party and its rejection of multiculturalism and increased immigration, however, the position of racial minorities within the province may become more tenuous.

7.5 Case Study: Northwest Territories

Examination of the NWT affords a unique opportunity to study the impact of race on movement organizing in a context in which First Nations women constitute a numerical majority. The history of women's organizations in the Arctic suggests that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women, at least until quite recently, have replicated the patterns of much of southern Canada where parallel organizations with little overlap in agenda or membership have been the norm. In her overview of western Arctic women's organizations, Marina Devine (1991) explains that many NWT women's groups were founded as part of the general colonization of the North by southern Canadians. Yellowknife's first women's group was the Daughters of the Midnight Sun which emerged in the post-war period. Between 1945 and 1965, organizations such as the Girl Guides, a Handicraft Guild, the Home and School Association, the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Royal Canadian Legion, the Anglican Church Women, the Catholic Women's League and the Elks Lodge women's auxiliary appeared in Yellowknife.⁴⁶ These groups were "southern imports" organized by the growing non-Aboriginal population that flocked to the NWT as part of the resource boom. Devine argues that the influx of middle-class women recreated organizations

familiar to them, providing early social services and opportunities to learn and practice leadership skills (1991: 7).

By the mid-1960s, Aboriginal women joined local Women's Institutes established throughout the NWT by non-Native women and, for the first time, Aboriginal women in the north were linked to women's organizations in southern Canada. In 1966, non-First Nations women founded a northern branch of the Young Women's Christian Association, eventually operating a hostel, a daycare centre and a battered women's shelter. Devine compares the development of women's organizations in the NWT between 1945-1970 to the wave of "maternal feminism" that swept across Canada in the early decades of twentieth century.⁴⁷

This summary of early organizing in the Territories helps account for the lack of integration between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women. Women's organizations which first attracted Aboriginal members were grounded in practices and value systems foreign to First Nations women and were designed to assimilate them into non-Native culture. With the mobilization of Aboriginal populations in the 1970s, most First Nations women chose to focus their attention on issues of concern to their own communities. By the late sixties, First Nations women in parts of southern Canada were already organizing separately at the provincial level⁴⁸ and in 1974, organized nationally to form the Native Women's Association of Canada. In the NWT, the impetus for an Aboriginal women's association came in 1975 when well-known Inuvik resident Bertha Allen boycotted the International Women's Year conference and called on First Nations women to organize independently. Allen argued that Native women "have been dependent too much on southern women to keep us organized" (Devine 1991: 10). The NWT Native Women's Association was later founded by

Allen in 1977. As I have outlined, by the early 1980s, Inuit women also established their own organizational vehicle. While this move was argued for because of the Inuit women's distinct agenda, it also allowed Inuit women to distance themselves from the Native Women's Association that was seen increasingly by the Inuit as "too radical."

By the mid-1980s, a group of women in Yellowknife expressed interest in having an independent women's centre. The presence of a strong pro-life movement in Yellowknife and the emergence of a branch of R.E.A.L. Women inspired some non-Native women to organize actively for a local women's group. Arlene Hache remembers that it "took eighteen months of steady negotiating" before Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women, both pro-life and pro-choice, agreed on a consensual model of decision-making that could facilitate the functioning of the Yellowknife Women's Centre (Personal Interview 29 February 1996). Hache reports that the success of the Yellowknife Centre has been a result of much mutual education between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women. She explains that the goals and value systems of the two communities are so different, that constant attention to negotiating these cultural differences is required. The Centre does not officially define itself as feminist, because of the negative connotations of "southern feminism" shared by many Aboriginal women. Instead, the Centre works to incorporate the needs of Aboriginal women, a commitment that involves the integration of unique practices that distinguish the Centre from many of its southern counterparts.⁴⁹

Hache believes that cooperative work between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women is possible, but requires much sensitivity to the historic exclusion of Aboriginal women from mainstream, white-dominated NWI society. She argues:

Because we have a consensus system in the Assembly, and because its a Native majority government, everyone thinks we get along up here. There's lots of racism, but that racism is just more hidden. Aboriginal women have never been asked to participate in meaningful ways (Personal Interview 29 February 1996).

Hache notes also that the "cultural divide" between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women continues in large part due to the vast geography of the region. Language barriers and distances between communities make regular communication between women's groups throughout the NWT extremely difficult. Even with groups contacted on a regular basis, Hache admits, "we have no idea who we're talking to because we've never met them."

Efforts to build coalitions between First Nations and non-First Nations women have been advanced periodically in the NWT. In Chapter Five, I outlined the short history of the Northern Women's Coalition, founded in 1983 to bridge the racial divide. In the years following the Coalition attempt, Chief Cece Hodgson McCauley has used her column in the weekly newspaper News/North to promote stronger links among all NWT women. In one report about a banquet sponsored by the NWT Business and Professional Women's Association, McCauley chastised the organization for the lack of participation by Aboriginal women and bemoaned the communication gap between Native women and their non-Native sisters (1986: B8). In a report on International Women's Day celebrations held in 1987, McCauley lamented the lack of attendance at Native-organized events by non-Native women and asked "Why is it that we still don't really mix?" (1987: A13).

The GNWT has made efforts to bring Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women into collaborative relationships through tactics such as appointing Aboriginal women as the first two chairs of the Advisory Council. Devine

reports that work on specific issues such as spousal assault and pornography was taken on as issues that were "politically palatable" to both communities (1991: 18); however, significant cultural differences in accounting for the roots of violence and anti-violence strategies have had to be brokered.⁵⁰ Similarly, on the issue of the government's affirmative action policy (proposed as part of the Five-Year Plan of Action for Women) and women's inclusion as a specified group, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women voiced significant disagreements.⁵¹

Nevertheless, as Aboriginal nations continue to mobilize and gain political strength, particularly with the imminency of division, there appears to be greater cooperation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women as both communities recognize the gains that can be achieved through alliance during constitutional development. Arlene Hache argues, however, that the cooperation between the Native Women's Association and the Status of Women Council stems in part from a similar class base of women in both organizations while poor women, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, have yet to be organized in any effective manner (Personal Interview 29 February 1996).

The demographic profile in the Northwest Territories shows a total immigrant population of less than 3000 or 4.8% of population, while the Aboriginal population constitutes 51% of the population.⁵² This plainly reveals why issues related to race other than between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals and among First Nations communities have received little focus in NWT as the non-Aboriginal, racialized community has little organizational strength. As I have argued, however, the impending division of the NWT offers an opportunity for a broadening of attention to issues related to the ethnocultural diversity of the NWT. Some evidence suggests

that this is occurring. The inclusion of a submission by Vicenta Bugg of the NWT Immigrant Women's Association in a recent round of women's constitutional strategy conferences suggests the opening of a new avenue of communication among different cultural communities.⁵³

Marina Devine (1991) insists that non-Aboriginal women must realize that in future the political agenda of the NWT will be set by Aboriginal women and, therefore, collaboration and communication between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women can be achieved only when non-Aboriginal women make significant space for First Nations women and their priorities. The small population and homogeneity of the future Nunavut suggests that matters of cultural diversity probably will not figure prominently on the political agenda of the new territory. In the west, however, as the political balance of power between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations continues to shift towards Aboriginals, non-Native women will have to accept Aboriginal women's leadership within the women's movement.

As I argued in Chapter Three, the NWT state remains subject to much suspicion on the part of many First Nations people. Because the NWT bureaucracy remains dominated by a non-Native public service and, in spite of strong Aboriginal representation in the Legislative Assembly, the state's legitimacy problems with many Aboriginal residents persists. Until the state is not longer perceived as a white-dominated instrument of colonialism, it will be difficult, therefore, for women to use bureaucratic mechanisms such as the Status of Women Council to bridge the gap between and among First Nations and non-First Nations women, however well Aboriginal women from various nations have been represented on the Council. The organizational grid of women's organizations in the NWT also mitigates against effective collaboration between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal

women. Had the Northern Women's Coalition survived, the relationships between communities might well have had an opportunity to solidify; however, in the absence of regular communication links and the persistence of ethnocultural conflicts among First Nations, parallel organizing on the part of First Nations and non-First Nations women still characterizes the women's movement in NWT.

7.6 Conclusion: Women's Movements and Representational Projects of Diversity

Susan Phillips argues that "[a] movement requires both diversity and unity. It thus balances the dialectic of inclusivity (that is, the need to include as many organizations and individuals as possible who are willing to share in the collective identity) versus exclusivity (the creation of bounded distinction and the establishment of 'us' as apart from 'them'" (1990: 338). In the case of subnational women's movements in Canada, the extent to which issues of inclusivity permeate their agendas is evidenced in my analysis of diversity projects in this and the previous chapter. The four cases confirm that lesbians and racialized women in each context share a keen sense of marginalization from the mainstream women's movement and are active in struggles to make space for their issues within women's movements. I have documented how women's movements in each setting grapple, often with great difficulty, with how best to mobilize around a politics of difference which frequently must incorporate multiple and fractured identities. In each case, demands for inclusiveness challenge women's movements to meet the representational needs of a diverse range of communities while simultaneously developing strategies for change effective within particular locales and jurisdictions.

The narratives concerning each movement demonstrate that these diversity projects are constructed differently not only temporally, but also spatially; marked differences exist with respect to how issues are prioritized and strategized across and within contexts. Specifically, I have shown that the approach of women's movements to questions of diversity is influenced by several variables including: the overall orientation of the movement to the state; the political culture within which women's movements organize; the nature of the political opportunity structure; the nature of class divisions among women; the level of engagement of women's movements with their state; and physical factors such as demography, population density and geographic isolation.

My examination of diversity issues within the Newfoundland women's movement, for example, illustrates that action on both sexual orientation and race lags behind that of the other two provincial contexts. The debates currently being waged over the role and visibility of lesbians within the movement and the still somewhat rudimentary discussions of the place of Aboriginal and other racialized women contrasts sharply with parallel developments at play within the women's movement in Ontario, most particularly in Toronto. In Newfoundland, factors such as the small size of the non-Aboriginal racial minority community and its class location mitigates against the prioritization of anti-racism within Newfoundland feminism. The geographic isolation of Aboriginal women in Labrador and the challenge their presence poses to the economic interests of white communities in the region complicates their relationship to white feminists. An overall resistance to any imposition of an outside agenda has meant that the Newfoundland women's movement has been reticent to tackle issues such as anti-racism simply on the basis of their importance in other locations.

My study of Newfoundland reinforces how the political culture of particular locales can be influenced profoundly by institutions such as the Church; yet, the Newfoundland case illustrates also that women's movements can carve out space for pursuing a politics of difference during periods of political or social crisis. Furthermore, the Newfoundland case suggests that women may be less willing to prioritize diversity projects when they are fully engaged with the state and perceive themselves as having more to lose if their agendas risk alienating state actors.

In Ontario, the size of lesbian and racialized populations is pivotal to the patterns of activism identified around diversity projects. In many Ontario locales, both lesbians and racialized women have been able to channel their activism through movements other than the women's movement; the presence of "critical masses" of minority communities has levelled significant pressure on the provincial state to respond to diversity issues. In the case of lesbians, the shift towards pursuing a state-oriented approach to change in collaboration with gay men has eased tensions somewhat over homophobia within feminist organizations, particularly in Toronto. As equality measures continue to be secured at both the federal and provincial levels, we can predict that this lobbying strategy will continue. Political space clearly exists within Ontario politics, at least in Toronto, for attention to gay and lesbian rights. The recent appointment by the neo-Conservative Harris government of openly gay, former Tory Cabinet Minister Keith Norton to the Chair of Ontario Human Rights Commission signals that political opportunities for attention to discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation are available through the Ontario state. Although we cannot assume that progress in Toronto on lesbian rights ameliorates tensions over sexual orientation in women's organizations in other Ontario locales, clearly diversity projects

elsewhere will be influenced to some degree by the gradual liberalization of the provincial political culture on this set of issues.

On the "newer" issue of race, the desire of racialized women to look to the state for equality protection may be constrained significantly by the past experiences of racialized populations with the state. Within the Ontario women's movement, cleavages around race remain salient as feminists work to end systemic racism within their organizations. In Toronto, the pattern of separate organizing, however, may impede cross-cultural coalitions, although the influence of NAC and the leadership it has shown on anti-racism since the election of past-president Sunera Thobani suggests a significant commitment to resolving racial tensions within the Toronto feminism. Elsewhere in the province, the women's movement has shown an uneven attention to strategizing around issues prioritized by racialized women. Nevertheless, the evidence does suggest that some locales are registering success at integrating the agendas of racialized women and a commitment to anti-racist action into their feminist practice.

In Alberta, the decision of the women's movement to disengage from state has made space within the movement to concentrate on integrating diversity agendas into the internal politics of movement organizations. Because feminists have looked to cultural activism as a more fruitful form of mobilization given the neo-conservatism of their provincial state, attention to issues of difference have been broached within an environment where little concern is given to how the state reacts to feminist organizing. My study of the place of sexual orientation as an issue in Alberta's feminist politics sketches the complete absence of political opportunities for gays and lesbians to lobby for equality protection through provincial channels. Despite stiff opposition from fundamentalist forces, however, feminist groups have not

shied away from issues related to lesbian rights and homophobia; instead, attention to this element of their diversity projects has been carried out within local and provincial organizations with varying degrees of success. The place of racialized women has been less controversial within the Alberta women's movement; what is clear from Alberta case study, however, is that organizations of racialized women who do not identify as feminist and may still be engaged with the state are reluctant to commit themselves to coalition work with feminists.

In 1982, Caroline Lachapelle (1982) accounted for the lack of participation by Aboriginal women in the women's movement as stemming from four factors: class differences, lack of awareness or knowledge about the women's movement; white racism and fear of dividing the Native community (261). Each of the contexts under examination, attest to the ongoing marginalization of Aboriginal women from feminism as a consequence of different priorities and a legacy of racism and colonialism. The Northwest Territories, however, is the setting in which the most significant progress has been made on reconciling feminism and Aboriginal women's organizing. While much work remains to be done to integrate the agendas of majority and minority women in this context, the move towards political division of the territories provides a profound moment of transition that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women are using to forge cross-cultural linkages.

Despite that fact that Aboriginal women enjoy access to the electoral project because of the political opportunities available in the absence of party politics, the NWT state has not yet emerged as a key site for the representation of Aboriginal women's issues because of its lack of legitimacy among First Nations populations. Instead, First Nations organizations have

absorbed much of Aboriginal women's attention, leaving little room or interest in pursuing diversity agendas through coalition work with non-Aboriginal women. Yet, the opportunity for both majority and minority women to influence the state structures that will govern Nunavut and the western territory may yield important new political spaces within which diversity agendas can be prioritized.

Until that time, mobilization between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women around other diversity issues will be difficult. At present, the tenuous bridges between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women are focused primarily on matters of constitutional development and, to a lesser extent, issues of family violence. Given the flux of the current political situation, and the concerted efforts underway to identify points of agreement among First Nations women and their non-Aboriginal sisters, it is unlikely that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women will broach identity cleavages such as the role of other racialized women or lesbians, regardless of the attention afforded these issues in other jurisdictions.

Clearly, some racialized women in Canada have begun to contemplate the spatial dimension of their location, recognizing that context affects their experience of marginalization. Minelle K. Mahtani, for example, argues that

Perhaps one way of reconfiguring the classification of woman of colour is to change the question from "Who am I?" to "Where am I?" I have mentioned that my identity is one that is continually relational, and geographically and temporally specific. This would effectively shift the focus from a politics of identity to a politics of location, making context a key step towards identity shaping. For me, this context plays an integral role in my chameleon-ness (1994: 17 emphasis added).

For many feminists, however, the interconnection between a 'politics of difference' and the 'politics of place' remains unexamined. Until feminists

recognize how representational projects of diversity are rooted in space and place, successful pan-Canadian organizing around diversity challenges will remain difficult.

7.7 Notes to Chapter Seven

¹ My use of the term "racialized" instead of the more widely used "women of colour" is grounded in an effort to include the experiences of First Nations women, many of whom reject labeling as "women of colour." As well, the term captures the social construction of race and draws attention to the way in which such identities are differently constructed across time and space. Similarly, Jewish women have articulated the limitations of the "white/of colour" dichotomy that has contributed to antisemitism within feminist and anti-racist organizing (Gershbain and Rubin 1994; Haar and Nosov 1994). Vijay Agnew notes further limitations of the labels "racial minority," "visible minority" and "Third World women" (1996: 106-108).

² The notion of race blindness is drawn from Himani Bannerji (1991: 104). On this topic see also Roxana Ng (1993) and Daiva Stasiulis and Nira Yuval-Davis (1995).

³ Valverde's position was critiqued, however, by feminist Glenda Simms (1992) who states that she does not share Valverde's privilege in being able to choose her racial identity according to where she happens to be. Simms argues that she is a racialized woman everywhere in the world, regardless of who comprises the dominant culture.

⁴ For example, the Nain Women's Group received a grant of \$2500 in 1991 for a project on alcohol abuse and its effects on teenagers and children (WPO Newsletter Volume 3: 1 March 1991: 1).

⁵ For a report on this conference, see Laura Jackson (1990).

⁶ For details of the Innu's long protest against low-level NATO flights, consult Marie Wadden (1991). See also Armitage and Kennedy (1992). For coverage of this issue in the Newfoundland feminist press, see Fouillard (1989) and Rose-Marie Kennedy (1989b, 1990).

⁷ The organization formed as a chapter of the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada founded in Toronto.

⁸ Joyce Hancock reports a similar situation vis-à-vis women of colour in Stephenville. Hancock explains that the small minority population on the west coast of the province is composed primarily of professionals. (Personal Interview, 21 August 1992).

⁹ Along with NAC, the Congress of Black Women, DisAbled Women's Network, the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women and the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres withdrew their support in the summer of 1992. See Levan (1996) for an analysis of the Panel's difficulties.

¹⁰ The previous year, the CRIAW Annual Meeting (which is always organized by a local committee) had been hosted by Toronto women and addressed the theme of anti-racism.

¹¹ One exception is 155 Tamil refugees who arrived on the southern shore of the province in July 1986. For an account of these events see Malarek (1987: 136-149). Newfoundland also accepted 350 Vietnamese during the Boat People crisis of 1979-80.

¹² Statistics Canada. Profile of census divisions and subdivisions in Newfoundland, Part B. Ottawa: Industry, Science and Technology Canada, 1994. 1991 Census of Canada.

13 Gilad notes how in the mid-fifties, over a thousand immigrants from Germany, Austria and Latvia were brought to the province by the Smallwood government in an effort to establish an industrial base. Gilad notes that this "influx was thus the result of economic development policy and had nothing to do with any desire to broaden the cultural range of Newfoundland society" (1990: 166).

14 In the case of the refugee population in the 1980s, the percentage is even higher, reaching 80 percent (Gilad 1990: 6).

15 My own CFA status was remarked on repeatedly during the interview process. The women interviewed spoke openly about the attitude towards CFAers and one native Newfoundlander admitted that her own acceptance within the movement had been altered somewhat as a consequence of spending an extended period in Toronto and then returning to the province.

16 In 1991, the Newfoundland government decided to develop a longterm strategy to address violence against women, children, the elderly and dependent adults. In the research report submitted to the government on this initiative in 1994, it was acknowledged that "in Labrador, the language diversity and geographic isolation are realities that make service development and delivery very difficult" (Report of the Provincial Planning Meeting on Building a Provincial Strategy to Address Violence 1994: 3).

17 The military presence in Innu territory dates to 1941 when the U.S. and Canada built an airbase at Goose Bay to service wartime flights between Europe and North America. Prior to the flooding of their hunting territory by the Churchill Falls hydro-electric project in 1974, the Innu were nomadic. In the 1960s, the Innu were informed that if their children were not sent to school, they would no longer receive family allowance benefits. This meant that hunting seasons were interrupted and the traditional move into the interior for most of the year was disrupted. Henriksen describes the dislocation of the Innu as responsible for creating a cycle of welfare colonialism (1993: 17). In 1967, a group of Innu were moved from tents into houses in the new village of Davis Inlet.

18 In Nain, for example, one of the most northerly Labrador communities, a Women's Group has existed since 1978.

19 See Henriksen (1993) for a report on the high rates of suicide and substance abuse among Davis Inlet residents.

20 Egan, Gardner and Persad's account of the attention to issues of race at the 1978 IWD notes that "racism was not an issue that concerned the overwhelmingly white Coalition, and most women would have felt that it w[a]s adequately dealt with by the inclusion of one demand among seven (1988: 36).

21 See "Racism and International Women's Day in Toronto" Cayenne: a socialist feminist bulletin (June/July 1986): 25-27 as well as Egan, Gardner and Persad's analysis (1988). For a post-mortem of the events, consult also Ingrid MacDonald (1986).

22 The distinction here between Black, Native and other women of colour reflects their own self-definition within Our Lives. For a discussion of the issue of naming, see Faith Nolan (1986).

23 Consult Agnew (1996) for a list of such organizations active in the Toronto area.

²⁴ The University of Toronto Women's Centre Collective was highly critical of the Toronto Women's Bookstore's handling of the Peters incident and the decision of the Bookstore to use its access to the mainstream feminist press to defend its position. See "University of Toronto Women's Centre Letter to T.W.B." *Rebel Girls' Rag* (November 1988): 6-7, 10.

²⁵ Statement from The Popular Front-of-the-Bus Caucus reprinted in *Broadside* Vol. 9, no. 8 (June 1988): 3. See also "Response" from other members of the Press in the same issue.

²⁶ See "Second Story Press" *Broadside* Vol. 10, no. 3 (December 1988/January 1989): 4 for a sense of the bitter nature of this split.

²⁷ An excellent analysis of the struggles to overcome racism within Canadian feminist publishing is found in Daiva Stasiulis (1993).

²⁸ Ruth Roach Pierson (1993) notes that this caption appeared under a photo of Callwood on the cover of *Toronto Life* in March, 1993.

²⁹ The reference to "Mother Teresa" is from Sadiq (1992). Adele Freedman (1993) describes the "white woman's burden." For additional sympathetic coverage, see Elaine Dewar (1993). Not all mainstream coverage championed Callwood's position. Columnist Michele Landsberg noted that by the 1990s, Nellie's clients were more than half immigrant, refugee and minority women. Landsberg's analysis of the incident was to challenge white feminists to "dismant[le] hidden patterns of discrimination" (1992: K1, K7).

³⁰ Callwood had been involved previously in an 1989 controversy with Marlene Nourbese Philip over charges of racism within PEN Canada (Pierson 1993). See M. Nourbese Philip (1992) for her account of this conflict. In addition to the examples cited, Sue Findlay (1993) notes that similar struggles occurred within the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre.

³¹ See Gershbain and Rubin (1994) for accounts of the events in question.

³² See, for example, Peters (1993d).

³³ In 1967, the Canadian immigration system adopted a point system which considered the occupational skills and educational qualifications of applicants as well as the demands of economy rather than race, ethnicity or countries of origin. This change resulted in higher rates of emigration from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.

³⁴ These initiatives were not uncontroversial. Thomas Walkom recounts the debates over the inadequacies identified by activists such as Judy Rebick in the employment equity legislation and the divisive conflicts which occurred within the Employment Equity Commission (1994: 214-219).

³⁵ Helvaciglu (1992) discusses the protests in Toronto at this time and challenges the media's depiction of them as "race riots."

³⁶ See M. Nourbese Philip (1993) for her analysis of the racism identified within these theatrical productions.

³⁷ It is important to remember that 93% of racial minorities in Canada reside in metropolitan areas compared to 59% of the racial majority (Kelly 1996).

³⁸ Attention to Native women at this time was also a result of federal Native Women's Program. Sue Findlay (1988) traces the role of the Native Women's Program which began in 1972 and notes how the structure of the Women's Program within Secretary of State and the Native Women's Program reinforced differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women and made collaborative work difficult.

³⁹ See for example the issues of August /September 1985 and October 1985.

⁴⁰ For an account of these workshops, see "Racism in the Women's Movement" the News magazine (January /February 1987): 6-9.

⁴¹ See, for example, Ravida Din (1987) and Joyce A. Green (1987).

⁴² "Women say No to racism" ASWAC Newsletter (April 1986): 7.

⁴³ Makeda Silvera, Dionne Brand, Himani Bannerji and Prabha Khosla (1983). This issue of Fireweed was the first time in Canadian feminist literature that women of colour collectively came together in a single anthology. A continuation of the discussion contained in "We Appear Silent to People Who Are Deaf to What We Say" is "Organising Exclusion: Race, Class, Community and the White Women's Movement" Fireweed Issue 17 (Summer /Fall 1983): 57-65.

⁴⁴ For example, at the 1989 ASWAC Assembly, workshops on Native women's issues and immigrant women's issues formed part of the agenda. In 1992, the ASWAC conference "Making Connections included sessions such as "The Feminist Movement--Does It Include Women of Colour?" and "Multicultural Health Issues" (Undated conference pamphlet, ASWAC file CWMA).

⁴⁵ Statistics Canada. Profile of census divisions and subdivisions in Alberta, Part B. Ottawa: Industry, Science and Technology Canada, 1994. 1991 Census of Canada.

⁴⁶ This overview of NWT women's organizations is drawn from Devine's (1991) groundbreaking paper on NWT women which represents an important first step in documenting the organizational history of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women in the North.

⁴⁷ For an introduction to the emergence of maternal feminism within Canada, consult Kealey (1979).

⁴⁸ As I noted earlier, the Alberta Native Women's Association was founded in 1967. It was followed by the British Columbia Native Women's Society in 1969.

⁴⁹ For example, the Yellowknife Women's Centre organizes an annual caribou hunt for urban Aboriginal families who otherwise do not have access to a regular hunt. The Centre also has a medicine woman on site and allows men to access their services if they are part of an Aboriginal family unit.

⁵⁰ In 1992, the Yellowknife Women's Centre, led by Hache, publicly called for the resignation of two MLAs who had written reference letters for a man charged with sexual assault. The Centre also demanded the resignation of the Crown prosecutor involved in the case who agreed

to drop the charge despite having signed a statement of fact with the defense lawyer which stated that the woman involved had not agreed to sex with the accused. An ex-president of the Native Women's Association also wrote in support of the man as did the current president of the NWT NWA, Bobbie Bulmer. Bulmer defended her position: "I believe in families. I didn't condone what the guy did ... but I recognize it was hard for both sides Young people make mistakes and they learn from it and that's the way I feel" (Saywell 1992: A3). The incident underscores the gulf that sometimes exists between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women in their approach to issues of violence.

51 In the end, the policy assigns priority to NWT Aboriginal people, but also targets "resident women" and "indigenous non-Native persons who have spent more than half their lives in the NWT" (Devine 1991: 19).

52 Statistics Canada. Profile of Census Divisions and Subdivisions in the Northwest Territories, Part B. Ottawa: Industry, Science and Technology Canada, 1994. 1991 Census of Canada.

53 See Western NWT Women's Caucus Conference on the Constitution. Report on "Actioning A Vision for Women's Equality" 4-6 December 1994.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Conclusion

The final result of a process of comparison is never likely to be the clarification of absolutes, but rather perception of the greater complexity of the web of problems that surround each individual and a recognition by the individual of where she stands in the web (Bassnett 1986: 182).

8.1 Thesis Summary and Major Findings

Immediately following her election to the presidency of NAC, Toronto-based activist Joan Grant-Cummings spoke of the need to reach out to women in places like Newfoundland and fight for better services for women from the North and from rural communities "who have been long-standing members of NAC but who never felt connected to the centre" (Ibbitson 1996: A8). In making these statements, the new President countered recent media efforts to paint NAC as a Toronto-centric "single-issue" feminist organization interested only in anti-racist action (Stern 1996). Her remarks indicate also that Grant-Cummings's analysis of the many cleavages that divide women across Canada incorporates an understanding that place matters in feminist activism. Her perspective, therefore, meshes well with the central objective of this dissertation which was to uncover the differences among women's movements in diverse Canadian settings and to account for the variations among women's movements active at the subnational level.

The thesis identified a number of theoretical, methodological and empirical objectives. Theoretically, the dissertation proceeded by yoking together insights from feminist political science and feminist geography as a

way of "spatializing" women's activism and organizing a comparison of substate units capable of illuminating how the issues, organizational structures and strategic action of women's movements are influenced by the places in which they are situated. In questioning the capacity of existing analyses of women's movements to capture, for example, differences among women in terms of access to the political system and variations in engagement with the state, my framework emphasized a focus on the movement actors and their roles as political agents of change. John Agnew's (1987) triad of locale, location, and sense of place inspired a model to structure a "spatially-sensitive" analysis that considered aspects of both the physical location of movements and the social and political "locations" of movement actors.

Methodologically, I have demonstrated how pairing analyses of movements and their relationships to their states, with examinations of their internal dynamics, can generate more nuanced understandings of movements and better account for the actions in which they engage. My use of the organizing concept of "representational projects" emphasizes the breadth of movement activity. It also reinforces the critical point that movements simultaneously seek representation through a range of venues while struggling to provide meaningful representation within movement organizations for divergent constituencies. My use of extensive interviewing as a prime research tool ensured that the thesis remained "women-centred" and rooted in women's lives. This inductive approach ensured also that theory generated would be grounded in the experiences of women's movements. Empirically, the dissertation offers new "rich seams" (Schuller 1988) of research on women's movements in a variety of locales and provides

a starting point for further comparative work on movements in provincial and territorial politics.

This dissertation supports my original hypothesis that the heterogeneous women's movements in Canada active at the subnational level are different in character because they chose representational projects that reflect the specificities of the contexts in which they act. In other words, the image of a uniform "English-Canadian women's movement" is inaccurate and misleading. Several generalizations can be drawn from the comparisons mounted. Although my thesis concentrated on isolating differences among women's movements, the evidence reveals fundamental similarities in movement activity across space. In each setting, women's movements face subnational states which exercise substantial influence over their collective goals and the lives of their individual members. In turn, each movement charts its negotiation with that state based on its prior experience with the state, its estimation of the available political opportunities and the particularities of the place in which the movement must organize.

As I document in the thesis, women's representational projects vis-à-vis the state can be pursued in multiple ways: through the electoral project; via the bureaucracy; and through lobbying. Common to movements in each setting, however, are debates around conflicts over difference and diversity. Struggles within women's movements to accommodate and represent identities are an integral element of contemporary movement organizing. But those identities are experienced and manifested differently in different places and contexts. For example, "race" is experienced and manifested differently where racialized people are a large minority (Ontario), a small minority (Newfoundland and Alberta), or a majority (NWT). Sexual orientation is also experienced and manifested differently depending on

where protective legislation exists (Ontario) or doesn't (Alberta, Newfoundland and the Northwest Territories).

In tracking two diversity agendas, however, I have demonstrated that prioritization of, and strategic action around, issues of difference are mediated by the specificities of the movement's context. For example, where movements face a hostile state, as in the case of Alberta, feminist activity around diversity questions may be limited to resolving internal debates if feminists decide that lobbying the state for change on diversity matters is futile or dangerous. Conversely, the Newfoundland example suggests that once a state-oriented movement decides to pursue diversity questions, its focus may be on achieving policy changes through the state, leaving internal cleavages unresolved. A further general finding is that the organizational grid of movements at the provincial and territorial levels varied across contexts. While the Alberta movement has been able to sustain a provincial umbrella organization, efforts to build such provincial organizations in Ontario and the NWT have failed. In Newfoundland, most feminist activity is channelled through local status-of-women councils with the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women frequently assuming a central, coordinating role. The case studies also reveal significant differences with respect to timetables for action on particular issues and the timing of internal debates. For example, the debates challenging Newfoundland feminism in the early 1990s around issues of sexual orientation and the place of lesbians in the women's movement echo struggles within the Toronto women's movement almost two decades earlier. Subtle intra-state differences in campaigns around anti-racism occurred between the women's movements in Edmonton and Calgary.

In the thesis I have demonstrated also that women's movements can exercise considerable agency in every locale; that is, movements can choose their own courses of action and frequently influence their political environment, shaping their opportunities. In fact, the women's movements under scrutiny in this dissertation generally reveal themselves to be "quick studies;" that is, their strategies show a keen understanding of both their political environment and particular locale. As well, the movements exercise considerable prudence both in determining how projects should be approached and when alternative courses of action should be explored. Obviously, the agency each movement enjoys is neither unlimited nor of the same extent everywhere. The evidence also reinforces that periods of transition--either social, political, or economic--can be crucial for movement politics. Changes in political opportunity structures or shifts in the general political culture can provide women's movements with important new spaces within which to advance their equality demands.

The experiences of women's movements in Newfoundland, and, to a lesser extent, the Northwest Territories, illustrate that state-sponsored status of women councils and internal bureaucratic mechanisms have served women well in some jurisdictions, depending on the ability of women's movements to influence the initial structure and agenda of the mechanisms and/or in the absence of provincial umbrella organizations. With respect to women's representational projects vis-à-vis the state, however, it would appear that a moment of transition is upon us and feminists would be well advised to be judicious in their responses to this new configuration of political opportunities. For example, the loss of status of women machinery in Ontario, Alberta and federally may prove more significant than originally anticipated.

My examination of the women's movement in Newfoundland and Labrador reveals a thriving movement which maintains a high level of engagement with its provincial state. In the absence of a successful electoral project until very recently, however, that engagement has been structured around the state bureaucracy and an extra-parliamentary lobby. The high priority still assigned to the electoral project by feminists in Newfoundland reflects their lack of experience - successful or not - with a critical mass of woman legislators. Largely because of the enormous contribution made by Lynn Verge in Newfoundland politics, feminists still identify electoral politics as a worthwhile endeavour. Currently, there are high expectations for the new crop of women members elected in the 1996 campaign, and this focus on having women represented mainly through electoral politics may well continue. If feminists fail to see positive benefits in terms of outcomes from this electoral breakthrough, however, a re-thinking of their traditional state-oriented approach may result. Nevertheless, the continued success of Newfoundland feminists in gaining access to the state through bureaucratic channels helps sustain a state-oriented movement.

The pervasive "sense of place" which characterizes the environment in which Newfoundland and Labrador feminists organize engenders a deep attachment to local and provincial politics. A political culture marked by neo-nationalism combined with an acute sense of physical isolation, a strong women's culture and, in the wake of the fisheries crisis, feelings of abandonment by the rest of Canada, all contribute to a prioritization by the women's movement of provincial matters. In such a context, progress on questions concerning the representation of diversity within the movement has been slow. Both the relative homogeneity of the island population and the physical separation of the majority of the population from Labrador's

Aboriginal communities stalls work on the discrimination endured by Newfoundland's First Nations women. Class divisions, coupled with a resistance to adopting agendas perceived as emanating "from away" has meant that anti-racism work within the movement has barely begun. As well, the movement's close relationship to the provincial state has made it more difficult for the movement to tackle such controversial issues as the representation of lesbian issues. The gradual secularization of Newfoundland society, however, is opening opportunities for the movement to address this and other diversity questions.

In sharp contrast, the Ontario movement is a highly diverse and fractured movement, unable to sustain a provincial women's organization and often swamped by the large feminist community of Toronto which assumes a key leadership role in pan-Canadian feminist activism outside Québec. My evidence suggests that feminist activism in Ontario usually privileges the arena of federal politics in its lobbying efforts, neglecting the provincial state. A strong current of regionalism, however, helps shape a northern women's movement which is oriented towards the provincial state. The orientation of most feminists in Ontario towards federal politics reflects the province's overall political culture. It also reflects the historic fact that feminists from Toronto assumed pivotal roles in founding movement organizations such as NAC which have been active at the federal level with little focus on provincial and territorial politics.

In Ontario, provincial electoral politics have proven fairly open to women's participation. Indeed, even in the absence of a critical mass of women legislators, important gains for women were realized under the long tenure of the Progressive Conservatives, a situation contrary to that experienced by Alberta feminists under successive Tory regimes but similar to

the experience of Newfoundland women under PC governments. In part, the openness of the Ontario state to feminist demands in the 1970s can be understood as a consequence of initiatives first undertaken at the federal level which were then acted on by a provincial government closely aligned with its federal counterpart. This situation did not reflect an explicit alliance between feminists and Conservative leaders as occurred in Newfoundland. In the last decade, however, the volatility of electoral politics in Ontario has meant that the women's movement has engaged more actively with the provincial government as the political opportunity structure appeared to be in flux with dramatic changes in the fortunes of all three major parties. Attacks on women's equality under the Harris government coming on the heels of considerable gains but, nonetheless, disillusionment, on the part of many Ontario feminists with the Rae government, suggests that a new strategy of engagement with the provincial state is required by the Ontario movement.

Internally, the Ontario women's movement, led by the Toronto community, has been at the forefront of often very divisive debates around the integration of a politics of difference into feminist practice. In the case of both racialized women and lesbians, however, these struggles have been initiated within urban centres where the existence of large minority communities has made separate, parallel organizing possible. Such autonomous organizations exerted significant pressure on mainstream feminist organizations to address diversity challenges, but also may have inhibited the development of coalition politics. In smaller locales, however, the project of representing diversity within mainstream organizations varies according to the particular demographics of the community and the extent to which the minority communities are engaged in separate organizing.

The case of Alberta documents how success in electing women to provincial legislatures does not translate necessarily into a women's movement that is state-oriented. Indeed, the Alberta case implies that if legislative representation fails to yield substantive gains for women, women will cultivate alternative avenues for their activism. Alberta feminists find their activism blocked in all channels of access to the Alberta state and their experience of disappointing electoral, bureaucratic and lobbying projects has soured interest in pursuing representation through a hostile provincial state dominated by a single, increasingly right-wing party.

In Alberta, moreover, right-wing women have been successful in pursuing their representational projects with increasing visibility in electoral politics, lobbying and the bureaucracy. In an environment where class politics has been minimal and where populism and religious fundamentalism remain politically significant, feminist activism has been organized mainly around an anti-state position, focusing instead on various forms of cultural feminism. Like Ontario, however, the Alberta movement exhibits different organizational experiences across locales. Like Hellman's (1987) study of feminism in Italy, my findings confirm that, not only do women's movements vary between urban and rural settings, but they also can display divergent patterns of activism among urban centres (such as among Calgary, Edmonton and Lethbridge) within a single jurisdiction.

The ability of the Alberta women's movement to respond to the challenges of representing difference has been shaped as much by the province's political landscape as the decision by many feminists to withdraw from engagement with the state. Diversity issues have been on Alberta's feminist agenda for a number of years. The movement has addressed matters relating to race, however, less contentiously than lesbian concerns.

Nonetheless, the fact that the avenue of representing feminist goals via the state is basically closed to Alberta women has made it possible for the movement to represent diversity within its organizations better than in Newfoundland.

The strength of the right-wing's "family values" platform in Alberta with its virulent castigation of homosexuality organized by a well-organized, state-centric right-wing movement shapes Alberta's politics. While an anti-immigration position also has been central to New Right thinking, this thread of right-wing philosophy has been embraced somewhat less zealously in Alberta politics than anti-gay rhetoric. As well, the prominent roles assumed by leaders of ethnic communities in the Progressive Conservative party during its long tenure tempered overt racism in the province's political system (although not in the federal Reform Party). Such is not true for First Nations people, however, who remain marginalized from Alberta politics and face significant racism, particularly as land claims and self-government issues unfold. Within this context, anti-racist action within feminist organizations has proven less controversial (both externally and internally) than have anti-homophobia initiatives. Alberta's feminist organizations have little to gain by attempting to tailor their actions to meet the provincial state's approval. Consequently, the Alberta movement's disengagement from the state has facilitated the emergence of a well-entrenched project of representing diversity in movement organizations, with feminists in Alberta committed to resolving conflicts related to identity politics outside of the formal political process.

My analysis of feminist politics in the Northwest Territories leads me to reject the claim of former Status of Women Council Chair Katherine Peterson that "there was and is no women's movement in the NWT" (as

quoted in Devine 1991: 13). While I have been careful throughout the thesis not to identify women's organizing in the NWT as feminist, my evidence confirms that a plethora of women's organizations are involved in working for improvements in the status of NWT women. In a jurisdiction where a sprawling state is ever-present in most women's lives, it is perhaps not surprising that NWT women can be characterized as engaged with the state. The nature of that engagement, however, is quite different from the Newfoundland and Ontario cases. NWT women, and, in particular, Aboriginal women in the Territories have made enviable inroads in electoral politics, particularly given their late entry into the political system. The presence of Aboriginal women in NWT Cabinets and Nellie Cournoyea's tenure as NWT Premier attest to the significant strides made by Aboriginal women in territorial politics. As I illustrated in Chapter Four, the barriers for women imposed by party politics elsewhere are exposed most starkly when the electoral histories of NWT and Newfoundland women at the subnational level are compared.

Despite enviable results in their electoral project, however, the legacy of internal colonialism which permeates NWT politics affects NWT women and perpetuates a crisis of legitimacy for the territorial state among the Aboriginal population. Clearly, neither Aboriginal nor non-Aboriginal women have abandoned the state. Indeed, the flurry of activity around constitutional developments and the interest by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women in ensuring that women's perspectives figure prominently in the design of new state structures signals an ongoing engagement with the state. Nevertheless, for many First Nations women, the potential for meaningful participation in the creation of state structures that

will be controlled by First Nations peoples is the prime motivation for their involvement in the constitutional process.

Aboriginal women's historical experience of oppression by the white-dominated state continues to have a profound impact on other aspects of women's organizing in the NWT. Centuries of domination by a colonial state impedes the ability of women, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, to bridge racial and cultural barriers through the use of state machinery such as status of women councils or women's directorates. Indeed, it is testimony to the substantial efforts on the part of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women that various women's organizations across the North, and institutions such the Status of Women Council, have had some success in integrating the priorities of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women in their agendas. Still, the profound geographic isolation of many communities and the acute cultural and class differences between First Nations and non-First Nations women and, indeed, among Aboriginal women, currently mitigates against the consolidation of a unified women's movement. As the representational projects vis-à-vis the state continue to unfold in the NWT, space may open up for attention to be paid to other axes of difference.

8.2 Some Testable Hypotheses

Several testable hypotheses related to both sets of representational projects can be drawn from this study which offer starting points for further comparative research on women's movements:

1. The choice of issue priorities, organizations and actions of women's movements reflect the specificities of the places in which the movements organize.

2. Women's movements will remain engaged with their subnational states as long as at least one channel of activity--either electoral, bureaucratic or extra-parliamentary lobbying--provides access to the state. When all channels are blocked, however, women's movements will disengage from the subnational state and pursue alternative forms of mobilization.
3. The ability of women's movements to exploit "moments of transition" in either the general political culture and/or the configuration of the subnational state will affect their level of engagement with the state.
4. Subnational state machinery for women can serve as effective representational vehicles for women's movements in jurisdictions where the bureaucracy is informal and/or state structures and practices are not yet congealed.
5. The extent to which women's movements are engaged with their subnational state affects their strategic action around diversity issues. In particular, movements which have been successful in gaining positive outputs for majority women through engagement with the state will be reluctant to represent diversity agendas within their organizations.
6. The past experience of women's movements with their state is the major factor in predicting their future patterns of strategic action.

8.3 Limitations of this Research and Directions for Future Investigations

As with any multi-case comparative analysis, the coverage of each movement in this thesis varies slightly according to the existing documentary evidence, prior research and access to key individuals and organizations. In each case, the parameters of the investigation were restricted by my ability to obtain interviews with representatives of key organizations and their willingness to share their insights and perspectives on women's activism. Additionally, my analysis was restricted by time and financial resources that constrained travel to more remote locations. More detailed research within Labrador, for example, might well have yielded other points of comparison with the Northwest Territories. My decision to mount a "thick," multi-case

comparative study also imposed certain limitations on the scope of the research as well as the analysis; clearly, each separate element of both representational projects merits further study and evaluation.

Despite these limitations, however, my conclusions in this dissertation suggest several new trajectories of research ready to be mined. Most generally, I demonstrate the pressing need to excavate more empirical data on women's movements at the local and subnational levels to develop analytic tools that incorporate the specificities of the contexts encountered by women in Canada. The dearth of research on contemporary feminist practice, particularly outside of Ontario and Québec, impedes comparative analysis and perpetuates incorrect assumptions that feminist organizing is not significantly affected by context, thus allowing the myth of a homogeneous "English Canadian" feminism to persist.

Studies that analyze both the variety of tactics employed by feminists, and how activism occurs simultaneously through multiple channels will broaden our knowledge of the complexity of movement politics. As I argued in Chapter One, political science prioritizes research that investigates relationships between states or between citizens and their states at the highest level, a disciplinary bias which long excluded women and their politics from serious study. In this dissertation, however, I have incorporated an examination of internal movement dynamics and elements of women's activism that are explicitly anti-state and I have argued for the validity of research that pushes against the traditional boundaries of political science. In sum, there is much to learn about women's political lives by understanding why they reject involvement with the state and investigating their alternative forms of political participation. It is no longer possible to explain such activism with the idea that particular forms of ideology (e.g. radical

feminism) "direct" women to adopt such an orientation, independent of their actual experience of state politics where they live.

A larger research question looms behind this dissertation and relates to the consequences of the patterns of activism uncovered. Bashevkin's call for comparisons that "focus on what women's movements and their allies obtain in a variety of political environments" resonates throughout this work (1994: 276, emphasis added). A logical extension of this thesis, therefore, is comparative analysis of public policy that weighs the gains achieved by women's movements as a result of particular courses of action. In Chapter Two, I noted how the peculiarities of Canada's federal system had a profound impact on women's lives and their political activities. Although I do not explore in any detail in this thesis the role of the federal state as a variable in shaping women's movements at the subnational level, scholarship on the effects of Canadian federalism on women and their movements is long overdue. More generally, movement comparisons both among locales within single jurisdictions and across multiple jurisdictions remain a rich vein for scholarly research. In particular, comparing feminist movements with other movements for change will allow testing of whether the influence of space and place on women's movements documented in this dissertation is replicated similarly in the experience of other movements.

8.4 Conclusion

In sum, in this dissertation I concur with Keith and Pile's argument that "space cannot be dealt with as if it were merely a passive, abstract arena in which things happen" (1993: 2). Women's movements work for change within specific temporal and spatial locations which influence their choice of issues, organizations and strategic action. Regardless of their location,

women's movements both shape and are shaped by the characteristics of their particular locales. Political life is always bounded by space and time. Even in an era of globalization this remains true, particularly for women. In this study of women's organizing across contexts, I argued that women's movements develop according to their experiences and opportunities within specific places, although those places are themselves subject to constant change and evolution. Only through further documentation and comparison of the course of women's movements and their successes and failures across place and time will feminism meet the challenge of creating new political spaces for women everywhere.

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