

THE POLITICS OF POLICY TRANSFORMATION

THE POLITICS OF POLICY TRANSFORMATION:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CHILD CARE
AND UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE
IN CANADA AND IRELAND

By

JOAN GRACE

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AUTHOR: Joan Grace

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Abstract

This study is an exploration of why policy outcomes in the sectors of child care and unemployment insurance, between the time period 1972 to 1996, did not meet the policy goals of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) in Canada and the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCi). Specifically, this study sought to explain why successive governments in Canada and Ireland persistently resisted the implementation of policy goals put forth by NAC and NWCi in the sectors of child care and unemployment insurance, or when they did respond, policy outcomes had differential impacts on women. With this in mind, the overall research question of this study was: What happened to the policy goals of NAC and NWCi once they were articulated to government?

In order to answer this question, this study merged the theoretics of historical-institutionalism with feminist political economy into a theoretical framework I have termed feminist-institutionalism. This framework was applied to argue that policy institutions (as mediators and containers of gendered social relations) redefine feminist policy goals articulated by women's groups to government into gendered policy outcomes that often undermine the original intent of those goals. I have called this process of redefinition *policy transformation*. By employing a framework of analysis - three spheres of policy transformation - this study comparatively maps out the processes, institutions and factors within the macro-political policy context which contributed to an overall lack of success on the part of NAC and NWCi in the realization of their child care and unemployment insurance policy goals. One of the conclusions of this study is that NAC and NWCi were equally unsuccessful even given stark differences between macro-political institutional structures and interest representation systems in Canada and Ireland.

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Abbreviations and Terms

Canada

CAP	Canada Assistance Plan
CACSW	Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women
CDDAA	Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association
CHST	Canada Health and Social Transfer
EI	Employment Insurance
EIC	Employment and Immigration Canada
HRDC	Human Resources Development Canada
NAC	National Action Committee on the Status of Women
RCSW	Royal Commission on the Status of Women
SSR	Social Security Review
SWC	Status of Women Canada
UI	Unemployment Insurance

Ireland

CSW	Council for the Status of Women (pre-1995)
EEA	Employment Equality Agency
EEC/EU	European Economic Community/European Union
ENOW	European Network of Women
EWL	European Women's Lobby
FAS	Foras Aiseanna Saothair (Training & Employment Authority)
IBEC	Irish Business and Employers Confederation
IFA	Irish Farmers Association
ICTU	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
JOCWR	Joint Oireachtas Committee on Women's Rights
MSWA	Ministry of State for Women's Affairs
NWCI	National Women's Council of Ireland (since 1995)
NESC	National Economic and Social Council
NESF	National Economic and Social Forum
SIPTU	Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union
UB/UA	Unemployment Benefit/Unemployment Assistance
WRC	Women's Representative Committee

Irish Terms

Oireachtas	Irish Parliament (Upper and Lower Houses)
Dail	Lower House - Legislature
Seanad	Upper House - Senate
Taoiseach	Prime Minister
Tanaiste	Deputy Prime Minister
Teachta Dala	TD - an elected member of Legislature

Introduction - Why Study Policy Transformation?

In Western democracies, the overwhelming majority of women do not participate in the decision-making process. It could be said that democracy developed without women, if not against them.

Yolande Cohen, *Women and Counter Power*¹

The Policy Problem, Overview of Existing Research & Significance

In many Western liberal democracies, women's groups have been engaged in an on-going politics of change "to challenge women's powerlessness and social inertia".² Although the status of women substantially improved during the latter half of the twentieth century, progress has been uneven and major inequities between men and women have persisted.³ Worldwide women continue to organize to "face the state" demanding the dismantlement of entrenched social, economic and political barriers - a struggle which became all the more acute under the exigencies of economic restructuring and neo-liberalism.⁴

This study relates part of the story of women's struggle for social and political recognition. It is a tale about two particular women's groups, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) in Canada and the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWC) in the Republic of Ireland, and how they organized in reaction to pervasive gender inequalities in their respective countries - inequities often perpetuated by government action or inaction. In staking a claim on the political terrain, both NAC and NWC took up the challenge of representing women's voices and in doing so, developed their own policy ideas and policy goals around an array of issues of

utmost importance to Canadian and Irish women. This study examines two of those policy issues - child care and unemployment insurance.

The Policy Problem: The Need for Child Care and Unemployment Insurance

Government attention towards public policies such as child care and income security through unemployment insurance has been important for many women, since their ability to be economically independent depends on their opportunity to enter the paid labour market to take up forms of sustained paid employment. For NAC and NWCI, this has meant that women, as primary caregivers, must have access to publicly funded and affordable child care to free them from the confines of their domestic duties, and for many women, to make the transition from the family home into the paid labour market. Moreover, to ensure income stability, women must also have access, without undue hindrance, to unemployment insurance benefits during interruptions in paid employment. Child care and income security through unemployment insurance are policy issues all the more salient for women since securing economic independence, it is argued by NAC and NWCI, is a crucial step towards achieving women's equality. Developing and implementing policies such as a national child care program were also important to NAC and NWCI since substantive policy action by governments on this front would have sent a signal that child care is a societal responsibility rather than just a "woman's duty".

Yet, the persistent inattention by government authorities in Canada and Ireland to many women's policy issues has been remarkable. Lack of government attention has

obvious when considering consistent resistance by governments to develop a universally accessible, high quality and affordable child care system that is publicly funded by the national government. The unavailability of child care via a viable child care system has had grave consequences for women wishing to pursue interests outside of the family home. One only need to look at the statistical picture. In Canada, the availability of regulated child care has been historically low. In 1988, there were approximately 2.6 million children under the age of 13 in need of some form of child care, yet regulated child care services were available for only 10.6 per cent of these children.⁵ By 1992, child care provision actually dropped, being available for only 7.5 per cent of all Canadian children aged 0-12. By 1995, this statistic had improved only marginally with child care being available for only 8.5 per cent of children in the same age group.⁶ Compared to Canada, the provision of publicly-supported child care in Ireland has been even more dismal. Indeed, Ireland has long had one of the worst records of child care provision in all of the member states in the European Union. From 1990 to 1995, only 2 per cent of child care services were publicly funded for children in the 0-3 age range.⁷ Among European countries, only the United Kingdom, Italy, Greece, Spain and Austria provided as low, or even slightly higher levels of public commitment and public funding. In Belgium, Denmark, France, Portugal, Finland and Sweden, publicly-funded services for 0-3 years olds was considerably higher.⁸

Women's access to a universal child care system became all the more important as a policy issue for NAC and NWCI due to women's increased participation in the paid labour market. As shown in Table A, women's participation rates rose dramatically in

many Western countries, although for historical and social reasons discussed later in this study, activity rates of women were higher in Canada than in Ireland:

Table A
Women's Labour Force Activity Rates (%)

	<u>1979/81</u>	<u>1988/90</u>	<u>1994*</u>
Canada	55.5	67.5	67.8
Ireland	34.8	36.8	47.2
Denmark	69.0	77.8	73.8
France	51.0	58.8	59.6
Germany	49.7	55.5	61.8
Italy	38.9	46.7	42.9
Portugal	53.8	57.8	62.0
United Kingdom	55.9	63.7	66.2

Sources: International Labour Office, *World Labour Report 1992*, (Geneva: ILO), pp. 96-97.

*Brian Nolan and Dorothy Watson, *Women and Poverty in Ireland* (Dublin: Oak Tree Press, 1999), p. 83.

There were two important consequences for women once they entered the paid labour market. First, women became vulnerable to being unemployed, as the general unemployment rates in Canada and Ireland illustrate in Table B. Second, women in Canada and Ireland were predominantly employed in the low-status, low-waged clerical and service sector, which was often part-time or casual employment.⁹ Although women's employment in this sector provided an opportunity for women to expand their participation as compared to men, it nonetheless segregated women providing fewer benefits, less job training, limited job stability and limited future job prospects.¹⁰

Table B
Unemployment as a Percentage of Total Labour Force
(Average)

	<u>1968-1973</u>	<u>1974-1979</u>	<u>1980-1990</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1996</u>
Canada	5.4	7.2	9.2	10.2	9.7
Ireland	5.6	7.6	14.2	16.5	12

Source: OECD, *OECD Economic Outlook: Historical Statistics: 1960-1990*, (Paris: Head of Publication Service, 1992), p. 43. Statistics for 1993: International Labour Office, *World Labour Report, 1992* (Geneva: ILO, 1992), p. 31. For 1996 in Canada, Statistics Canada, CANSIM Data Base, Last Update 31 August 2001. For 1996 in Ireland, *Partnership 2000 for Inclusion, Employment and Competitiveness* (Dublin: The Stationery Office, December 1996), p. 9.

Women's paid employment and potential unemployment meant then, that economic independence had to be underpinned by some measure of economic security through a non-discriminatory unemployment insurance program during interruptions in paid employment. This has been an important policy issue for NAC and NWCI, since not only were women vulnerable to changes in the economy, women were six times more likely than men to leave their jobs due to family responsibilities, a testament to the difficulties of balancing paid work and care giving.¹¹

Employment in all industrialized economies, over the past three decades, grew in the services sector, while decreasing in others.¹² The effects of globalization and economic restructuring had grave consequences for Canadian women. New employment patterns and changes in the workplace, and the kinds of precarious employment women increasingly took up in the labour market, meant that they were even more vulnerable to being unemployed. During the 1990s, women in Ireland also felt the effects of changes in the economy given their over-representation in the lower echelons of Ireland's unskilled labour pool in the growing technology sector.¹³ This

sector was part and parcel of Ireland's so-called "economic miracle" leading some to describe Ireland as the Celtic Tiger, given the country's remarkable economic growth. Most analysts pointed to Ireland's GDP which had consistently outpaced all EU and OECD member countries.¹⁴ Indeed, from 1990 to 1994, women's employment increased by 14 per cent, while men's employment declined by 1 per cent.¹⁵ However, the "unfinished business" of Ireland's economic turnaround has been the persistence of high unemployment and pervasive poverty, reminding us that the economic benefits of the Celtic Tiger were not equally felt by all Irish citizens.¹⁶

In summary, it is clear why NAC and NWCI would target their efforts in the policy areas of child care and unemployment insurance. For NAC and NWCI, and for the many women these organizations represent, however, child care and unemployment insurance are not just about securing economic independence and women's equality. They are policy issues that go to the heart of how women participate in the economy, their role within the household and their experiences as citizens in their respective countries.

Overview of Existing Research

But if child care and income security through unemployment insurance have been so important to women, why have Canadian and Irish policy makers consistently developed policies that did not benefit women? Why, in some cases, was there no policy development?

The history of capitalist welfare states is one that has excluded or marginalized

women's participation in the labour force. Public policy reinforced women's dependence on men, and the family wage, whether through social welfare policy, or through family allowances which were designed to facilitate women's unpaid work at home.¹⁷ For those women that did work in the paid labour force, women's economic independence was further undermined by their segregation into low wage work, their difficulty in qualifying for state benefits, such as unemployment insurance, and the absence of affordable and accessible child care.

Yet, as societal values and economic conditions changes, and under sustained pressure from women's organizations such as NAC and NWCI, governments did make changes to public policies that benefited women. However, policy reforms in child care and unemployment insurance instituted by governments in Canada and Ireland have only gone part of the way to help women with child care duties in the home, and with income security while unemployed. The lack of a universally accessible, publicly-funded child care system and a national child care policy, along with a sexist unemployment insurance system, continued to have differential impacts on women. NAC and NWCI had long advocated for a set of child care policies and an employment insurance system that did not penalize women and was also accessible to women from all walks of life. Since the inception of NAC and NWCI it often remained difficult, however, for these organizations to achieve many of the public policy changes necessary to emancipate women from their status as "secondary citizens". The overarching research questions for this study, therefore, were: Why has the achievement of NAC's and NWCI's child care and UI policy goals been so elusive? What happens

when NAC and NWCI articulate their policy demands to government? Did government action or inaction reflect the demands of NAC and NWCI or were their demands altered in some way once they entered the “black box” of government and public policy making?

Feminist academics have long pondered some of these questions, in consideration of women’s relationship to the capitalist welfare state and the gender consequences of public policies. In Canada and Ireland, an extensive literature analysing the differential impact of seemingly gender-neutral public policies has gone far to uncover the factors that contribute to women’s limited participation in the upper echelons of economic and political decision-making and their unequal access to social and economic resources.¹⁸ This literature documents the perpetuation of male violence against women, the regulation of women’s reproductive choices, the feminization of poverty, the sexual division of labour and women’s disproportionate share of unpaid work/caring within the family, women’s under representation in legislative arenas and concomitant lack of political power in spheres of influence, labour market segmentation into low status, low-waged occupations and the persistent wage gap between men and women in the paid labour force.¹⁹

Significant contributions to our understanding of how the public policies analysed in this study have had gendered impacts have been made by Jane Pulkingham and Leah Vosko. Both of these feminist academics carefully analysed aspects of the Canadian unemployment insurance system, demonstrating quite clearly how particular ideas about women, as dependent family caregivers, were infused into the development

of the unemployment insurance system rooted in a notion and experience of the regular “male” breadwinner/ worker.²⁰ In addition, these studies uncovered how “degendered” terms and language were used to frame the UI policy, such as the frequent claimant classification, and how terms such as this had grave consequences for women. In Ireland, the interrogation of unemployment insurance through a gender lens also focussed on how gender was a crucial determinant of how and why the system developed. In a collected edition on women in Irish society, for example, gender was revealed as a paramount organizing principle of the Irish social welfare system, under which unemployment insurance is administered, thereby encouraging the development of a policy that persistently and purposefully discriminated against women.²¹

In the policy sector of child care, Katherine Teghtsoonian also furthered our understanding by studying how ideas and ideology framed child care policy developments in Canada and the United States, and how a federal system of government mediated neo-conservative ideas about mothers and child care.²² In Ireland, there has been far less academic public policy analysis of child care, arguably due to the tremendous lack of child care, juxtaposed to other more pressing women’s policy issues such as limited access to abortion.

The above studies of unemployment insurance and child care have told us much about the differential impact of policy outcomes on women. They represent the first step in understanding the complexities of women’s public policy issues. Taking a step back into the policy development process, however, is the next step in order to fully grasp NAC’s and NWCI’s ability or inability to change public policy, or introduce new

policy ideas. It was, therefore, crucial to assess the interface between women's groups in civil society and government authorities. With this in mind, we are left asking a series of questions: In what ways do women's groups approach government authorities? What challenges do women's groups confront when attempting to voice their policy concerns? How do these challenges differ across jurisdictions? In what ways does the language of women's policy goals conflict with government policy language? Do women's groups have any particular allies within the institutional structures of government to support their policy claims?

A number of Canadian studies have provided us with some initial answers to these questions. The rich analysis of NAC, undertaken by Jill Vickers, et. al., and Sylvia Bashevkin respectively, provided valuable contributions in understanding NAC's shifting relationship with government authorities, how the organization responded through policy advocacy and how NAC confronted neo-conservative ideas and an "unwelcoming" policy context during the mid to late 1980s.²³ In other studies, Rianne Mahon and Vappu Tyyska specifically analysed the connection between the women's movement and child care policy developments.²⁴ Vappu Tyyska's study is a substantial contribution given its comparative analysis of child care policy developments between Canada and Finland, offering insights into differences between unitary and federal systems. Rianne Mahon's analysis, part of a comparative study of child care policy between Canada and Sweden, focussed our attention on how NAC organized around the issue of child care in a "coalition politics" with day care advocates from the labour movement and early childhood education sector.

In Ireland, there has been less scholarly attention to the interface between the women's movement and public policy developments dealing specifically with child care and unemployment insurance. Yvonne Galligan, however, analysed women's political mobilization, set within broader analyses of women in Irish politics, documenting how differing feminist groups, such as NWCI, related to government authorities and how the "women's agenda" was represented in a variety of government institutions.²⁵

The above studies have provided researchers with important insights regarding how women's groups have "faced the state". This study hopes to add to these insights through a detailed, comparative analysis that links the processes of policy development with feminist policy goals advocated by two high profile women's groups.

In doing so, this study will add to a dramatic lack of comparative public policy analyses on this topic, as well as an even more dramatic lack of analyses using Canada and Ireland as the jurisdictions under study. This study will also fill a gap in both the Canadian and the Irish literature by offering an analysis that maps out the complexities of government-society relations and the socio-economic conditions under which NAC and NWCI advocated their policy demands to their respective governments.

This study also seeks contribute to our growing understanding of how language both frames policy and determines policy outcomes as an important issue when considering how and why feminist policy ideas either meet or clash with prevailing government policy priorities. By interrogating language, we will also add to our knowledge of the relative importance of various government institutions and how those institutions promote a particular language that may potentially conflict with NAC's and

NWCI's policy goals, and those institutions, such as women's policy agencies, which attempt to offer a counter language and perspective. An analysis of policy transformation, then, will add to an emerging literature that has specifically analysed the clash between feminist and bureaucratic language. One such study, by Andrea Levan, studied how bureaucratic authorities attempted to redefine feminist definitions of violence against women into a definition that fit an individual and family treatment model.²⁶

Significance

It is with great hope that this study will contribute a new and useful concept for public policy analysis. The concept and theoretical underpinnings of policy transformation could easily be applied to highlight the interface between groups within civil society and the processes and institutions that influence their relationship with government in a variety of policy areas. That is, since citizens expect certain things from their elected representatives, and transmit their policy preferences to various officials within government, analysing the factors that frustrate those policy goals provides us with insights into the constraints imposed upon groups within civil society regarding their policy access, policy influence and strategies for change. These insights help us to further understand that, even when confronted with substantial challenges in the realization of their policy goals, women persistently look to government for legislative changes that benefit women.²⁷

The concept of policy transformation also brings to the fore questions as to why

certain sets of policy solutions are given government attention and legitimacy, while others are not. By analysing policy institutions, policy language and structures of interest representation, we gain an understanding of government responsiveness to whether or not policy outputs meet the expectations of civil society. By analysing the complex web of factors that affect whether or not feminist policy demands are taken into account by government, this study focusses on understanding why and how institutions within government matter for Canadian and Irish women.²⁸

Conclusion

A framework of analysis was employed to harness and structure the complexities of policy transformation. This framework of analysis - conceptualized in this study as three spheres of policy transformation - begins with an understanding of the policy goals articulated by NAC and NWCI. The second sphere, analyses the role and influence of policy institutions and policy language. The final sphere of policy transformation examines the policy context.

This study has been organized into three parts. Part One - Chapters One and Two - present the research design and theoretical framework. Part Two - Chapters Three, Four and Five - present the empirical data framed within three spheres of policy transformation. Part Three - Chapters Six and Seven - discuss child care and unemployment insurance policy outcomes and how those outcomes either met or clashed with the policy goals of NAC and NWCI. This section also presents two detailed case studies in policy transformation.

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Part One: Research Design & Theoretical Framework
Chapter One

Research Design: Hypothesis, Concept Definition and Methodology

Hypothesis

As both a strategy for change and a body of theory, feminist politics has confronted degendered conceptions of political institutions often associated with conventional neo-institutional approaches to policy analysis. By arguing that government agencies are containers and propagators of gendered social relations, and hence, policy outcomes that flow from institutions have differential impacts on policy recipients, feminist scholarship has built a convincing case that institutions matter differently for women. This literature puts forward two findings: first, that public policy outcomes are gendered, and second, that *institutions* within the bureaucracy are a key locus of this gendering.¹

What is not so clear are the actual factors and processes that account for this gendering. This study intends to fill this gap by: 1) emphasising policy development rather than policy outcomes and 2) by providing a systematic analysis of specific “gendering processes” in a comparative study of two policy sectors in Canada and Ireland. To do so, two key questions form the basis of this thesis: What factors contribute to the gendering of policy outcomes? How are the institutions and organizations within government implicated in this gendering?

In order to analyse and capture the factors that have a hand in shaping policy

developments that have differential impacts on women, this study employs a theoretical framework that is sensitive to the role of institutions, not only as mediators of politics, but as *gendered* organizations. With that in mind, this study merges the theoretics of historical neo-institutionalism with feminist political economy into a framework I term *feminist-institutionalism*. A feminist-institutional approach provides a set of ideas and assumptions to analyse gendered policy outcomes by linking neo-institutionalism's focus on governmental organizations with feminism's emphasis on transformational politics. This framework will be applied to argue that policy institutions (as mediators and containers of *gendered* social relations) redefine feminist policy goals articulated by women's organizations into gendered policy outcomes that often undermine the original intent of those policy goals. This process of redefinition is called *policy transformation*.

Concept Definition

In the early stages of this research, it was expected that the factors influencing the redefinition and transformation of NAC's and NWCI's policy goals in child care and unemployment insurance hinged on one basic premise: that policy preferences articulated to government by groups in civil society were not simply translated through a set of "neutral" state-based institutions and organizations, but were altered by those institutions. One of the important and interesting findings of this research, however, is that the transformation of NAC's and NWCI's policy goals, during the time frame of this study, was far more complex.

NAC and NWCI approached policy makers with their policy goals that were often

in opposition to successive political agendas. This meant attempting to convince, persuade and sometimes confront government decision makers who, by the very structure of government-society relations, held positions of authority “above” NAC and NWCI since they are situated outside of the formal, governmental policy development process. NAC and NWCI also had to struggle with government authorities over the meaning of women’s equality (practices and ideas to achieve that goal) and how that ultimate goal related to their child care and unemployment insurance policy goals.

This study also revealed that the transformation of NAC’s and NWCI’s policy demands extended well beyond the “desk” where child care and unemployment insurance policy was conceived and developed within the bureaucratic setting. Although institutions at the macro-level, such federal or unitary forms of governance, and meso-level organizations within the welfare state were important, policy transformation was also often about the set of ideas underpinning public policies, and how those ideas were translated into the language of the policy either by way of terms or categories. These ideas provided a window into the policy language which shaped the definition of the policy problem, the interests of government and eventual policy outcomes. This was an interesting component of policy transformation since it demonstrated how NAC’s and NWCI’s policy ideas clashed with the policy ideas of government authorities thereby impeding their acceptance and interjection into policy outcomes.

Policy transformation was also as much about what did *not* happen as what did. That is, policy transformation was also about the way in which policy institutions and bureaucratic practices circumscribed and sometimes prohibited NAC’s and NWCI’s

efforts to articulate their policy goals. It was significant, for instance, as to what kind of access NAC and NWCI had to advance their policy goals to policy authorities. Limited access and passive participation, or sometimes no access at all, erected a formidable barrier to NAC's and NWCI's opportunity to reach government authorities in their attempts to influence policy debates. As well, these barriers were not necessarily institutional. Once invited into the policy process, both NAC and NWCI had to compete with policy agendas advanced by other social groups, such as poverty groups or other "equality" seeking groups. Policy goals articulated by NAC and NWCI, then, were often transformed - that is, redefined, ignored or blocked.

Finally, NAC and NWCI did not stand outside of the transformation processes, nor did they remain entirely neutral players. Rather, at different junctures and time periods, both of these organizations took an active role in the transformation of their own policy goals in order to meet policy ideas/goals as articulated by government, or to be conducive to a shifting policy environment. This meant that NAC and NWCI had at times re-evaluated and redefined their *own* policy demands in *response to* the prevailing policy environment.

In light of this study, policy transformation is defined as a process wherein:

...policy goals articulated to government by groups within civil society are either ignored or redefined being transformed into policy outcomes which often undermine or change those original policy goals.

This study identified three spheres of policy transformation to encapsulate the factors that structured and influenced the transformation of NAC's and NWCI's policy goals in the areas of child care and unemployment insurance. Distinguishing three

spheres of transformation provided the author with a way to systematically detangle the complex processes of policy transformation in order to determine key aspects. Moreover, it was an effective heuristic device to discern and understand the policy goals articulated to government by NAC and NWCI, where those policy goals were advocated within government and how the policy context influenced NAC's and NWCI's policy advocacy efforts.

Sphere One

The first component of policy transformation involved capturing a sense of who NAC and NWCI were as women's organizations and what kind of policy goals they articulated to their respective government authorities. And in many ways, studying policy transformation begins with understanding the policy goals being articulated to government. Over the course of the time frame under study, even when confronted with seemingly insurmountable challenges, NAC and NWCI continued to press governments for policy redress. By devising and countering women's structural discrimination and the gendered outcomes of public policies, these organizations often came in direct contact with the government officials and organizations within the administrative structure. To understand NAC and NWCI, and to evaluate their relationship with government, this sphere of policy transformation, analysed in Chapter Three, studied each organization's policy goals in child care and unemployment insurance, the organizational development, the feminist principles that underpinned the organization and the factors that influenced their engagement with policy advocacy.

Sphere Two

In Chapter Four, the second sphere of policy transformation, we analysed four policy events in order to investigate the impact of the institutional setting on the transformation of NAC's and NWCI's policy goals. In this study, the term "institution" was conceptualized as:

...configurations or networks of organizational capabilities (assemblies of personal, material, symbolic, and informational resources available for collective action) that are deployed according to rules and norms that structure individual participation, govern appropriate behaviour, and limit the range of acceptable outcomes.²

For clarity, the concept of "institutions" was used interchangeably with "organizations" in order to make analytical distinctions between that type of entity from macro-political institutions such as federalism in Canada, or the unitary political system in Ireland and supra-national institutions such as the European Union. Policy institutions analysed included organizations within the bureaucracy, such as lead ministries directly responsible for the policy area, as well as the role and influence of women's policy agencies directed by government to advance the status of women. All of these organizations were analysed with respect to their role as access points for NAC and NWCI to advocate their goals, and as potential policy entrepreneurs for NAC and NWCI.

Sphere Three

The third sphere of policy transformation is the policy context, or the broad backdrop to policy making. In this sphere, we investigated how a particular regime of gender relations set in place certain policy legacies which influenced the policy terrain

regarding NAC's and NWCI's success in realizing their policy goals. We also analysed the consequences of different interest representation systems and macro-political institutions such as federalism in Canada and social partnership in Ireland. The chapter finishes with an investigation as to how the language and associated ideas of neo-liberalism shaped policy developments. The policy context is analysed in Chapter Five.

Methodology: Policy Areas, Comparative Method and Research Approach

This study seeks to explain the factors that contributed to the transformation of feminist policy demands into gendered policy outcomes that potentially undermined particular policy goals as articulated by NAC and NWCI. Here, gender is defined following Joan W. Scott's two propositions: that "gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power".³ To say that an "outcome" is gendered means that "...advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine".⁴ These differential impacts, however, are not always transparent.

This study's dependent variables, that is sets of gendered policy outcomes in child care and unemployment insurance from 1972 to 1996, are the starting point for this study. Tracing back from that point, these gendered policy outcomes were used to discern the factors that comprise policy transformation. These factors of policy transformation were then comparatively analysed in the jurisdictions of Canada and the Republic of Ireland,

both parliamentary liberal democracies. This study focuses on the role of the central governments, since it is to that level of government both NAC and NWCI directed their attention.

This section briefly introduces the policy areas under analysis. This is followed by a discussion on methodology and data collection, which includes justifications for selection of the temporal period, the policy sectors, as well as the countries and the women's organizations analysed in this study.

a) Policy Areas

Child Care - Canada:

The constitutional authority for the regulation and development of child care policy in Canada rests with the provincial governments under Section 92 and 93 of The Constitution Act, 1867. Therefore, the main method in which the federal government intervened in child care was through the use of the federal spending power. Two aspects of this spending power stood out. First, in 1971 the federal government introduced the Child Care Expense Deduction, a provision of the *Income Tax Act*, allowing families with children to deduct some of their work-related child care expenses.⁵

Second, the federal government also made funding available to provinces via the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) introduced in 1966 as Canada's premiere social welfare legislation. CAP enabled the federal government to cost-share with the provinces social assistance programs and funding of social and welfare services, some of which was spent by provinces on child care. CAP was intended to achieve a number of objectives: 1) consolidate a patchwork of welfare services and shift the provision of financial assistance

from “cause of need to presence of need” regardless of the cause - considered to be a major advance in Canadian social policy; 2) provide an infusion of federal funds to help build and maintain a social safety net; and 3) introduce national standards, which included: requirement of a needs test to determine eligibility for financial assistance; the prohibition of a minimum residency period for eligibility; and the assurance of due process via a required appeals system.⁶

Child care was not one of the stipulated cost-sharing programs under CAP. However, since funding for child care became administered under the CAP system by the provinces, child care services developed within a welfare system with funding available only for “needy or potentially needy families”.⁷ This welfare-oriented approach to child care meant that child care was developed as an income security measure to alleviate poverty, rather than for the purposes of building a child care system (i.e., more child care spaces) or for the purposes of developing a national child care policy.

CAP stipulated certain conditions be met, but did nothing to compel provinces to introduce particular social programs. Nor could the federal government impose sanctions if provinces did not comply, beyond withdrawal of funds. This limitation on federal intervention fell in line with a Supreme Court decision stipulating that the “federal spending power can be exercised so long as it is not in substance legislation on a provincial matter”.⁸ Since CAP was intended to be an “open-ended” arrangement between the federal and provincial governments, the program did not stipulate maximum levels of participation by the provinces and territories. Once CAP funding was received by the province or territory, spending on child care was placed where the provinces

wished to do so (e.g., subsidies, tax credits), or not provided at all. Federal spending through CAP was further tightened in 1990 when the federal government began to limit this cost-sharing arrangement by restricting Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia to a 5 percent annual increase for five years.⁹ As discussed in Case Study #1, the 1995 budget announced the end of the CAP, to be replaced by the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST).

The child care literature in Canada highlights the need to define what is actually meant by the term “child care”.¹⁰ In this study, child care referred to those services designed to care for children, under the age of 12 years, either outside of their immediate homes and/or regular school hours including care provided within the “parental” home. Given that definition, child care services were vast, including arrangements such as informal, casual child minding or babysitting, regulated in-home family day care (home day care) or non-regulated family day care, day care centres, play groups, half-day nursery schools and/or preschools which care for pre-school children. Income security programs, such as the child tax benefit, were not directly analysed in this study since programs such as these are often thought of as being part of an array of programs targeted towards eradicating poverty rather than providing child care. Income tax deductions for child care expenses were also not directly analysed in this study, but were considered as part of the federal government’s intervention in this policy sector. Maternity and/or parental leave provisions were explicitly not included in this study, although these schemes are sometimes considered part and parcel of a comprehensive child care system. It was also beyond the scope of this study to analyse programs designed to meet the

special needs and circumstances of disabled children, the children of immigrant families, children at risk or services provided to aboriginal or first nations communities.

Child Care - Ireland:

As with the Canadian case, this study did not analyse income security programs for children, such as Ireland's universal child benefit. This study also did not include maternity benefits, nor did it analyse child care services offered to immigrant families or travellers. In the Irish case, the term "child care" has been used to refer to two quite distinct types of "care" for children. One type of care provided a range of protective services for vulnerable and "children at risk" up to the age of eighteen. This study, however, was interested in the other type of child care - that is, the care of young children up to the age of ten in a variety of settings, either in a family or other private home (sometimes referred to as childminding), in a playgroup or in a nursery/creche.¹¹ As noted in the Introduction to this study, Ireland has one of the lowest levels of publicly-funded child care services of European Union member countries. As well, Ireland is the only country in the EU that does not have specific legislation dealing with the regulation of pre-school child care services.¹² Consequently, it has often been very difficult for child care advocates to compile reliable data on the number of children attending early childhood services, or to get a sense of the actual need for child care.¹³

Unemployment Insurance - Canada:

Income support in the form of unemployment insurance was a far more complex

policy field than child care given its significance to the development of the modern welfare state and its integration with the economy and labour market policy. Indeed, the provision of some form of income security for workers during “unproductive” times, is a hallmark of the modern, post-war capitalist state. As Leslie Pal stated in his seminal work on Canadian UI policy, the unemployment insurance system is one of the “best expressions” of the welfare state - a policy and program that along with other major social policies such as health and retirement, came to distinguish this entity from its Poor Law-based predecessor.¹⁴

Although programs vary across nations, compensation for unemployment, rather than the prevention of unemployment, was the dominant approach in both Canada and Ireland.¹⁵ Moreover, in Canada and Ireland, the unemployment insurance system had in common three broad sets of goals: to assist the unemployed worker in the alleviation of poverty during times of unemployment, to improve the availability and mobility of the labour pool, and achieve goals of economic stability.¹⁶

Once a provincial responsibility, a constitutional amendment in 1940 gave the federal government exclusive jurisdiction to develop and administer the unemployment insurance system. A contributory insurance scheme was established between employers, employees and the government covering approximately 42 per cent of the work force.¹⁷

In 1971, the unemployment insurance (UI) program was expanded to include nearly all workers in the waged labour force, up to 96 per cent compared to the previous 80 per cent. Eligibility requirements were relaxed, benefit rates were increased from an average of 43 per cent of insurable earnings to 66.6 per cent, and new benefits were

introduced such as sickness, retirement and maternity.¹⁸

Unemployment Benefit/Assistance - Ireland:

In Ireland, there are three basic types of income maintenance: Contributory social insurance benefits funded by employees, employers and government. Unemployment benefit falls within this category. Unemployment assistance is part of the social assistance stream which is means tested and wholly funded by the state. The last is the universal children's allowances (later child benefits) also financed by government. This triad of income security programs are typically referred to as the "social welfare system".

The National Insurance Act, 1911 established a contributory social insurance scheme providing short-term unemployment benefits. Widespread and perennial unemployment during the 1930s led to the introduction of a means tested, non-contributory assistance scheme for those who had exhausted their unemployment benefits.¹⁹ Social assistance programs were designed to ensure a minimum subsistence income for claimants. The means test normally took account of income earned by the claimant or income available, either by way of capital assets, the earnings and assets of a spouse or cohabitee, or in some cases, the earnings of the claimant's parents. Employment under a contract was not taken into account in the determination of eligibility of unemployment assistance. As in Canada, claimants seeking unemployment benefits in Ireland have had to satisfy three broad requirements: be physically able, willing and available to work.²⁰

b) Comparative Method

It has been remarked that comparative knowledge "provides the key to

understanding, explaining and interpreting”.²¹ In order to appreciate and identify why and how policy goals were transformed, and the rich array of reasons that may account for similarities and differences, this study employed a comparative method to emphasize “...the reasons for, and consequences of, policy activities in context” in order to expand potential explanations and develop generalizations about policy transformation.²²

This study was comparative along four dimensions - time, country, policy sector and organization. The first dimension of comparison was across time. The time frame of this study, 1972 to 1996, lent itself well to a comparative study of policy transformation since it was during this period that NAC and NWCI were established and developed as organizations. This twenty-four year period also provided this study with an opportunity to analyse policy sectors that had undergone different kinds of policy change, sometimes due to changes in government or due to shifts in the socio-political environment. Readers will note, however, that some of the analysis extends beyond 1996. The author included policy developments and events beyond the official temporal period given their extraordinary effect on policy outcomes in the area of unemployment insurance in Canada and child care policy developments in the Irish context.

The second dimension of comparison is this study’s cross-country analysis. Both Canada and Ireland are liberal-democracies with pluralistic political cultures and competitive political party systems. During the time frame of this study, the Liberal Party of Canada and the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada formed governments at different times. In Ireland, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael formed governments at various times.²³ Canada and Ireland are often categorized as welfare states with integrated social

safety nets.²⁴ But our understanding of differences and similarities between the welfare states of Canada and Ireland has been severely restricted given a paucity in the comparative literature using Ireland as a case study - and an even larger dearth of comparative research analysing similarities and differences in public policies in Canada and Ireland. This may be partly explained by the hesitation of some analysts to select Ireland as a case for study, given debates about where to place Ireland within the European scheme, and more generally, in welfare state typologies. Michel Peillon, for example, pondered whether it was best to categorize Ireland as an advanced capitalist system, along with other European nations such as Britain, Germany and France, or as a peripheral/semi-peripheral country, in league with Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain, since Ireland had neither institutionalized, or industrialized, like other European systems, nor had it developed stable corporatist systems such as other small European economies. Peillon eventually argued, that despite Ireland's low level of capitalist industrialization, prior to economic turnaround in the mid-1990s, Ireland had nonetheless acquired institutions and features of advanced capitalist countries, and therefore is best thought of as representing a model of European capitalism.²⁵ Aside from the similarities between Canada and Ireland, why are these two countries good candidates for an exploration of policy transformation? Part of the reasoning has to do with the third comparative dimension of this study - the policy sectors.

From an institutional perspective, the two policies analysed - child care and unemployment insurance - provided a rich array of formal macro-political institutions - which are different in Canada and Ireland - to account for policy transformation. In

Canada, unemployment insurance was a federal responsibility, while child care fell under provincial jurisdiction. In Ireland, both of these policy sectors had been developed within unitary decision-making structures. This fundamental difference in institutional configurations was one of the key justifications for selecting Canada and Ireland. This thesis has attempted to discern, for instance, how and why policy transformation is facilitated or constrained in either type of institutional setting. Key policy questions in this regard evolved around whether centralized or decentralized political systems made the policy process more or less permeable to feminist policy aspirations as a set of non-institutionalized ideas. This study also considered whether parliamentary systems built on the Westminster tradition provided institutional actors with a strong base, by way of cabinet-centred government, upon which to pursue policy goals relatively independent of socially articulated policy demands.

Two additional institutional dimensions were key in the selection of Ireland, in comparison to Canada, for this study. First, Ireland's membership in the EU meant that the presence of a set of supra-national institutions influenced policy developments in Ireland at the domestic level, while also providing NWCI with an European network of women's policy advocates as potential allies. Second, social partnering at the national level, bringing together key actors in the economy such as government, unions, employers and farmers, put in place a set of institutions and a corporatist interest representation system of policy making unlike Canada's pluralistic system. Ireland's commitment to social partnership²⁶ added a very interesting institutional and political context, and potential explanatory factor to account for differences and variations in how

NAC and NWCI related to government and the ways in which their policy goals were articulated to policy authorities. Social partnership was formally exercised through membership on the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) - one of the most important policy making institutions in the Irish political system, outside of cabinet. Indeed, NESC documents and strategies generally became government policy and/or were parlayed into national agreements between the social partners.²⁷ Specifically, the NESC was established in June 1973 to:

...provide a forum for discussion of the principles relating to the efficient development of the national economy and the achievement of social justice, and to advise the Government, through the Minister of Finance, on their application.²⁸

This study also selected Canada and Ireland, not only because they offered interesting differences between institutional structures and associated administrative systems as outlined above, but also because they are countries with divergent socio-cultural realities, particularly in relation to the translation of *feminist* policy goals. As noted above, NAC and NWCI were formed in Canada and Ireland to represent and “speak” on behalf of the many women in their respective countries. Although these organizations were established for many of the same reasons, their influence and role in policy development took two different paths, in part because women in Ireland had not made some of the gains that women in Canada had achieved by the early 1970s. As discussed further in Chapter Five, women in Ireland were living under a gender regime far different from the gender regime women lived under in Canada. With that in mind, there is something particularly interesting, then, in comparatively analysing policy transformation of women’s or feminist policy goals between Canada and Ireland.

Two policy sectors were also investigated to highlight unique features of policy transformation between two divergent policy areas. To account for how institutions influenced the transformation of feminist policy goals, two diverse policy sectors were selected for this study for two methodological reasons. First, these two sectors allowed this study to distinguish the influence of policy-specific factors, at the sectoral level, from macro-political institutional factors in the process of policy transformation.

Two distinct policy sectors were also selected because they are representative of two gender sub-systems - child care, is squarely located in the “feminine” care giving policy sphere, often described as a *women’s* policy issue, and unemployment insurance is largely rooted in the “masculine” sphere of paid work, often described as an *economic* and therefore “*serious*” policy issue.²⁹ Specific components of these gender sub-systems include how women are viewed or categorized as policy recipients (e.g., as mothers, workers or taxpayers) and relatedly, the set of ideas underpinning the policy (e.g., to facilitate paid employment or to maintain a household).

Child care and unemployment insurance were also selected for analysis because they have been long-standing policy issues for NAC and NWCI. Child care has been of utmost importance since access to affordable, quality child care has been identified by women as one of the central measures to promote their economic independence and equality. Unemployment insurance has also been a key policy concern for NAC and NWCI. First, unemployment insurance policy was developed at a time when women were considered “dependents” of husbands. The legacy of dependency, albeit in differing degrees, has been structured into the unemployment insurance system in Canada

and Ireland, particularly through eligibility rules, that have differential impacts on men and women. Second, access to income security through unemployment insurance benefits also secures a measure of economic independence for women.

For analysis of the transformation of feminist policy goals then, child care and unemployment insurance offer similar and divergent policy concerns for NAC and NWCI. Moreover, since the unemployment insurance policy sector has considerable history behind it, while child care policy issues that have been advocated by NAC and NWCI over a sustained period of time, these two sectors have also provided this study with an opportunity to track shifts or critical junctures in the policy transformation process.

The final comparative dimension included assessing differences and similarities between the two organizations in this study, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women in Canada and the National Women's Council in Ireland. Feminist policy goals were conceptualized in this study as public policy ideas and strategies devised to improve and promote women's socio-economic status. To be feminist policy goals, these policy prescriptions had to be articulated, lobbied and defended by identifiable society-based organizations that legitimately represented the progressive women's movement to government authorities.³⁰

In this study, feminist policy aspirations in the sectors of child care and unemployment insurance were represented and articulated in Canada by the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) and in Ireland by the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI).

NAC and NWCI were selected for this study due to their shared and divergent characteristics. First, both NAC and NWCI were national, broad-based umbrella groups representing a vast array of women and women's issues to the central government in their respective countries. Each of these organizations has also been active at the international, non-governmental level, participating in United Nation's World Conferences on Women on behalf of their countries. Moreover, NAC and NWCI have built their organizations and strategies for representation and change upon feminist principles, albeit from slightly different perspectives. As well, over the course of each organization's development, NAC and NWCI have been viewed by governmental officials, although not to the same degree, as the "official voice" of women.

Both NAC and NWCI employed similar policy advocacy techniques and approached government decision-makers with their policy preferences. Both NAC and NWCI met with representatives in government who were potentially sympathetic to their demands and therefore an advocate of the organization. As national organizations lobbying on behalf of a broad range of women's groups, NAC and NWCI, also met with other key ministers and political authorities such as finance, took advantage of public hearings by presenting briefs to parliamentary committees and task forces, and publicly responded, by way of media releases, to government action or inaction on various policy issues.

Beyond line departments within the administrative structure, both NAC and NWCI had the opportunity to articulate their policy preferences to women's policy agencies within the bureaucratic apparatus. These women's policy agencies, mandated

by government to advance women's equality, provided NAC and NWCI with a potential "ready" institutional entrance, and arguably, a cohort of "femocrats" to consult and streamline their policy preferences into the decision-making and policy development processes in government.³¹

A final shared characteristic was that for NAC and NWCI, child care and unemployment insurance system were both personal and political issues for women. NAC and NWCI long viewed access to comprehensive and affordable child care services and income security provided through equitable unemployment insurance schemes, that attend to women's relationship to the paid labour market, paramount in addressing the realities of many women's lives. And because governments in both countries had a particular interest in regulating the economy and labour market policies, not to mention the financial resources to facilitate funding social policy, these issues were at the forefront of both NAC's and NWCI's lobbying efforts.

There were, however, interesting and important differences between NAC and NWCI. First, unlike NAC, NWCI actively engaged in networking at the supranational level, sometimes through the European Women's Lobby. NWCI also advocated their policy goals through other pertinent European Union bodies such as the Network on Childcare. Second, although both organizations were initially liberal-feminist in orientation, the feminist philosophy underpinning NAC and NWCI eventually differed, with NAC becoming more radical in the 1980s. Over the course of the organization's development, then, NWCI willingly engaged with government authorities, participating on various government agencies and committees, whereas NAC struggled to maintain its

autonomy as a “Parliament of Women”. Finally, and perhaps most obviously, NAC and NWCI were organizations that were created, developed and influenced by their respective country’s socio-cultural history and political dynamic.

c) Research Approach

This study relied upon qualitative analysis given the ability of this approach to “...understand a particular social situation, event, role, group or interaction”, and to focus the study on the “...process that is occurring as well as the product or outcome...”.³² Data collection methods included elite interviewing using semi-structured, open-ended questions and detailed document analyses. In order to access some original documents, and to undertake archival research, the author collected data from several field research trips to Ottawa, Canada, the location of the federal government, as well as two field research trips to Dublin, Ireland. The first trip to Ireland took place from February to May 1998, the second in July 1999.

A qualitative research approach was well suited to understanding policy transformation since it was a way to map out and assess decision making processes as well as the ideas and meaning behind public policies. This approach also allowed the author to interpret the evolving nature of events surrounding policy transformation, assess how events affected policy, and to capture changes over time in order to discern why and how history mattered.³³ Moreover, this research approach allowed the author to determine the multitude of individuals and groups involved in child care and unemployment insurance policy debates, assess the type of relationships between those actors, and appraise the implications of differences between their policy perspectives.

The strength of a qualitative approach was that it provided the author with a way to gauge, understand and assess motivations, ideas and contestations - in essence the dynamics and politics of public policy making. It was an approach that allowed the author to explore the characteristics of language and meaning behind texts to reveal the complexities of public policy and policy transformation. And, perhaps even most importantly, a qualitative research approach allowed the author to interrogate public policy making from a gendered perspective.

As for data collection, detailed document analyses of original sources, such as government documents, legislative debates, internal organization documents (e.g., newsletters, memorandums, annual reports), media reports and secondary sources (e.g., published research and autobiographies) were undertaken. This approach and analysis was useful to: a) identify key actors; b) discern and compare the language framing the policy; and c) to identify the form and substance of what was said by organizational actors either in government or in NAC and NWCI.

Elite interviewing was helpful to the author to: a) fill in missing information not available through published research and primary sources such as government and other organizational documents; b) to verify and explain information and data documented in primary and secondary sources; and c) to gauge and assess the “institutional memory” of individuals or groups closely connected to the topic under study.

Individuals interviewed were identified as key members of various organizations. These organizations included NAC and NWCI and key organizations and departments within government which included Human Resources Development Canada and Status of

Women Canada and the Department of Social Welfare and the National Economic and Social Council in Ireland. Other individuals interviewed were recommended to the researcher by the initial set of interviewees. Each interviewee was asked a series of open-ended questions. A list of organizations contacted and interviewees, as well as a sample list of questions, are provided in Appendices 1 and 2.

While collecting data for this study, the author was presented with a number of challenges. First, given the kinds of struggles that groups such as NAC and NWCI often confront (i.e., financial instability, spending constraints, high staff turnover and the lack of resources to ensure the maintenance of archival material), the author had some difficulty in obtaining internal documents, which were sometimes unavailable or lost. Moreover, the author had some difficulty locating key informants for interview since these individuals had long departed the organization.

Second, some members of bureaucratic organizations (i.e., government departments) and certain members of NAC and NWCI, particularly notable in the Irish context, were not forthcoming with respect to being available for interview. The author speculates that this may have been because the questions asked, and the topic of the research, may have been interpreted as investigating the success or failure of the organization and therefore were viewed as uninvited scrutiny. On the other hand, this situation may simply have been a reflection of the rather formal and closed nature of the Irish bureaucracy.

Conclusion

The task of this research was to determine and analyse the factors that contributed to the redefinition and transformation of feminist policy goals into policy outcomes. This study specifically analysed policy goals developed and articulated by NAC and NWCI in the sectors of child care and unemployment insurance. The research was designed to study sets of gendered policy outcomes as the starting point, traced backwards to determine the “redefinition/transformation” processes. This research analysed the dynamics of policy transformation as it played out at the central level of government in Canada and Ireland.

Chapter One - End Notes

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2. Michael M. Atkinson, Governing Canada: Institutions and Public Policy, (Toronto: Harcourt Brace, 1994), p. 6.
3. Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis", The American Historical Review (91) 5, December 1986, p. 1067.
4. Joan Acker, "Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations", Gender & Society (4) 2, June 1990, p. 146.
5. Gillian Doherty, Ruth Rose, Martha Friendly, Donna Lero and Sharon Hope Irwin, Child Care: Canada Can't Work Without It, (Toronto: Centre for Urban and Community Studies: Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 1995), pp. 14-15. The Child Care Expense Deduction was introduced in 1971.
6. Sherri Torjman, "Is CAP in Need of Assistance?", in Keith Banting and Ken Battle, eds., A New Vision for Social Canada? Perspectives on the Federal Discussion Paper on Social Security Reform, (Kingston: School of Policy Studies and Caledon Institute of Social Policy, 1994), p. 100.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
8. Barbara Cameron, "Child Care: Whose Responsibility?" in Kerry McCuaig, Project Co-ordinator, Putting the Pieces Together: A Child Care Agenda for the 90s, (Toronto: Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, June 1994), p. 25.
9. Martha Friendly, Child Care Policy in Canada: Putting the Pieces Together, (Don Mills: Addison-Wesley, 1994), p. 83.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Noirin Hayes, "Organization and Support of Childcare in Ireland", Irish Journal of Feminist Studies (1) 2, Winter 1996, p. 5.
12. In Canada, child care is regulated via legislation developed and implemented in each province.
13. Noirin Hayes, "Organization and Support of Childcare in Ireland", Irish Journal of Feminist Studies (1) 2, Winter 1996, pp. 13-14.

14. Leslie A. Pal, State, Class, and Bureaucracy: Canadian Unemployment Insurance and Public Policy, (Kingston & Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), p. 17 and p. 20.
15. Stephen McBride, Not Working: State, Unemployment, and Neo-Conservatism in Canada, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p. 215.
16. Leslie A. Pal, State, Class and Bureaucracy, pp. 26-27.
17. Ibid., pp. 38-41.
18. Jane Pulkingham, "Remaking the Social Division of Welfare: Gender, "Dependence," and UI Reform", Studies in Political Economy (56) Summer 1998, p. 17.
19. John Curry, Irish Social Services, Second Edition (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1993), p. 20.
20. Leslie A. Pal, State, Class, and Bureaucracy: Canadian Unemployment Insurance and Public Policy, (Kingston & Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1988), p. 28.
21. Giovanni Sartori, "Compare Why and How: Comparing, Miscomparing and the Comparative Method" in Mattei Dogan and Ali Kazancigil, eds., Comparing Nations: Concepts, Strategies, Substance, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 15.
22. Colin Bennett, "Comparative Policy Studies in Canada: What State? What Art?" in Laurent Dobuzinskis, Michael Howlett and David Laycock, eds., Policy Studies in Canada: The State of the Art, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), p. 302.
23. The Progressive Conservative Party is considered a conservative centre-right party (with centre-left elements) while the Liberal Party is often considered to be Canada's centre or, during the Trudeau era, centre-left party. Since the mid-1990s, many would argue that the Liberal Party is much more centre-right given its adherence to neo-liberal policy initiatives. In Ireland, Fianna Fail (soldiers of Ireland) and Fine Gael (Irish race) are more difficult to capture on the right-left continuum. Fine Gael is sometimes categorized as a christian democratic party, centre-right, but often largely because its origins in the struggle for independence. Fiance Fail is a party that has been described as "secular conservative" or centre-right, but has also had a long tradition of radicalism and close ties with the labour movement. For more on Ireland, see Peter Mair, "The Party System and Party Competition" in John Coakley and Michael Gallagher, eds., Politics in the Republic of Ireland, (Dublin: PSAI Press, 1996), p. 88.
24. Ian Gough, Jonathan Bradshaw, John Ditch, Tony Eardley and Peter Whiteford, "Social Assistance in OECD Countries", Journal of European Social Policy (7) 1, February 1997, p. 36

25. Michel Peillon, "Placing Ireland in a Comparative Perspective", The Economic and Social Review (25) 2, January 1994, p. 192. The economic turnaround began in the mid 1990s. Institutional features of an advanced capitalist country include: state management of the economy, state regulation, a welfare state, and in some cases, corporatist tendencies.
26. Social partnership members included government, farmers represented by the Irish Farmers Association, labour union (represented by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions) and employers (represented by the Irish Business and Employers Confederation). Later, social partnership was opened up to include community-based groups such as the NWCI.
27. Personal Interview, Sylva Langford, Department of Equality and Justice, Ireland, April 1998.
28. National Economic and Social Council, The Work of the NESC: 1974-76, (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1977), p. 29.
29. Heather McIvor, Women and Politics in Canada, (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1996), pp.317-320.
30. In Canada, NAC's main counter-movement has been REAL Women of Canada, an organization federally incorporated in 1983, who claim to represent Canada's "new women's movement" largely in opposition to NAC's "narrow feminist perspective". REAL Women of Canada, Brief Presented to the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development, Re: Consultation on Social Security Review, December 1, 1994, p.5.
31. The term "femocrat", an Australian invention, was devised to refer to women bureaucrats most often attached to women's policy agencies within government directed to promote women's equality. See Anna Yeatman, Bureaucrats, Technocrats, Femocrats: Essays on the Contemporary Australian State, (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1990), p. 65.
32. John W. Creswell, Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches, (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1994), p. 161 and p. 162.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 145.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Framework: Neo-Institutionalism Through a Feminist Lens

Since the 1980s, the role and influence of institutions, as a key unit of analysis, have taken pride of place in public policy studies. Yet, it is often remarked that the discipline of political science is, and always has been, about the study of institutions.¹ Prevalent during the first half of the 20th century, the study of institutions was preoccupied with detailed administrative and constitutional analyses which were generally descriptive, atheoretical and of little comparative value.² In reaction, the behavioural revolution, which had its birth in the late 1950s within the American political science community, rejected this type of analysis, arguing that in order to understand political behaviour, one had to look beyond formal and legalistic institutions to informal distributions of power.³ Theoretically underpinned by methodological individualism, the behavioural revolution understood political outcomes to be the result of the aggregation of individual action, the policies of which were best understood as the “outcome of a game-like contest in which power-seeking individuals, or institutions acting like individuals, compete for resources...”⁴

Since the behavioural paradigm either viewed institutions narrowly or discounted them altogether, many policy analysts pointed to the inadequacies of behavioural approaches to political analysis. Michael Atkinson and William Coleman have argued, for example, that the “rational choice” underpinning of non-institutional approaches rested upon a restrictive set of questions revolving around efficiency and the availability

of resource endowments which asked nothing about what values political actors held and how they came to acquire those values.⁵ Others pointed to the comparative deficit of behaviouralism since it “obscured the intermediate institutions that structure politics in different countries”.⁶

In 1984, March and Olsen declared that a “neo- institutionalism” had emerged, calling for a distinctive theory that was attentive to the role of institutions and the organization of political life.⁷ Neo-institutionalism rejected behaviouralism’s focus on “politics” as standing *outside* of the institutional setting where the privately-held choices and preferences of individual actors were formed independent of institutional influence. Neo-institutionalists argued for an autonomous role for political institutions as “political actors” in their own right. These institutions were to be perceived, not as “inert artifacts”, but as “significant human creations” that structure interaction, define norms of behaviour and set-out the parameters and rules for appropriate courses of action or inaction.⁸

In the policy literature, two predominant strands of neo-institutional thought emerged - rational choice and historical institutionalism.⁹ The rational choice school generally conceptualizes institutions as procedural rules and informal norms and conventions of behaviour which constrain human interaction.¹⁰ Although the rational choice perspective accepts the notion that institutions restrain individual behaviour, preference formation begins and ends with the individual. From this standpoint, preference formation is considered to be exogenous to organizational context. The historical institutionalist school, however, views individual preference formation as “problematic” by emphasizing how institutions not only set the rules of the game, but

also structure and shape ideas and interests, consensus and conflict - in essence, political struggles are mediated by the organizational setting.¹¹ These institutional factors are relevant, Peter Hall argues, because they play two fundamental roles: first, the organization of policy-making affects the degree and type of power that any one set of actors has in policy outcomes; and second, organizational position within the institutional setting influences an actor's conception and definition of their own interest.¹² In this regard, then, institutions not only situate the policy hierarchy, they also have *transformative* power. Moreover, the historical-institutional approach has been sensitive to the recognition that domestic political institutions must be analysed and understood as part of broader social, economic and political contexts.¹³

A feminist critique of the basic underlying tenets of rational choice institutionalism reveals two interrelated assumptions: a universal conception of the individual and a separation between the private and public. That is to say, as with other liberal theories, rational choice institutionalism is underpinned by an abstract, universal conception of the "individual" which conceals that it is *men* and *women* who comprise and interact in organizations and are the recipients of public policies. As Carole Pateman put it:

In order for the individual to appear in liberal theory as a universal figure, who represents anyone and everyone, the individual must be disembodied. That is to say, a natural fact of human existence, that humankind has two bodies, female and male, must be disregarded.¹⁴

Pateman furthers her argument adding that these conceptions of the universal individual emerge from liberal social contract theory which is based on the notion that civil society

is the result of a contract wherein inhabitants of “the state of nature” substitute natural freedom for an equitable form of freedom which is protected by state apparatuses.¹⁵ This premise hinges on the notion that conventional social contract theory only tells half of the story for it is silent about the consequences of the *sexual* contract. That is, although freedom underpins the social contract, underpinning the sexual contract is a story of subjection which “tells how a specifically modern form of patriarchy is established”.¹⁶ Civil society is uncovered as a patriarchal¹⁷ social order which separates public space from private space with sexual relations synthesized as “domestic” and “nonpolitical”. Within the exigencies of the sexual division of labour, paid employment becomes the key to the legitimation of citizen and citizenship in the capacity of worker/male breadwinner with an economically dependent wife caring for his and their children’s needs. Women are not incorporated into society as individuals-workers-citizens as men are, but as members of the family in “social exile” from civil society and the public sphere.¹⁸

A feminist critique of rational choice institutionalism is significant for two reasons. First, a focus on liberal conceptions of the “individual” negates a theoretical analysis of women as a social collective. The consequences of this problem is that it becomes impossible to “conceptualize oppression as a systematic, structured, institutional process”, thereby ignoring women’s particular relationship to the state and the way in which the state perpetuates women’s oppression.¹⁹

Second, the division of labour is significant since it has evolved into a pervasive ideology “so universal, so ubiquitous it appears as ‘natural’ and hence becomes invisible”.²⁰ This division of labour has demarcated public and private spheres rendering

invisible women's presence in the private domain of the family, which includes, but is not limited to, the domestic work they perform in the household or the care they provide to dependent children or aging parents, having spillover effects in the kinds of work women take up, usually as low-waged, flexible labour in the paid labour force.²¹ The public-private dichotomy, the invisibility of women and the concomitant devaluation of their work have profound policy consequences. Issues of importance to women, for example, are often not taken to be pressing, since "women's caring" is not conceptualized as economically productive and therefore not requiring the attention of key policy makers. Moreover, when policy issues that matter to women do reach the political agenda, they are handled by government officials with caution, or avoided altogether, since "private" issues are often deemed an inappropriate use of public resources or government intervention. The demarcation between public and private space, however, is contested. The terrain of public and private space shifts often in reaction to women's mobilization, changes in government policy or due to the struggles of other groups in society. The sexual contract, and the public-private divide have history behind them, and are embedded in social and cultural institutions, and in formal political institutions.

Unlike rational choice institutionalism, historical-institutionalism offers an approach to policy analysis that attends to the consequences of history and the ways in which institutions mediate politics. As Sven Steinmo and Kathleen Thelen point out, historical institutionalism does not rest on the assumption that institutions are the "sole cause" of political outcomes. Indeed, it is a perspective that accounts for the "...broad political forces that animate various theories of politics", such as class or gender

structures.²² Historical institutionalism, then, is an approach that has been highly productive in reminding the analyst that institutions are embedded in a particular political environment. Historical institutionalism has also been useful in highlighting how past choices often hinder future policy and program reforms or institutional change.²³ Path dependencies, as they are often characterized, are of particular interest to groups within civil society who challenge state action or inaction or desire changes to current public policies or the development of new policies. Policy and institutional inertia pose a formidable challenge for women's groups, who not only desire policy reform, but also wish to contribute to a rewriting of history that counters accepted codes of behaviour to accept new voices and identities into the policy picture.

An historical-institutional perspective also reminds that, as enduring features of the political landscape, it is remiss to neglect the impact of formal political institutions as organizers of collective life and dispensers of "authoritative allocations". Analytically, historical institutionalism offers a rich and diverse body of research from which to draw. It is an approach to policy analysis that has built a convincing case that "institutions matter" in consideration of policy histories, constraints imposed on policy makers, government effectiveness and policy capacity.²⁴

How institutions *structure* and influence policy advocacy and participation in the policy process by groups in civil society has also been studied and demonstrated by institutionalists by applying the concepts of policy communities and policy networks. This literature has been especially fruitful in: 1) highlighting the role of macro-political institutions such as federalism, parliamentary government, constitutions and class as

“organizers” of policy development, 2) analysing unique policy developments at the sectoral level, 3) assessing the effectiveness of interest representation of groups within civil society in their attempt to influence policy (policy advocacy) and to take part in policy development (policy participation), and 4) linking policy institutions with the activities of social actors to map relations between organized interests in civil society and governmental decision-making bodies.²⁵ Linking institutions of the state into their surroundings has also been amply demonstrated by policy studies that have analysed “institutions” along side of the role of ideas and interests. These studies have made important contributions to the policy literature by highlighting that ideas have played a profound role in the development and evolving agenda of public policy, and that interests - that is those who benefit from policy and programs and those who “bear the costs”, provides a much more complete and holistic explanation of the public policy process or policy outcomes.²⁶

Gendering Institutions

A burgeoning feminist literature in the field of organizational analysis offers valuable insights into the gendered aspects of institutions. As Joan Acker explains, a “gendered institution” means that gender is present in the “processes, practices, images and ideologies, and distributions of power”.²⁷ As Anne Marie Goetz relates, the “institutional failure” of public bureaucracies to attend to women’s experiences and social realities, may in part be explained by the traditional “technicist” basis of bureaucratic organizations. That is, the practices and internal cultures of these organizations rest on

gender neutral principles of merit and assumptions that “neither the sex of bureaucrats, nor of policy recipients, makes a difference to the objectives of policy, to the ways policies are implemented, or to the ways in which the interests of men and women are institutionalized in public administration”.²⁸ And often the interests of women, Nancy Fraser would argue, become depoliticized within bureaucratic structures due to “expert needs talk” or administrative discourses that translate politicized needs into manageable needs or social services. Once in the administrative surround, for example, women’s “need” for child care becomes decontextualized from the social and recontextualized within the bureaucratic confine. As a result, expert redefinitions “reposition” the needs of the people in question into individual, managed “cases” rather than as “members of social groups or participants in political movements”.²⁹ Expert needs talk is often shaped by “key words” that come to be critical in the definition of social reality and policy discourses.³⁰

These discourses, or policy language as it is referred to in this study, are enduring. Theories of bureaucracy would explain this durability by pointing out that policy developers within the government look to certain terms and categories to maintain the “objective” formulation and implementation of public policy. By doing so, public policies apply equally to all potential beneficiaries. In a rational-legal bureaucratic context, policy language is not assumed to be problematic.

For feminists, however, the objective rational-legal bureaucratic context is highly problematic. They offer their own explanation, arguing that language, in and of itself, must be challenged since it is not a “...neutral and transparent means of representing

reality...rather, language is assumed to codify an androcentric world-view.”³¹ The feminist project highlights the point that it was men who had control over “naming” and therefore the institutionalization of “meaning”. Language, then, becomes one expression of gendered social relations which are conveyed by political and policy institutions, subsequently framing public policies. Over time, the overt reasons for the sexist and discriminatory aspects of public policy may have been largely lost. The language and meaning, however, have persisted often under the guise of a gender-neutral, ostensibly objective policy language.

In support of the viewpoint that bureaucratic institutions are gendered, Judith Grant and Peta Tancred have argued that state bureaucratic apparatuses are themselves implicated in this gendering since the “structural relations of gender inequality are inscribed in state institutions, policies, and actions”.³² To support their position, they rely on Rianne Mahon’s work and the notion of “unequal structure of representation” which suggests that specific productive forces are hierarchically structured within the bureaucracy - that is, class contradictions are “inscribed in the very structure of the state”.³³ To Grant and Tancred, *dual structures of unequal representation* ensure that, within the *first* structure, women’s voices as a potential counter force, are segregated into women’s policy agencies, and in the *second* unequal structure, women’s unequal socio-economic status is replicated in the “gendered hierarchy” of every department and branch in government.³⁴ That is to say, unequal structures of representation are institutionalized by the relatively powerless position of women’s policy agencies (e.g., The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women) and through the relative powerlessness of

women in all government departments and agencies. This “structure of unequal representation” is a reflection of the unequal representation of women within society.

But, as noted above, women’s experiences and oppressions have been shaped by factors that extend beyond the consequences of gendered institutions. In order to fasten the links between policy institutions and policy language with women’s structural discrimination, a gendered conception of institutions is merged with the purpose of feminist-political economy into a *feminist-institutional* framework. Synthesizing a historical institutional approach with feminist-political economy is an attempt to contextualize formal policy institutions into a broader set of economic, political and social processes and historical contingencies. This produces an integrated approach for comparative analyses highlighting the intersection between patriarchy and capitalism and that gender is “always inextricably interlocked with class, race, ethnicity...and whatever other structural and symbolic systems [that] organize cultures as distinctive”.³⁵

Feminist political economy also arranges the broad political and economic landscape to analyse the transformation of feminist policy goals informed by three crucial assumptions: First, that societies are divided along gender, class, race, ethnicity and other relations of inequities that structure power hierarchies. Second, the state, household and the economy - with an emphasis placed on women’s unpaid work within the family and concomitant sexual division of labour as part of capitalism’s drive for both productive and reproductive labour power - both structure and maintain these divisions and gender hierarchies. Third, organizations and policy makers within the state have generally resisted defending and promoting women’s equality, except for brief periods that

converged with other political forces.³⁶ We now turn to each of these sites:

The State

It is generally acknowledged that all modern welfare states have protected *and* advanced women's equality while also working against their emancipation.³⁷ This contradictory nature of the welfare state has been well documented. Linda Gordon's contribution to organizing a complex breadth of feminist scholarship on the welfare state distinguishes three research stages: 1) *discriminatory theories* pointed to how welfare states reinforced androcentric arrangements; 2) *structural theories* emphasized how welfare state policies functioned to economically subordinate women to men; and 3) *women's political-activism and influence theories* which rejected the idea that women were passive victims of welfare state policies.³⁸ Yet, as Julia O'Connor, Ann Shola Orloff and Sheila Shaver remind us, for women, the state is especially significant since it has been "...so important in translating the demands of feminist movements and women citizens...interested in greater gender equality into material social changes and support for the cultural transformations associated with women's entry into the public spheres of work and politics".³⁹ For at least four reasons, then, the state is important in any analysis of women's policy demands since:

- * policies, services and benefits of the state incorporate assumptions about gender roles;
- * women are the major consumers of welfare state services, not only for themselves but for their children and others that are under their care;
- * policies and services of the state both produce and actively shape gender relations in women's entrance into paid labour, their exit from abusive

relationships and care to dependent family members;

* the welfare state has the potential to generate resources, alliances and organizations in women's struggle for change.⁴⁰

This list serves as a reminder that not only is the state of essential consideration when analysing women's role in society and in the economy, it is also directly implicated in sustaining women's inequality. But just how this is achieved differs depending on the socio-cultural context.

The Household and Family

Heather Jon Maroney and Meg Luxton prompt us to be aware that, the "State...is neither simply male nor wholly patriarchal, but a terrain where some gains can be made through struggle...".⁴¹ Yet Vicky Randall also reminds us that all Western welfare states have taken a particular interest in women's lives, notably in the: "...powers within marriage, control of sexuality and fertility, rights and duties as mothers, control of wealth and income, employment, and education"⁴², many of which have to do with women's experiences as "private" individuals. Along with the state's regulation of women in these personal aspects of their lives, particular social institutions, such as organized religions and the family, have constructed gender roles, norms of behaviour and expectations which are deeply embedded in particular cultural contexts and perpetuated by the organizations of the state through public policy outcomes. Of paramount importance in the historical development of gender relations is the family, and/or household, considered the main economic and social unit predating the development of the modern welfare state. That is, in pre-industrial revolution societies, there was no clear distinction between

work and home, public and private.⁴³ Traditional patriarchal societies were socially organized around a patriarch, a male head of the household, who held control over junior males and all females. With the advent of the industrial revolution and the restructuring of work and family, it was assumed that the “impersonal forces of the market” would erode and dismantle patriarchy in the “West”.⁴⁴ The family unit did eventually evolve, yet patriarchal power relations between men and women, and within society, have been lasting and resilient. As Jane Ursel argues, as the concentration of patriarchal power began to erode in the family, the welfare state “was pressured to assume many of the supportive and regulative functions previously confined to the family” the consequence of which was a shift from familial to social patriarchy.⁴⁵

Although women have a long history of engaging in paid labour outside of their domestic duties, their connection to home and hearth has remained relatively steadfast, even with the infusion of women into the paid labour force, in large numbers, in the late 20th century. Women, as well as policy makers, however, had to then begin to deal with the contradictions associated with women attempting to balance domestic labour, of which they assume a disproportionate share, with paid labour. As many feminist analysts see it, the sexual division of labour has resulted in women juggling paid employment with domestic, household responsibilities, with the result being their working a “double day” - one full day in the paid labour market, the second full day at home.⁴⁶

The Economy

Yet paid and domestic labour are not distinct activities - they are two sides of the

same coin - both necessary for capital accumulation and reproduction of classes.⁴⁷ That is, hierarchically defined gender relations have been structured into paid labour markets which means that women's labour is "sold" and "demanded" under very different conditions than men.⁴⁸ By including the capitalist economy in an analysis of gendered policy outcomes, we can understand the relationship between production and reproduction - public and the private space - the way in which women participate in the paid labour market, or why they do not, and the consequences of changes in economic activity which have often profoundly affected the economic reality of women.

Economic development and shifts in economic and political priorities (e.g., downsizing, debt reduction or the retrenchment of social services due to economic restructuring and globalization) have always had grave consequences for women. This is particularly so in light of women's experiences in a segregated labour market and women's often precarious experience in the paid labour force as part-time or temporary workers. Work remains, however, an important part of women's lives, like most individuals in a capitalist system, since "...work not only provides meaning and identity in our lives but also shapes our resources, our social contacts and our opportunities...".⁴⁹

Conclusion: Toward a Feminist Definition of "Institutions"

Feminist-institutionalism highlights the importance of distinguishing the consequences of the separation of private and public space and the concomitant sexual division of labour. One consequence of the division of labour, as Nancy Fraser argues, is the entrenchment of two gender sub-systems: the masculine sphere of "paid" employment

and the feminine sphere of “unpaid” domestic labour.⁵⁰ These gender sub-systems are perpetuated by state actions wherein one set of programs *familializes*, women making claims, e.g. child benefits, as part of a household, while another set of programs *individualizes*, men making claims, e.g., unemployment insurance, based on his identity as a paid worker and sole breadwinner. These gender sub-systems are important for feminist-institutional policy analysis since feminine and masculine policy spheres act as key translation sites in that they (e.g., gender sub-systems) produce certain conceptions of women (and men) and ideas of how to frame policy problems, along with “proper” policy solutions.

This also brings to the fore the importance of discursive politics or the “politics of meaning making”, as Mary Fainsod Katzenstein describes it. This is a significant contribution of the feminist project since women’s strategies for emancipation go beyond interest group politics to interrogating how women are “thought about” in print and in the media or “talked about” through language, speech or conversation. In effect, the politics of meaning-making “...seeks to reinterpret, reformulate, rethink, and rewrite the norms and practices of society and the state” to ensure that conceptual changes lead to material changes for women.⁵¹ With the above in mind, feminist-institutionalism is a framework to:

- a) attend to the history and legacy of welfare state development;
- b) discern the social, economic and political context of policy development;
- c) assess the significance of how and where women’s policy goals are articulated to institutions and agencies within government;
- d) disaggregate conceptions of the state to determine the relevant policy actors

and key policy institutions within the bureaucratic hierarchy;

e) locate how, where and why (or why not) women's experiences are taken into account within that hierarchies; and

f) highlight the language of policy and how it translates the language of women's policy goals.

This chapter has developed a theoretical framework as a guideline to explain why institutions matter for women with the hope of explaining why public policies often have gendered outcomes. This framework is the result of merging feminist political-economy with historical-institutionalism, from a gender perspective. These two streams of thought are actually complementary in three ways. First, both theoretical schools attend to the consequences of history. Second, each perspective understands the importance of institutions of the state as sites of both policy change and policy inertia. Third, each perspective takes account of how formal institutions are embedded into social, economic and cultural contexts, although to differing degrees.

Formal policy institutions are not merely neutral conveyor belts which "input and output" policy choices. Rather, institutions are better conceived of as "instruments of social organization that exercise collective power over a number of generations".⁵² As such, institutions are enduring features of the socio-economic and political landscape, possessing the capacity to structure women's social and economic realities, as well as their ability to effectively engage in a counter-politics of their own. As institutions of social organization, and containers of historical policy legacies, institutions and organizations within government have the power to transform policy preferences of civil actors or groups. As this study attests, however, how those transformation processes play

out in particular cultural contexts, and how they change or shift over time, remains open for comparative analysis. It is to that analysis this study now turns.

Chapter Two - End Notes

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2. Peter A. Hall, Governing the Economy: The Politics of State Intervention in Britain and France, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) p. 20 and Kathleen Thelen and Sven Steinmo, Structuring Politics, pp. 3-4.
3. Kenneth A. Shepsle, "Studying Institutions: Some Lessons from the Rational Choice Approach", Journal of Theoretical Politics (1)2, 1989), p. 133.
4. Peter A. Hall, Governing the Economy, p. 10.
5. Michael M. Atkinson and William D. Coleman, The State, Business and Industrial Change in Canada, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p. 5.
6. Kathleen Thelen and Sven Steinmo, Structuring Politics, p. 5.
7. James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life", American Political Science Review (78), 1984, p. 734.
8. Michael M. Atkinson, Governing Canada: Institutions and Public Policy, (Toronto: Harcourt Brace, 1993), p. 4 and Robert Grafstein, "The Problem with Institutional Constraint", The Journal of Politics (50) 3, August 1988, pp. 577.
9. Definitions of what constitutes an "institution" depends on the variant. Rational choice views institutions as rules, laws and codes of behaviour, either formal or informal, that play a role in the formation of individual preference. Historical institutionalism, on the other hand, places its emphasis on how institutions structure and mediate politics and behaviour arguing that formal organizations (and the rules devised within those organizations) can both influence and even transform the actions and preferences of individuals.
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14. Carole Pateman, "Introduction: The Theoretical Subversiveness of Feminism" in Carole Pateman and Elizabeth Gross, eds., Feminist Challenges: Social and Political Theory, (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1986), p. 8.
15. Carole Pateman, The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism and Political Theory, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), pp. 1-2.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
17. "Patriarchy" is a highly contentious concept, often criticized for being ahistorical and a descriptive concept that cannot fully explain women's subordination. For an overview of these criticisms, see Anna Pollert "Gender and Class Revisited: or, the Poverty of Patriarchy", Sociology (30), No. 4, November 1996, pp. 639-659; and S. Duncan, "Theorising Differences in Patriarchy", Environment and Planning A (26), No. 8, 1994, pp. 117-1194. In order to capture the depth and breadth of how the state has structured and facilitated women's secondary social citizenship, particularly in Ireland, the term "patriarchy" is being applied in this thesis since it is useful to comparatively account for the historical development of the Canadian and Irish welfare states. Patriarchy is defined in this thesis based on the work of Sylvia Walby, as "a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women". See Sylvia Walby, Theorising Patriarchy, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 20. It is important to highlight to the reader that patriarchy is conceived here as a "collective social framework" meaning that not every man is oppressive and every women subordinate (S. Duncan, p. 1178).
18. *Ibid.*, p. 184.
19. Iris Marion Young, "Gender as Seriality: Thinking about Women as a Social Collective", Signs (19), No. 3, Spring 1994, p. 718.
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Part Two: Three Spheres of Policy Transformation

Chapter Three

Sphere One - Policy Goals, Organizational Development and Policy Advocacy

The next few chapters analyse the processes of policy transformation, along with how and why the transformation of NAC's and NWCI's policy goals took place under very different conditions in Canada and Ireland. As countries with unique histories, political systems, governance structures and ideas about the role of women in society, the dynamics of policy transformation unfolded differently.

In both countries, an examination of policy transformation begins with an understanding of the policy goals articulated by NAC and NWCI, along with an appreciation of the organizations representing and promoting those policy goals. And as can be expected, the creation of NAC and NWCI, the development of their policy goals and each organization's capacity to get their policy goals onto the political agenda, were also influenced by circumstances and conditions unique to each country.

The feminist policy goals developed and put forth by NAC and NWCI in the areas of child care and unemployment insurance were more complex than initially expected. Indeed, their policy goals framed around successfully achieving particular policy responses from government in the policy sectors of child care and unemployment insurance were actually part of a package of goals, each relating to the achievement of a broader, ultimate goal - women's equality.

NAC and NWCI developed their policy goals for particular reasons, the most

important of which was to approach government authorities for policy redress. It was important then, to investigate the capacity of NAC and NWCI to generate their policy goals in response, their ability to articulate and explain those goals to policy and political officials and how NAC and NWCI advocated those policy goals to government authorities. By focussing upon policy advocacy, we appreciate each organization's access to government, their relationship with government, their capacity and competency to generate their policy goals and their expertise in penetrating government structures in their attempt to articulate those goals to government authorities.

In the process of communicating to government their respective policy goals, NAC and NWCI become implicated in the transformation process. This was due to a shift in the policy goals that NAC and NWCI presented to government and the ways in which NAC and NWCI were engaged in policy advocacy. Over the course of each organization's development, NAC became more radicalised and hence marginalised from government insisting on maintaining their autonomy from possible government intrusion. NAC, therefore, became an "outsider" from the mainstream government policy processes. NWCI, on the other hand, welcomed and accepted participation on government bodies which for the most part involved supervising the implementation of public policies for the benefit of women. Due in part to the fact that NAC and NWCI developed as feminist organizations at different stages, NWCI was less radicalized than NAC, and given the existence of a neo-corporatist interest representation system, NWCI willingly assumed the role of a government "insider". As noted below, however, this strategy was not universally accepted by all members of the organization.

This chapter takes us back to the establishment of NAC and NWCI in the early 1970s and to the reasons why many women in Canada and Ireland organized to press their governments for policy attention. This chapter begins, however, with an examination of NAC's and NWCI's policy goals in the areas of child care and unemployment insurance.

Part 1 - Policy Goals: Child Care and Unemployment Insurance

In this section, we analyse aspects of NAC's and NWCI's policy goals around child care and unemployment insurance. As further elaborated in Chapter Four, over the course of this study, there were differing institutional structures in place with respect to these policy sectors. In unemployment insurance, there was a well-established program base and bureaucratic organizations that had developed over time in Canada and Ireland due to substantial government intervention in this policy area. In the child care policy sector, however there was far less institutional and program development at the central government level in both Canada and Ireland.

National Action Committee on the Status of Women

Since the early 1970s, child care has been a central focus of NAC's strategy for change given its important role in promoting women's equality. It has been apparent to child care advocates and feminists for some time, for example, that due to inadequate access to child care services, women's ability to exercise their "fundamental right to work" and the consequent right to secure economic independence had been difficult to achieve.¹ Given the steady increase of the labour force participation of women with

young children after the post-war period, the need for child care services for women became all the more acute for women in Canada.

After the establishment of the organization in 1972, NAC advocated and demanded that until such time that free child care was available, parents should pay according to their ability, with no parent paying more than 50 per cent of the cost.² In 1980, NAC added to this mix by demanding the development of a Child Care Act, along with *free* child care services. By 1989, NAC's policy goals had shifted in line with the Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association (CDCAA), one of their member organizations. The shift away from advocating for free day care for all parents to a universally accessible system, however, was criticized by some socialist-feminists within the day care movement. These critics argued that this move paid far less attention to how a parent's class and socio-economic status played a role in the accessibility of day care. Moreover, by demanding a universally accessible system of child care, critics were also concerned that the child care movement was pandering to government officials who held far less radical, that is less socialist, ideas about the politics of child care.³ Arguably, NAC incorporated this shift into its own policy program for two reasons. First, NAC became quite involved in the day care movement during the mid to late 1980s in coalition with other organizations opposed to child care policy developments being advocated by the Conservative government.⁴ Indeed, the policy terrain had undergone a substantial shift during the mid to late 1980s under the neo-conservative agenda of the Mulroney government (see further details below in Part II). NAC was placed in the circumstance of have to forestall major set-backs in the child care area, while also maintaining some

measure of adhering to policy goals that could ultimately have some obvious benefits for women. Under a neo-conservative agenda, wherein the role of women was increasing being discussed in traditional terms, NAC no doubt felt it was politically strategic to “tone down” socialist policy rhetoric. Second, and related to the first, as an umbrella organization, NAC would have to have been sensitive to the policy goals articulated by member organizations. Given the emerging prominence of the CDCAA in the wider policy community of child care, it is not all that surprising that NAC would pass a policy resolution that reflected the ideas and policy strategies of the CDCAA.

In the late 1980s then, NAC began to lobby government for: a) legislation to ensure universally accessible not-for-profit child care; b) open-ended cost-sharing grants to provinces/territories; and c) child care subsidies to low and modest income families.⁵ NAC’s child care policy aspirations were further expanded in 1995 when it specifically began to advocate for a “...national child care program with a comprehensive network of accessible and affordable, publicly-funded, non-profit, high quality child care services complemented by a scheme of parental leaves adapted to diverse family realities.”⁶ This national program would be underpinned by a funding commitment from the federal government, as well as the development of national objectives/principles to ensure universality, affordability and accessibility. The child care system, moreover, would be non-profit, to ensure affordability and access.⁷ Universality meant that child care had to be developed in a way that ensured access to all persons regardless of income or employment status as opposed to a targeted program available to low-income parents administered through the social welfare system.⁸ The concept of universality, for

advocates such as NAC, meant that a child care system needed to be developed and funded as a public service rather than a welfare service. As a public service, a substantial public funding commitment was also required so as to eliminate, or make more affordable, child care fees.

In the area of unemployment insurance, NAC had consistently championed for the restoration and maintenance of a viable unemployment insurance system as an income security support mechanism during temporary interruptions in paid employment. For NAC, income support through a comprehensive unemployment insurance system was particularly significant for women given their caregiving duties in the household and their often precarious attachment to the paid labour force as low-waged, non-standard or “secondary” wage earners.⁹ An unemployment insurance system that did not penalize women was crucial, since women often had to refuse or leave a job due to inadequate child care which would more often categorize women as frequent users or newcomers to the unemployment insurance program thereby threatening their eligibility for UI benefits and the duration of benefits.

Given the existence of an extensive and highly institutionalized unemployment insurance system, during the time frame of this study NAC’s policy goals were largely in reaction to cuts in benefit levels or restrictions imposed on eligibility. From the late 1970s, and much of the 1980s, there were numerous occasions when NAC found themselves responding to proposed or implemented legislative reforms to the UI program that were detrimental to women rather than advocating for new policy goals. Jane Pulkingham documented these changes in her study of UI, arguing that they actually

appeared to be *designed* to disqualify women who had entered the labour market during that period. For example, changes to the system made from 1977 to 1979 required that “new entrants” and “re-entrants” to the system, as well as “repeat users” (which were often women), have additional hours of work to be qualified to receive UI, while workers with less than 20 hours (again, which were many women) were disqualified from receiving UI altogether.¹⁰ In the 1990s, a period when substantial changes were being made to the UI system, NAC’s demands evolved around demanding that UI entitlement remain based on individual rather than family attachment to the labour force, that the “re-entrant” and “new entrant” provisions be rescinded, that the UI system remain in tact “as an essential, national federal program” and that cut-backs and the restructuring of Canada’s UI system not victimize and penalize workers who suffer unemployment and underemployment in an “increasingly precarious job market”.¹¹

National Women’s Council of Ireland

As discussed in Part II below, during the founding era of the organization, NWCI was involved in monitoring the implementation of the Commission on the Status of Women Report during much of the 1970s.¹² It was not until the early 1980s that NWCI outlined their policy goals around child care and unemployment insurance. Indeed, this written document was published in 1981, a product of a national women’s forum held in 1980 in Dublin, to formulate a plan of action for presentation to the government. It is in this document that NWCI called for authorities to “encourage and facilitate the establishment, particularly in local communities, of plans for the systematic development

of childcare services and facilities” which should be “free or at reasonable charge in case of need”.¹³

By 1986, the time when NWCI published its very first official policy document, child care policy goals had been more comprehensively developed which advocated for a “network of publicly-funded and monitored child-care facilities open to all children”.¹⁴ In 1989, NWCI expanded on their policy aspirations, calling on government to develop child care facilities both in the community and in the workplace. NWCI’s attention to workplace child care was unlike the case in Canada, since up to this point in time, many more Canadian women had entered the paid labour force than Irish women had. In order to promote women’s economic independence then, the reconciliation of work and family was often a component of their child care policy goals.¹⁵

In the 1990s, NWCI’s policy goals became more nuanced calling on the government to develop a national child care strategy and infrastructure administered by a dedicated child care agency housed in a Ministry at the national level. Unlike the Canadian case, then, NWCI called on successive Irish governments to establish a government agency mandated to administer the program. Although NAC and NWCI shared some of the same policy aspirations, that is a national child care policy/program, NWCI was also looking for the development of an institutional structure to support that program. In the early 1990s, NWCI also began to focus attention on lobbying for the introduction of income tax deductions for child care expenses associated with employment, a policy practice in existence and administered by the federal government in Canada since the 1970s, but non-existent in the Irish context.¹⁶

Unemployment insurance (unemployment benefits and unemployment assistance) in Ireland is administered under the social welfare system. The social welfare system is a complex array of programs, administered by one government department, Social Welfare. In the mid 1990s, the Irish social welfare system transferred benefits to *one third* of the Irish population through three types of benefits noted in Chapter One: social insurance (compulsory), social assistance (means-tested benefits) and a universal child benefit.¹⁷

Since the early 1980s, NWCI had been especially vigilant in lobbying for the “standardization”, later referred to as the “individualisation”, of unemployment benefits and assistance (UB/UA). The concept of individualization refers to the idea that benefits are calculated based on individual entitlement. Specifically, NWCI argued that individualisation of social security based on *individual* entitlement of benefits, rather than entitlement by virtue of marriage, was crucial since it spoke directly to women’s ability or inability to be recognized in her own right and be economically independent.¹⁸ NWCI had been particularly vocal about individualisation given the discriminatory feature of the social welfare code, based on sex and marital status, which had historically provided less social welfare benefits to married women than single women or men. This situation had long been part of the social welfare code through what was termed the “adult dependent” category of eligibility. NWCI pushed, then, for the elimination of a pervasive “dependency ethos” which was structured into the social welfare system. This policy demand had been articulated by NWCI since the early to mid 1980s with no voluntary movement from Irish governments. It took Directives issued by the EU to force Irish authorities to address the most egregious aspects of the system. The implementation of

the Equality Directive is discussed further in Chapter Seven. Given the complexity and intractability of eliminating the dependency ethos the social welfare system, NWCI's policy goals in the unemployment insurance sector were long-term unlike the situation for NAC in Canada.

Discussion

An interesting feature of NAC's and NWCI's policy goals in the areas of child care and unemployment insurance was their complexity. That is, both NAC and NWCI situated their policy aspirations around child care and unemployment insurance in relation to securing women's economic independence *and* women's equality which was, when packaged together, a comprehensive policy strategy. So while NAC and NWCI were advocating to government for a publicly funded child care system, along with arguing for the implementation and/or maintenance of a non-discriminatory unemployment insurance system, they were *also* advocating for the promotion of women's economic independence and women's equality. We can capture this dynamic in this way:

Organizing goal:	Women's Equality / Gender Equality	
Defining goal:	Women's Economic Independence	
Action goals:	<u>Child Care</u> - national policy/ strategy	<u>UI</u> - non-discriminatory eligibility rules
	- accessible, universal publicly funded	- individualization of benefits

By understanding this dynamic, we come to appreciate that, for NAC and NWCI, their child care and UI policy goals were multifaceted. In many ways it begins with recognizing that women need to secure a measure of economic independence, since “dependence” reinforces inequities and women’s powerlessness. And, NAC and NWCI had long argued that economic independence, or income adequacy as it is sometime referred to in the Irish context, was in part achieved by the development of a national child care system and by ensuring that the unemployment insurance system is non-discriminatory and open to women as fully as it is to men. So, while NAC and NWCI were advocating for specific action/policy goals to government in the areas of child care and UI, these action/policy goals were framed around a policy strategy that also included their defining goal (securing women’s economic independence) and organizing goal (women’s equality or gender equality).

For policy transformation, appreciating the complexity of NAC’s and NWCI’s policy goals was important. First, conceptualizing NAC’s and NWCI’s policy goals as multiple layers nuanced the analysis to capture any substantial changes or shifts in policy goals. For example, evident through an analyses of their policy and program briefs to government officials in 1996, particularly those having to do with briefs given to the social partners NWCI began to use the term “gender equality” when referring to the organization’s overall goal.¹⁹ Although the term “gender equality” was used sporadically, and often in conjunction with the principle of women’s equality, the parallel use of both terms indicated to the author that a rethinking in the organization had taken place. This may have been due to NWCI’s participation on the National Economic and

Social Forum (NESF) and the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) - two organizations central to social partnering in Ireland discussed later in this study. That is, unlike NAC, NWCI was willing to broaden its most important organizational goal, perhaps in an attempt to be conciliatory during policy discussions with the social partners.

The complexity of NAC's and NWCI's policy goals also highlighted another important aspect of policy transformation. Over the life of successive governments, authorities and political elites were at times able to point out to representatives of NAC and NWCI that their respective governments were listening and acting. This was often the case when both the Canadian and Irish governments committed some resources to devising measures to eradicate women's social and economic disadvantage when international forums met, such as the United Nations World Conference on Women in 1985 and the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995.²⁰ Grandiose statements about the importance of promoting women's equality, outlined in a number of published documents, however, did not lead to the implementation of the kinds of policy responses NAC and NWCI were seeking. This scenario also emerged in the context of gender-based policy analysis framework, based on the Canadian federal government's *Federal Plan for Gender Equality*. This strategy promoted the project of "women's equality", but actually was framed in the context of "gender equality". As well, in the Irish context, social partnership agreements made promises to promote social inclusion and women's equality, without making similar commitments to implement any of NWCI's action policy goals.

Due to largely symbolic statements and “commitments” to promote women’s equality, then, government commitments to women’s equality in some sense made it appear as though governments were acting, while also stalling or pushing off the active political agenda NAC’s and NWCI’s action policy goals.

In summary, there are a number of dimensions to the child care and unemployment insurance policy goals advanced by NAC and NWCI that are significant when analysing policy transformation. First, it appeared to make a difference as to whether the policy sector was already established, as with UI and UB, or in the case of child care, largely non-existent.

In the UI policy sector, for instance, NAC and NWCI were lobbying government officials to implement changes to a highly institutionalized policy area. This meant that since a well-established bureaucratic policy process was in place, along with an institutionalized policy discourse/language framed to implement government policy goals, it was all the more difficult for NAC and NWCI to shape the form and substance of UI policy. Institutional memory and practices, underpinned by the policy histories of the UI/UB systems, were highly effective in prohibiting the interjection of a different language or thinking about the policies purpose and objectives.

Given the minimal institutional and policy system at the national level having to do with child care, however, NAC and NWCI had some opportunity to take more control over the policy area in suggesting where within the bureaucracy child care is best developed and what type of language best articulated the policy problem and hence, the policy solution. Since the child care sector was in flux, NAC and NWCI were able to be

more influential, the hope being that their policy ideas would find their way onto the political agenda. In practice, however, NAC and NWCI would make use of certain windows of opportunity, such as the Social Security Review and the social partnership, to make their respective cases.

Finally, as discussed above, NAC's and NWCI's policy goals did not remain static. Indeed, in response to the prevailing political environment which is discussed at some length below, both NAC and NWCI updated and reformulated their policy goals over the period of this study. Two particular instances, however, stand out. First, NAC shifted from advocating for free day care in the early 1970s to a universally accessible system in the 1980s. Second, by 1995, NWCI was articulating some of their action/policy goals within the language of promoting "gender equality" rather than women's equality.

Now that we have an understanding of the policy goals advanced by NAC and NWCI, it is necessary to investigate how these organizations were placed to generate their policy strategies and how they advocated those goals to ensure they would reach the political agenda.

Part II - Organizational Development and Policy Advocacy

The "first wave" of women collectively organizing around common concerns took place from the late 19th century to early 20th century. Initial struggles for these women in many Western industrialized countries, Canada and Ireland being no exception, evolved around acquiring legal recognition, property rights and the franchise. In Ireland,

women's right to vote was also tied to the fledgling country's fight for independence from Britain.²¹ The so-called "second wave" of women's organizing during the late 1960s and 1970s, brought many feminist women together, under many types of feminisms, to advance women's liberation. Some of these feminists advocated an agenda based on achieving women's equality of opportunity. Commonly known as liberal feminism, the overarching goal was that laws should not grant fewer rights to women than men.²² In order to ensure this, liberal feminists looked to the state and government to reform discriminatory policies and practices. Other feminists organized around the mantra "the personal is political", a more revolutionary agenda than liberal feminism. These feminists advocated for the conceptualization of women's "collective identity" and the reconceptualization of established political space and political discourse, having less faith in the state and government to advance women's emancipation. The personal is political became a way of thinking and acting about women's lives and experiences challenging the widely-held belief that politics was just about what took place in national parliaments, within political parties or that women's equality could be achieved by providing a level playing field. For the radical feminist, women's personal lives in the home and family, as well as women's public lives, were symbiotically political since both "sites" of subordination systematically structured men's power over women.²³ As one feminist writer relates:

It is by claiming and redefining the significance of women's struggles at the personal level - both internally and externally - that we can begin to understand our own experience, the common ground we share with other women. It is by addressing the political, that is, collective issues which have to do with men's power over women, work and the State, that we begin to reshape the very systems

and structures that exert decisive influences over every women's life.²⁴

Both NAC and NWC were outgrowths of second wave feminism. As the next section relates, however, each organization's development was influenced by a particular socio-cultural and political context. So too was each organization's capacity to successfully engage in policy advocacy.

Policy advocacy is defined here as "the attempt to influence what will or will not be a matter of public policy, the content of policies as they are being made and the way in which they are implemented...".²⁵ William Coleman has argued that effective and successful policy advocacy is shaped by three factors: the group's *policy process knowledge*, their *political impact knowledge* and *policy specific knowledge*.²⁶ Policy process knowledge entails understanding the policy development process, knowing what actors are involved in the policy process, particularly in key agencies and departments, and having reliable contacts within those organizations. Political impact knowledge refers to the organization having an understanding as to the potential political effects of their policy demands, and how their policy proposals will either be accepted or rejected by government, the media or the public. Policy specific knowledge refers to each organization's capacity to assess government policies and how those policies will affect their members, and the ability to generate a level of technical knowledge and expertise to formulate a response to or develop their own policy proposals. Technical and detailed knowledge developed from these assessments may or may not be solicited by politicians and bureaucrats, thereby giving the organization an indirect influence on the policy process, as well as direct contact with state and bureaucratic actors who may prove to be

helpful contacts for the organization in the future.

To assess each of these aspects of policy advocacy, this chapter turns to the establishment and organizational development of NAC and NWCI, two entities Sandra Burt would categorize as “status of women” groups.²⁷

National Action Committee on the Status of Women

In the mid-1960's, a coalition of women's movement groups, called the Committee for the Equality of Women, lobbied the federal government for the establishment of a commission on the status of women in Canada.²⁸ In February 1967, a Royal Commission was struck to “...inquire into...the status of women in Canada...to ensure for women equal opportunities with men in all aspects of Canadian society...”.²⁹ The Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW) released its *Report* in September 1970 outlining 167 recommendations in the areas of: 1) women in the Canadian economy, 2) education, 3) women and the family, 4) taxation and child care allowances, 5) poverty, 6) the participation of women in public life, 7) immigration and citizenship and 8) criminal law and women offenders, as well as providing a Plan of Action for implementation.³⁰ In general, the RCSW's recommendations were favourably accepted by women's groups, with the exception of radical, left-wing feminists who criticized the Commission for not fully examining causes of women's oppression.³¹ With respect to unemployment insurance, the RCSW stated that:

The federal Unemployment Insurance Plan is not above reproach. This plan, set out in the Unemployment Insurance Act, is intended to provide financial help to workers who have lost their jobs for reasons beyond their control and who are willing and able to take any suitable employment available. On the whole the

provisions are the same for men and women, but there are a few differences in the terms and in the effect they may have on men and women, especially married working women.

Contributions made by women and men are the same but there is a difference in benefits when the contributor has dependents. Under the terms of section 47(3) of the Act, for example, a wife is a dependent if she is “being maintained wholly or mainly” by the husband. A husband, on the other hand, is a dependent if he is “dependent” on his wife.³²

The Commission also stated that discriminations were evident in the unemployment insurance plan since certain kinds of employment were excluded from coverage; occupations dominated by women (e.g., duty nurses, housewives). The RCSW, therefore, recommended:

...that the Unemployment Insurance Act and Regulations be amended to provide a common definition for “dependents” of women and men contributors; and

...that the federal Unemployment Insurance Act be amended to apply to all employees working in an established employee-employer relationship.³³

In the area of child care, the RCSW stated that:

...the Canada Assistance Plan is inappropriate because it is limited to welfare measures. We contend that a day care-centre programme must be conceived on much broader lines. It must be designed for all families who need it and wish to use it. Nothing short of this kind of programme can give Canadian women the help they need in the vital task of caring for their children.

A national Day-Care Act would provide a framework and the incentive for such a programme. Initiative at the provincial government level could then proceed from clearly defined legislation.³⁴

In this vein, the RCSW recommended:

...that the federal government immediately take steps to enter into agreement with the provinces leading to the adoption of a national Day-Care Act under which federal funds would be made available on a cost-sharing basis for the building and running of day-care centres...³⁵

The RCSW became a major transmitter of a set of values which had a hand in shaping the second wave women's movement in English Canada. These values, which included a way of conducting politics, were termed by Jill Vickers as "radical liberalism" to denote a set of ideas and practices that were both reflective of a measure of faith that reforms could be undertaken through the mainstream political process, while also highly critical of the inadequacies of mainstream political institutions to promote women's equality, in essence, a hybrid of liberal and radical feminisms.³⁶ A reflection of the dominant political culture at the time, radical liberalism provided a code of operations for the women's movement framed by:

1. a commitment to the ordinary political process;
2. pro-statism; a belief in the efficacy of state action especially the welfare state;
3. pro-activism; a belief that change is possible;
4. a belief that dialogue with those who differ may be useful; and
5. a belief that helping others, in terms of service, is a valid contribution to change.³⁷

Although the RCSW was viewed as a necessary step to address women's liberation, and the recommendations of the *Report* became a guiding document for many in the English Canadian women's movement, there was the general sense among feminists that the creation and reporting of a Commission would not be enough to compel change. What was needed was a permanent organization of women to ensure that the federal government would act on behalf of women. The Committee for the Equality of Women, therefore, dissolved itself and formed the National Ad Hoc Committee on the Status of Women. With 42 women's groups, mostly consisting of institutionalized women's organizations, not grassroots women's groups which were far more radical in their philosophy and strategies for women's liberation, a *Strategy for Change* conference

was organized in 1972.³⁸ At that conference, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women was created. Since then, the organization's membership, who pay a fee to NAC based on the numbers of individuals in their group, has steadily grown: in 1978 there were 130 member groups, in 1982, 200 women's groups were members, in 1985 there were 395, in 1986 that number grew to 458 and by 1996, NAC was representing over 650 women's groups across Canada.³⁹

Since the 1970s, NAC has received federal government funding, most notably administered through the Women's Program, a bone of contention for those feminists who did not want to become dependent and co-opted by government and vulnerable to swings of the political pendulum. Nonetheless, federal funding provided a regular source of financial stability so needed to nurture and develop a national organization. This funding was readily accepted by NAC on the basis that democratic governments were obligated to support social groups that, left to their own meagre financial resources, would not otherwise be able to take part in interest representation or take an active role in public education. NAC's first federal grant, in 1977, was \$17,500. In 1978 they received \$37,000 and in 1987-88, federal funding had grown considerably to \$543,701.⁴⁰

Since the organization's inception, NAC has subscribed to four principles as set out in the Royal Commission on the Status of Women: 1) women should be free to choose whether or not to take employment outside the home; 2) the care of children is a responsibility to be shared by parents and society; 3) society has a responsibility to women because of pregnancy and child-birth; and 4) in certain areas, women require special treatment to overcome the adverse effects of discriminatory practices (e.g.,

employment equity).⁴¹ One of the very few comprehensive studies of NAC categorized the organization's development into three phases: the founding era, the transitional phase and institutionalization.⁴²

During the *founding era* (1972-1978), NAC's feminist underpinnings were very much wedded to radical liberalism which manifested itself as a "status of women" approach to policy development in the organization. Described as an approach that focussed NAC's attention on policy issues that had a clear "status of women" dimension (i.e., policy issues wherein women had a unique position or were affected in a different way than men), the organization's leaders were responding or reacting to policy positions developed either by government or the mainstream political parties.⁴³ At the time, this approach was not surprising since: a) the organization was created to respond to the recommendations of the Report of the RCSW and monitor its implementation, b) many women's groups, excluding radical feminists, had faith in the formal political process, and c) a conservative feminist perspective predominated within NAC.⁴⁴

A compilation of NAC's policy resolutions indicates that women within the organization have engaged in substantive policy debate since 1972, although the current structure of holding an Annual General Meeting (AGM) and forming an executive were not finalized until 1975. The AGM was the main forum for policy debate in the organization with the executive taking a leading role and responsibility for acting on agreed upon policy goals (e.g., lobbying government officials or organizing demonstrations on Parliament Hill). Along with monitoring the RCSW Report, early objectives of NAC were also to "...serve as an educational and communications link for

women in Canada who are striving to improve their status and to change the traditional attitudes and habits of prejudice towards women...”.⁴⁵ NAC’s lobbying efforts were of two varieties - NAC executive conducted on-going lobbying of government ministers, cabinet members and often gave presentations to Parliamentary Committees and task forces. One of the most visible methods of lobbying the federal government was created in 1977 called the NAC Lobby. Held immediately preceding an AGM, a mass showing of the NAC membership descended on Parliament Hill to press the three mainstream political parties on current or on-going policy issues of concern to women. The main functions of the Lobby were:

1. for NAC delegates to see at first hand how the parties behave and how the top decision-makers respond to issues of the day;
2. to provide education and new skills for the individual delegates in questioning their elected representatives - skills that could carry over to the provincial and local levels;
3. for NAC to exercise and experience its own strength as a lobby organization that wields political clout to persuade new or wavering member groups of that clout;
4. for NAC to gain media coverage.⁴⁶

During the *transitional phase* (1979-1982),⁴⁷ a status of women approach continued in the organization, although NAC began to publicly describe itself as a “feminist organization” an indication of a pending shift in the organization’s approach to policy.⁴⁸ During this time frame, NAC began to look for external “policy experts” to assist in policy development. The Executive also established an internal committee system to develop policy goals outside of the AGM process. By 1981, six policy

committees had been created: social services, employment, pensions, media, constitution and justice.

By all appearances, NAC's organizational objectives were not all that different from its earlier years. During the *institutionalization phase* (1983-1988), these objectives, as stipulated in the Constitution, were to "initiate and work for improvements in the status of women by":

1. actions designed to change legislation, attitudes, customs and practices;
2. evaluating and advocating changes to benefit women, including measures proposed by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, and those adopted by NAC;
3. encourage the formation of, and communication and cooperation among, organizations interested in improving the status of women in Canada;
4. exchange information with member organizations and other interested persons or groups, and providing information to the public about the current status of women and recommend changes for improvement.⁴⁹

Yet within the organization, deep divisions had been growing between feminists.

Socialist and radical feminists increasingly viewed "policy experts" in NAC as representative of a "male" perspective and "male" hierarchy, while other NAC feminists were critical of NAC's centralized policy development, calling for a more decentralized approach allowing for grass-root and diverse input into the organization's policy goals.⁵⁰

Much of NAC's Organizational Review, voted on at the 1986 AGM, addressed these issues. In a 1988 document, the Organizational Review Committee clarified the executive's role, with responsibility for the execution and coordination of policy, giving the AGM sole responsibility for the approval of policy. Moreover, NAC's executive

became more regionally representative, having been predominately comprised of Toronto-based feminists. Future AGM's were held outside of Ottawa and the policy agenda was expanded to include issues relevant to aboriginal, Francophone, disabled and ethnic/immigrant women. Having instituted many of these changes, NAC began to be characterized as a "Parliament of Women" and, to many women, a fully "legitimate" voice of Canadian women.⁵¹ As socialist and radical feminists became more influential in the organization, policy development shifted from a status of women approach to a "feminist politics" wherein policy debates and strategies were devised and developed in NAC rooted in feminist policy analysis.

The decline of a status of women approach in NAC was also a response to a considerable shift in the political and policy environment, which began with the election of the Mulroney Progressive Conservative government in September 1984. Although to a lesser degree in Canada than in the United Kingdom and United States, NAC clashed with the government's policy agenda of privatization and deficit reduction, built upon the mantra that governments needed to do "more with less". This philosophy collided head-on with NAC's policy agenda of advocating for government funded social services for women which included their demand for increased federal funding for child care and unemployment insurance. As Sylvia Beshevkin put it, "Because leading conservatives and women's organizations differed on so many key principles, policy battles between the two sides were bitter, sustained, and virtually unavoidable".⁵² These policy battles were not the only area of concern for NAC. Ostensibly a component of the government deficit reduction program, NAC's federal funding was severely cut in 1989 - by 50

percent over two years. Furthermore, in 1987, the Conservatives were also the first government to refuse to meet with NAC representatives as part of the annual NAC Lobby of Members of Parliament in Ottawa.⁵³ In spite of these set backs, or because of them, women's groups rallied around NAC joining as fee-paying members in unprecedented numbers.

Into the 1990s, NAC's fourth phase, *radicalization*, continued as the backlash against feminism intensified. In 1990, the main funding program for NAC, the Secretary of State Women's Program, had \$1.6 million eliminated from its budget.⁵⁴ Core funding was decreased by 20 percent⁵⁵, and in 1995, the Liberal government eliminated core funding altogether after a reorganization of the federal Women's Program (the funding mechanism).

Under the leadership of Judy Rebick as President, NAC had moments of revitalization, however, taking an active role in constitutional debates during the 1992 Charlottetown Accord referendum, which gave the organization a high public profile due to substantial media attention. As well, NAC increasingly turned its attention to analysing the effects of globalization and economic restructuring on women. Moreover, NAC developed a number of priority areas, outlined in a "Women's Agenda", which included child care, in preparation of a pending federal election in 1993.⁵⁶

In 1993, the 12th President of NAC, Sunera Thobani, was elected as the first women of colour to lead the organization. Ms. Thobani's tenure, from 1993 to 1996, was rather rocky and controversial. That is, some members of NAC were critical of Sunera Thobani's willingness to link with business, purportedly through fundraising.⁵⁷ This was

perhaps not altogether surprising, however, given the difficult financial pressures the organization was under. It was under Sunera Thobani's presidency, for instance, that NAC would have begun to really feel the pinch of government funding cut-backs, while also having to deal with the consequences of government retrenchment in key policy areas of importance to women, such as the changes to unemployment insurance.

Reflecting on the backlash and NAC's subsequent radicalization, Judy Rebick was quoted as saying that she felt that, in the mid 1990s, NAC was entering into a period of renewal.⁵⁸ That is, given the lack of government and media attention, she argued that in order to maintain a presence, and to bring young women into the women's movement, NAC would probably need to focus on grassroots organizing, much like the organization had undertaken prior to its establishment in the early 1970s.

Policy Advocacy

Policy Process Knowledge:

Leadership in NAC during the early years indicates a certain level of political savvy and a knowledge of the public policy process given their connections with established political parties in Ottawa and their participation in mainstream politics. From 1971-74, NAC's first Chair, Laura Sabia, a position now called President, was former President of the Canadian Federation of University Women and had ties with the federal Progressive Conservative Party, while NAC's third chair was Laura Marsden (1975-77) who was well connected to the federal Liberal Party, later appointed a Liberal Senator, and had direct contact with members of the Liberal cabinet. Grace Hartman,

Chair from 1974-75, was politically active in the union movement and the New Democratic Party while also President of the Canadian Union of Public Employees from 1975-76, a position that would have no doubt have made her intimately aware of how policy was developed at the national and provincial levels. Later NAC Presidents, Doris Anderson (1982-84) and Chaviva Hosek (1984-1986) also had ties with the federal Liberal Party. In 1984, Chaviva Hosek was highly influential in achieving NAC's sponsorship of a nationally televised leader's debate on women's issues held in Toronto in August 1985. As President of NAC, Chaviva Hosek also received a measure of mainstream media attention.⁵⁹ NAC's media attention and the political savvy of the leadership was maintained under the Presidency of Judy Rebick (1990-1993), a high profile and out-spoken social activist, particularly when NAC joined with other groups advocating for a new rape law. During this period NAC formed stronger ties with the labour unions, given their collaboration in defending women's rights against an anti-feminist lobby.

Awareness of the public policy process would also have been influenced by NAC's requirement to apply for government funding through the Women's Program, which developed a long-standing relationship with this women's policy agency at the federal level. Inside information and knowledge of the constraints imposed on agencies within government was well known to the organization since one of their early Presidents, Doris Anderson, had been a former Liberal patronage appointment to head the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW), another women's policy agency.

The NAC executive was also aware of the workings of federalism and how it fragmented political relations between levels of government inhibiting the flow of federal funding to the provinces, the development of national policies, and the lack of substantive public input from non-governmental actors due to the predominance of executive federalism. In a document prepared by NAC for the CACSW in 1980 regarding the consequences of “overlapping” jurisdictions on the funding and provision of social services to women, NAC argued that in the area of social services, traditionally under provincial jurisdiction, “...a high priority must be given to meeting women’s needs, as they define them, with the kind of support services they require. Where old institutions have proven to be inadequate, new ones must be developed, with regular funding...”⁶⁰ This study formed the basis of future assessments of federal-provincial relations, most notably having to do with the weaknesses of the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP).

According to NAC:

...The Plan [CAP] was intended to provide a foundation for uniformity and consistency in the availability and delivery of social assistance programs throughout the country, and was aimed at lessening, removing and preventing the causes and effects of poverty, dependence and child neglect.

In any cost-sharing agreement, it is necessary that the provincial government commit funds first before the higher levels of government will contribute. At the best of times this creates problems because different levels of government have different priorities. In difficult economic times it becomes even harder to initiate and maintain programs under these funding mechanisms, particularly in provinces with limited financial resources...Issues dealt with by CAP are largely poverty-related; those social problems which are not necessarily related to poverty [such as child care] can be addressed with only partial success...

It has become increasingly apparent that there is a need either to reform CAP legislation in order to expand the number of services eligible for cost-sharing or to draft new legislation governing the funding of social services.⁶¹

Political Impact Knowledge:

NAC had argued as early as 1984, that a universally accessible and publicly funded child care system was not beyond the realm of possibility since federal funding had been in place for health care and post-secondary education.⁶² NAC could also rely on the fact that national objectives had already been stipulated for another policy area under provincial responsibility and that was health care, as administered under the 1984 *Canada Health Act*. This broached the possibility of devising similar national objectives for child care, along with and a similar federal-provincial collaborative arrangement.⁶³ For day care advocates, the application of the same principles as the *Canada Health Act* - that is, the requirement of provinces to ensure a comprehensive, universal, non-profit administration, accessible and portable health care system in exchange for federal transfer payments - could also be patterned in the child care sector.⁶⁴

On the UI front, NAC had been unyielding in its argument that women had to be treated on an equal basis with men in any measures that had to do with the paid labour market. This, after all, was one of the key measures to ensure women's economic independence. NAC felt it was worth fighting to maintain a system of income security, since many reforms to UI were more detrimental to women than men. Giving this claim credence, NAC often presented their argument for the maintenance of the UI system as part of comprehensive analyses of the economy and job creation. They often pointed to the need to be aware of the changing economy and how women were affected, reminding successive governments of the need for income security through UI due to sustained levels of high unemployment during this period.⁶⁵

Major opponents of NAC's policy aspirations were often visibly articulated via the New Right agenda, and neo-conservative ideas. As noted above, the Mulroney government and NAC clashed on the role of the welfare state and government spending on social programs. There was also a noticeable strain of social conservatism during child care debates in the 1980s arguing for the maintenance of the traditional family and the caring of children within the home.⁶⁶ Perhaps one of the best expressions of this sentiment has been articulated by REAL Women of Canada - a fervent opponent of NAC. Federally incorporated in 1983, REAL Women, standing for Realistic, Equal, Active, for Life, have claimed to represent Canada's "new women's movement" purporting to support "thousands" of Canadian women and men who do not accept NAC's "narrow feminist perspective".⁶⁷ REAL Women's policy aspirations revolve around the advancement of women's equality by way of promoting and integrating the importance of family life, based on the Judeo-Christian understanding, into government policies and legislation. In the area of child care, REAL Women have advocated for a system that provides choice to parents through "...direct payments to the family which would provide the flexibility of keeping its child support monies for a parent to stay in the home, to spend on day care, whether government or community operated, or private (i.e., a nanny or relative) or a combination of the above".⁶⁸

Policy Specific Knowledge:

NAC's demand for a national child care policy has been part and parcel of a groundswell of support that spanned across various types of groups within civil society

and regional jurisdictions. Indeed, the realization of a national child care policy has been part of a much wider, broad-based child care movement, since the 1970s, which has included over the years, prominent union associations, child care service providers at the community level, and advocacy associations/groups at the municipal, provincial and national level (e.g., Canadian Labour Congress, Metro Toronto Coalition for Better Child Care, Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association). In the development of their policy in child care, then, NAC has had at their disposal a plethora of experts, advocates and ground-level individuals who have focussed a substantial amount of attention on the development of a comprehensive, national child care system. This gave NAC a coalition and network of experts from which to draw expertise in the policy area and, in conjunction with these other groups, assess government action or inaction.

NAC's policy specific knowledge has also been facilitated by the expert and political knowledge of its leadership as noted above. In conjunction with the leadership, NAC's technical knowledge of the policy areas and their own policy responses were often developed by "policy experts" and in-house policy committees, since the organization's institutionalization, dedicated to specific policy issues.

Council for the Status of Women (CSW)/National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI)

In the late 1960s, 11 women's groups organized into an ad hoc Committee on women's rights to approach the Irish government for the establishment of a Commission

on the Status of Women.⁶⁹ The ad hoc committee's efforts were rewarded when a Commission on the Status of Women (the Commission) was appointed in March 1970 by the Minister of Finance:

“To examine and report on the status of women in Irish society, to make recommendations on the steps necessary to ensure the participation of women on equal terms and conditions with men in the political, social, cultural and economic life of the country and to indicate the implications generally - including the estimated cost - of such recommendations”.⁷⁰

In the policy area of child care, the Commission recommended the:

...provision of facilities [creches/day nurseries] should be a condition for the grant of planning permission for such schemes [new housing] where many women may have an economic necessity to take up part-time work.⁷¹

This recommendation was framed in the very adamant and unanimous position of the Commission that the care of “babies and children”, at least up to the age of three,

...should, if at all possible, be cared for by the mother at home and that as far as re-entry to employment is concerned, the provision of day care for such children must be viewed as a solution to the problems of the mother who has particularly strong reason to resume employment.⁷²

Regarding discriminations in the social welfare system, the Commission reported that married women were treated differently from men in two ways. First, upon marriage, women were disqualified from obtaining unemployment benefit until 26 employment contributions were paid after marriage. Second, when married women did re-enter insurable employment, they were paid a benefit at a special rate lower than that of men and single women, even though full contribution rate was paid. In response to this unequal treatment, the Commission recommended:

...that a women should retain any accumulated title to social insurance benefit after marriage but that the present marriage grant should at the same time be

abolished, [and]

...that the Department of Social Welfare should have as an objective the abolition of the special rate of benefit payable to married women and its replacement by the rate of benefit payable to single persons.

The Commission also related that certain conditions applied for single women and not for men. Specifically, single women applicants, for unemployment assistance, were required to have at least one dependent, or at least 52 ordinary-rate employment contributions over four contribution years preceding the application, to qualify. The Commission, therefore, recommended that this special contribution condition, targeted towards single women, be abolished.⁷³

Following the Commission's reporting in December 1972, women's groups were approached by the members of the then disbanded ad hoc committee to form a new umbrella organization to represent, and sustain discussion on, the status of Irish women, as well as to monitor the implementation of the Commission's 49 recommendations and 17 suggestions. From a meeting of 20 women's groups, the Council for the Status of Women (CSW) was founded in 1973 by traditional and liberal feminist groups. The CSW changed its name in 1995 to the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCi). Since the organization's inception, membership, via an annual fee, steadily grew. In 1981, 32 groups were members with a representation of 250,000 women. In 1983, 38 groups were members, and by 1986, group membership had grown to 54. In 1993, 119 women's groups had become members. By 1996, 125 groups were affiliated with CSW, representing an estimated 300,000 Irish women.⁷⁴ First government funding to sustain the operation of the CSW was received in 1975 (IEP 4,000) for International Women's

Year. The first central government grant was received in 1979, and was readily welcomed by the CSW in order to sustain and carry out their work. In 1986, the government grant was IEP 84,000, which was increased in 1989 to IEP 93,000 and IEP 114,000 in 1991.⁷⁵ During the mid to late 1980s, funding was scaled back when the Irish government implemented cost reduction measures across government programs (e.g., health, education and social welfare). The budget of Women's Affairs, was decreased by 25 percent in 1986 - which meant a dramatic reduction in government funding to the CSW.⁷⁶

Responsibility for the administration of government funding to the CSW/NWCI had changed over the years, ranging from the Department of the Taoiseach, Prime Minister's office, Department of Labour, Women's Affairs and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.⁷⁷ The CSW/NWCI has also received important funding from the EU, via the European Social Fund, administered through the Irish Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, for special European Union sponsored projects such as NOW (New Opportunities for Women), through the European Commission's Third Medium Term Programme on Equal Opportunities (1991-1995) to support women's employment in the paid labour market.⁷⁸

In the early years, the Council for the Status of Women's stated objectives were to:

1. provide a liaison between government and women's organizations;
2. press for the implementation of the Report of the Commission;
3. provide educational and development programs for men and women aimed at giving women the opportunity to participate fully in the social, economic and political life of Ireland;
4. consider legislative proposals of concern to women;

5. examine and combat cases of discrimination against women.⁷⁹

In 1986, these goals were expanded to include acting as a liaison between “...Government, the Commission of the European Communities, Women’s Organizations and the Council”.⁸⁰ Indeed, in 1981, CSW had already promoted itself as having “consultative status” with government, was the EEC recognized body for Irish women and the “voice of the women’s movement “ in Ireland.⁸¹

The history of the contemporary women’s movement, however, reveals the development of two distinct streams - the liberal/reformist stream as represented by the CSW and a more radical, leftist stream, historically known as the Irish Women’s Liberation Movement (IWLM), with no obvious structural links between the two.⁸² When the IWLM began in the early 1970s, it consciously “....distinguished itself carefully from the reformist “Women’s Rights” feminism of the earlier group [the CSW]”, and made itself visible to Irish society in 1971 with the publication of its manifesto, *Chains or Change? The Civil Wrongs of Irish Women*, and the promotion of this manifesto on national television.⁸³ Yvonne Fitzsimons has even suggested that since the CSW was founded by traditional and moderate feminist groups who were largely “...unfamiliar with the critiques of society being developed by socialist and radical feminists”, the CSW was “...not part of the social and political process that was to manifest itself as the second wave feminist movement in Ireland”.⁸⁴ As this study indicates, however, CSW’s membership base would eventually diversify encapsulating both reformist and radical feminist ideas and strategies for change. In order to discern shifts in the organization, four phases of development can be distinguished: the founding era, community

organizing and consciousness raising, diversification and institutionalization and social partnership.

During the *founding era* (1973 - 1979), CSW concentrated on the implementation of the Commission on the Status of Women Report. CSW largely did so through an invitation by the Minister of Labour - the lead department charged with monitoring the implementation of the Report - to sit on The Women's Representative Committee (WRC). This committee, set up in 1974, was established "...to ensure that by the constant surveillance of the general position of women in Ireland, steady progress would be made to rid our society of discrimination against women."⁸⁵ The WRC comprised of thirteen members - four nominees each from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and the Federated Union of Employers, three nominees of the Council for the Status of Women, one nominee of the Economic and Social Research Institute and a legal advisor nominated by the Minister of Labour.⁸⁶ Two progress reports were produced, in 1976 and 1978, overviewing concrete measures taken on the recommendations of the Commission.⁸⁷ CSW's involvement on the WRC, however, was not supported by all member organizations. While the CSW welcomed the chance to take on the role as an organization representing Irish women on the WRC, one member organization, the Women's Political Association, overwhelmingly rejected the composition of the committee. Instead, the Women's Political Association argued that experts from each policy area covered in the Report be appointed to the committee to enable the WRC to "maintain a balanced programme and outlook".⁸⁸

After having been involved in the monitoring process of the Commission's

Report, CSW entered into a *Community Organizing and Consciousness Raising* phase (1980 - 1985). This phase of the CSW's development was a necessary step to situate itself as an organization for women, in conjunction with their role as the "recognized" voice of women to the Irish and European governments. This required engaging a broad range of women at the community level in the formulation of policies and strategies. This process began incrementally, initially via a National Women's Forum held in Dublin in November 1980. The National Forum, entitled *How Much Do We Need to Do?* called upon the women of Ireland to "...participate in forming a National Plan of Action to be presented to the Government".⁸⁹ The Forum was officially opened by Charles Haughey, then Taoiseach, the Prime Minister, and by the President, Patrick Hillery. Much of the Forum discussed and analysed strategies to follow-up on the UN World Conference of Women held in Copenhagen the previous July. Domestic policy issues were also discussed, such as women's employment, framed within the context that "...women could not achieve full equality in employment..." as long as adequate child care was not available.⁹⁰ In consideration that "women in the home" were not well represented at the Forum, the CSW held nation-wide "Get-Togethers" in late 1981. In all, the CSW organized eight Get-Togethers in differing regional areas of Ireland - three were held in Dublin, while the remaining five were held in Wexford, Dundalk, Cork, Athlone and Galway.⁹¹ At these Get-Togethers, the need for child care was a dominant issue. Discrimination in the social welfare system was less of a priority, although many women called for increases and the "standardisation" of social welfare payments.⁹²

As membership in the CSW grew, and the political environment shifted,

ideological perspectives expanded beyond the organization's original liberal/reformist tendencies. Although it is difficult to pinpoint, the organization appears to have been *diversifying* in the early 1980s, with solidification by the mid to late 1980s. During the 1980s, more "radical", or "non-reformist", feminist groups increasingly viewed the CSW as a viable umbrella organization to represent their interests. We can see evidence of this when groups such as the Dublin Lesbian Discussion Group, University College Dublin (UCD) Women's Studies Forum and the Limerick Rape Crisis Centre became members in 1986.⁹³ Diversification grew along with the *Institutionalization* of the organization (1986 - 1992), evident due to the publication in 1986 of the organization's first annual report and first comprehensive articulation of the CSW's policy goals, and the publication of the organization's official policy statements. It has been suggested that, at this point in the organization's development, a managerial approach to policy development was undertaken, placing a greater emphasis on planning and prioritizing.⁹⁴

Planning and prioritizing were arguably viewed as necessary due to the political environment during the mid 1980s, when government spending reductions were implemented. CSW increasingly became frustrated over being marginalised and ignored by government officials. Indeed, the CSW's Annual Report for 1986 indicates that the CSW had not met with the Taoiseach since 1981, and had been experiencing great difficulty in securing meetings with government ministers.⁹⁵ It is not surprising, then, that CSW sought support from all political parties during a general election campaign in 1989 to establish a second commission on the status of women. The CSW was successful in securing this support and lobbied the newly elected Fianna Fail-Progressive Democrat

coalition government to live up to their campaign commitment. In November 1990, the government struck this commission comprised of representatives from the CSW and the social partners - business, trade union and farming interests.⁹⁶ The Second Commission on the Status of Women was directed to:

...review the implementation of the recommendations of the first Commission...[and]...to consider and make recommendations on the means, administrative and legislative, by which women will be able to participate on equal terms and conditions with men in economic, social, political and cultural life and, to this end, to consider the efficacy and feasibility of positive action measures...⁹⁷

The Second Commission on the Status of Women's *Report to Government*, published in January 1993, reflected changes that had been taking place in Ireland since the last Commission on the Status of Women published in the early 1970s. The Second Commission dealt with controversial issues such as access to abortion, and recommended that gender proofing of government proposals be implemented. The Commission also recognized the importance of women's economic independence and that the individualisation of social welfare payments, along with increased state funding and the development of a policy on child care as an equality issue, were crucial in the promotion of women's equality.

CSW was also able to increase their presence in policy debates, when they became a member of the National Economic and Social Forum (NESF) in 1993. CSW was included on the NESF as one of the so-called "third strand" members. The other two strands consisted of representatives from the government and opposition parties, and the social partners. CSW's participation on the NESF is analysed in some length in Case Study #2, Chapter Six. Inclusion on the NESF was an important step, according to

NWCI, since it paved the way for CSW's membership on the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) in 1996 as one of the social partners. In anticipation of *social partnering*, the fourth phase of organizational development, CSW instigated an internal strategic review. The review began in 1995, with implementation of the organization's strategic plan in 1996. The Executive identified three key forces affecting the future of the organization:

a) increasing diversity in the views, values and activities of women's groups: making it essential, if the Council is to be effective, to have an agreed common vision to which all members much subscribe;

b) increasing professionalisation of voluntary sector organisations and lobby groups thus requiring the Council to professionalise further its own operations as member organisations and women generally come to expect high quality service and support;

c) the growth across the world of religious and moral fundamentalism, possibly resulting in the setting of a conservative agenda by forces seeking to unravel the gains made by Irish women over the past twenty five years, leading to the necessity for the Council to be strong enough to determine the agenda so as to counter the encroachment of such forces.⁹⁸

As a result of the review, the CSW's name was changed to the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI). The executive formed sub-committees to deal with membership, services and staffing, and also hired its first policy analyst. Four issue based panels were established, on Health, Social Affairs, Education and Work, to shadow the work of Irish parliamentary committees and the European Parliament. The panels were also created to put into place an internally generated and professionalized system to develop policy proposals, develop expertise in issue areas of relevance to the organization, and to act as a source of information for member groups.

Policy Advocacy

Policy Process Knowledge:

NWCI's awareness of the policy process would have been facilitated by the relatively small size of the Irish government bureaucracy, providing opportunities for networking and job opportunities through transfers to organizations throughout the political system. For example, past members of NWCI have become members of parliament, or members of key governmental agencies. Carmel Foley acted as Chief Executive of CSW from 1990 to 1993, and thereafter went on to serve as Chief Executive of the EEA. Ms. Foley had also been a public servant in the Department of Foreign Affairs prior to joining the CSW.⁹⁹ Indeed, Carmel Foley thought her experience and knowledge of the Irish bureaucracy was essential to the organization, particularly at that time. In her words, bridges needed to be built between NWCI and government officials. As she saw it, "...there was mega-phone communication between interest/civil society groups and public officials....the civil service was very defensive".¹⁰⁰ Another notable member of NWCI was Frances Fitzgerald, Chair of CSW from 1988 to 1992. She went on to serve in the lower house and, on occasion, would interrogate ministers during question period as to whether their departments had implemented gender proofing, a process promoted by CSW. By doing so, Ms. Fitzgerald was reminding members of parliament of their collective obligation toward women.¹⁰¹

NWCI's knowledge of the policy process was also facilitated by their membership on a variety of government commissions and agencies. As mentioned above, CSW representatives were appointed to both the first and second Commissions on the Status of

Women. Carmel Foley and Frances Fitzgerald served as CSW appointees on the Second Commission on the Status of Women. Since 1977, CSW had also been represented on the EEA. The policy process, then, would have been well known.

Political Impact Knowledge:

As with NAC, the articulation of policy goals to promote women's equality have been viewed by NWCI as being of a matter of social citizenship, particularly due to women's rather unique position in Ireland compared to other Western liberal democracies. NWCI was quite comfortable in articulating their measures to increase the availability of child care, especially since the EU Childcare Network had been advocating much the same, resulting in a European Council Recommendation on Childcare in 1992. This EC Recommendation would surely have given NWCI's claims legitimacy, particularly given the benefits Ireland was experiencing as members of the EU (e.g., infrastructure funding).

NWCI also had links with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) and some union women had been members on the NWCI executive. Furthermore, a number of NWCI's affiliates, or member groups, were trade unions, e.g., the Civil & Public Service Union and the Public Service, Executive Union. There was, however, no obvious written evidence that trade unions supported the concept of individualization per se. There is evidence, however, that women within trade unions were supportive of NWCI's general demand for the equal treatment of women in the labour market. Union women had been advocating for equal pay since the late 1950s. Indeed, the ICTU had established a

Women's Advisory Committee for the purpose of increasing trade union organizing of women, and to act as an advisory committee on economic, industrial, and social matters of concern to women.¹⁰² This included the development of child care services, especially important for working women.

Support from the EU on the issue of individualization began to percolate in the mid-1990s. At conference during the time of Ireland's Presidency of the European Union in October 1996, individualization and social rights between men and women were discussed. At this conference, the European Commission related its intention to "...make proposals for the removal of discriminatory fiscal and social protection policies and for the individualisation of rights", as outlined in the *White Paper on European Social Policy*.¹⁰³ Moreover, it was further reported at this conference that in the EU's Fourth Medium-Term Social Action Programme (1996-2000), the theme of individualisation would once again be broached in the context of the Commission's overall goal of reconciling family life and work, and in the promotion of women's equal treatment in social security.

Substantial opposition to NWCI's proposals emanated from Irish governments who were interested in minimizing "excessive" government spending. The introduction of individualization in the social welfare system, along with funding directed towards increasing child care services, would have put a strain on government revenues. Furthermore, in order to eradicate dependency in the social welfare system, a major overhaul would have been required, since a substantial portion of Irish citizens were beneficiaries of social welfare benefits (e.g., widow pensions, disability and injury

payments, workers compensation, family income supports, child benefits, payments to the elderly, maternity benefits, etc.). Indeed, figures from the Department of Social Welfare indicate that in 1987, there were 739,538 and 1,365,509 recipients and beneficiaries of weekly social welfare payments respectively and in 1996, 874,335 and 1,485,539 recipients and beneficiaries.¹⁰⁴ One potential outcome of a major overhaul to the social welfare system would be the possible expansion of the number of people eligible to receive benefits. Irish authorities were not prepared to take on this added expense. Moreover, individualization was not viewed as a priority by Irish authorities, partly because there has been no *substantial* pressure to institute such a measure. The EU may have done a lot of talking about individualization, but there had been no directives passed by the European Commission to compel policy change. As an Irish government representative related to the author, it was assumed that over time, elements of dependency would “naturally” abate as more women entered the paid labour market.¹⁰⁵

Policy Specific Knowledge:

As noted above, NWCI did not become institutionalized until the mid to late 1980s when the organization officially formulated and published its policy platform. The organization’s ability to assess and generate technical knowledge and expertise about public policy, which would have facilitated their own in-house policy responses, was generally hindered by the organization’s relatively slow institutionalization. During the time of this study, there is little evidence that NWCI attempted to fully explicate the concept of standardization or individualization, nor were there attempts to frame this

policy goal within broader debates about equality in social security system. This may in part be explained by Yvonne Galligan's observation that when the work of the WRC was completed in 1978, government authorities and NWCI agreed that the NWCI would monitor progress on women's rights in areas *other* than employment, since the newly created Employment Equality Agency (EEA) would be responsible for this policy area.¹⁰⁶

It could be argued, then, that NWCI had not considered employment programs, such as the unemployment insurance system, a priority and therefore did not spend valuable organizational resources in developing policy demands. As the organization prepared to enter the social partnership process in the early-mid 1990s, however, NWCI eventually began to assess and analyse the concept of individualization more fully.

There is little doubt that NWCI's knowledge of policy issues of concern to women would have been facilitated by NWCI's connection to the European Network on Childcare, by their networking with the European Women's Lobby (EWL), and by their involvement with the NOW project. As the "officially" recognized voice of women by the EU, representatives of NWCI often attended symposiums and conferences sponsored by the EU. These conferences would have provided NWCI with the opportunity to assess Ireland's programs with other jurisdictions and to gauge what policy proposals were being considered at the EU level. However, due to the absence of an in-house policy machinery of their own, which was not developed until the mid-late 1990s when NWCI created policy issue committees, the organization's capacity and ability to assess and respond to government policy action or inaction were no doubt hindered.

Discussion

NAC and NWCI are organizations that grew out of a collective desire by certain feminist women to organize into permanent entities to monitor the implementation of recommendations of Status of Women Commissions. During the early years, both organizations subscribed to liberal-feminist principles and strategies of change. Both NAC and NWCI eventually underwent an expansion of their membership base and the types of feminisms captured under the umbrella of each organization. Both NAC and NWCI became more radicalized as their respective organizations became institutionalized. NAC's radicalization, however, was more substantial, in part explained by the expansion of membership. It was also attributed to each organization coping with funding cuts, and associated changes in the political environment, which began in earnest during the 1980s altering their relationship to government. Again, NAC's experience was far more stark in this regard than NWCI's. This was largely due to the fact that a neo-conservative agenda and strong anti-feminist forces, here read as an attack on the feminist movement and NAC as one of its most visible representatives, were absent in the Irish case. In Canada, NAC was both dealing with the shift in the political agenda as presented by the Conservative government elected in 1984, while also fielding criticisms from R.E.A.L. Women. These circumstances compelled NAC to fight back as a "Parliament of Women" taking a clear and unwavering stand based on their feminist principles. In contrast, although NWCI did become more open to radical forms of feminism, it nonetheless described itself as a liberal-feminist organization to the author. Liberal-feminist principles, of course, would have found more favour with decision makers

within the Irish political system.

The opportunity, or willingness, to become an insider shaped how NAC and NWCI engaged in policy advocacy. Of interest to note here is the vast difference in how monitoring the recommendations and/or suggestions of the respective Status of Women Commissions were undertaken, and the different roles NAC and NWCI played. In Canada, NAC clearly stood “outside” of governmental processes, purposely developing itself into its own “enduring institution” - a Parliament of Women - to ensure control and autonomy. Although NAC was never invited by government officials to join in the monitoring process of the RCSW’s recommendations, and it is unclear whether NAC would have accepted the invitation, they nonetheless took a keen interest in ensuring that the promises of the RCSW were implemented. This situation was unlike the scenario in the 1970s when NAC had a relatively good relationship and connection to government through the Liberal Party.

Conversely, NWCI can be considered to be an “insider” during the monitoring phase since they were invited to sit on the WRC that was mandated to oversee the implementation of the Commission’s recommendations by the Irish government. NWCI’s insider position was cemented even further when they were invited to participate on the NESF with eventual membership on the NESC as a “social partner”. Indeed, although NAC would certainly be considered an important “stakeholder” to government officials, they were only one organization of many representing women in Canada. In Ireland, however, NWCI is considered to be the “official voice” of Irish women recognized as such by both Irish and EU officials.

Perhaps because of their outsider role, by the mid 1980s, NAC had become a fully institutionalized organization. On the other hand, NWCI's later institutionalization may well have been due to their involvement in implementing the Commission on the Status of Women's recommendations within the established governmental institutions, leaving them less opportunity (or desire) to nurture and develop their organization until well after its establishment. Indeed, during the early years, NWCI was still engaged in grassroots mobilizing and did not begin to institutionalize until late in the 1980s and early 1990s. By that time, NAC was well-established, developing their internal policy expertise well before NWCI. NAC, then, had developed more internal expertise and institutional capacity to engage in policy advocacy.

NAC's capacity to generate an in-house policy development machinery was further buttressed by NAC's link with an established and highly visible day care movement in Canada. This movement, a constellation of social, labour and other types of social justice groups, assisted NAC in their efforts to articulate their ideas around child care while also providing a viable network in which to lobby their action/policy goals to government. Although NWCI was attached to the European Network on Childcare, a valuable source of information, elite contacts, this network was at the supra-national level and not domestically located as was the case in Canada. Yet, since NWCI was at the table with government officials as one of the social partners, one can make the argument that NWCI had more immediate access to government officials which better situated the organization to influence policy development. As the following chapters relate, however, this was not necessarily the case given other government priorities and institutional

barriers. Indeed, although NAC had more organizational and internal policy expertise, both NAC and NWCI would push up against formidable institutional barriers when engaging in policy advocacy.

Conclusion

This chapter analysed how NAC and NWCI were implicated in the transformation process. On one front, NAC and NWCI were tied to the transformation of policy goals because of their desire to be the representatives of women as “direct policy generators”.¹⁰⁷ This sentiment is of utmost importance to these organizations for two reasons. First, due to the patriarchal legacies that permeate each of their country’s unemployment insurance system, and the concomitant lack of child care, NAC and NWCI were bound to respond to these conditions with critical assessments and policy solutions to eradicate the discriminatory features of these policies. Second, and related to the first, as feminist organizations, NAC and NWCI firmly believed that policies that have the most benefit to women take into account women’s perspectives and lived experiences, albeit to differing degrees given the differences in their feminisms.

On the other front, NAC and NWCI were linked to the transformation process because their own policy objectives shifted over time. We saw this with the change in NAC’s policy goal of advocating for free child care to a program based on universal accessibility. We also saw a fundamental shift in NWCI’s organizing goal with the redefinition of “women’s equality” into “gender equality”.

Ultimately, NAC strategized to maintain its autonomy and radical feminist

position apart from the mainstream public policy processes. NWCI, on the other hand, welcomed the opportunity to participate on a number of government bodies directed to monitor and/or develop public policies. The question then becomes: Given substantial differences in institutional structures, and hence the degree of policy access available to NAC and NWCI, was NWCI more successful in interjecting their policy ideas? Did NWCI encounter fewer institutional barriers? These questions are broached in the next chapter .

Chapter Three - End Notes

1. NAC, Index of Abridged Resolutions, p. 15. Resolution 300.10.2/77 states “That women’s fundamental right to work be recognized.”
2. NAC, Index of Abridged Resolutions, 1972 to 1995, p. 5. Resolution 100.30.5/77.
3. Susan Prentice, “The “Mainstreaming” of Daycare”, Resources for Feminist Research (17) 3, 1988, p. 60.
4. Rianne Mahon, “Both Wage Earner and Mother”: Women’s Organizing and Childcare Policy in Sweden and Canada” in Linda Briskin and Mona Eliasson, eds., Women’s Organizing and Public Policy in Canada and Sweden, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1999), p. 260.
5. NAC, Index of Abridge Resolutions, p. 6. Resolution 100.30.15/89. Child care subsidies are administered by the provinces in part funded by the federal government through transfer payments under the Canada Assistance Plan. CAP was replaced by the Canada Health and Social Transfer in 1995. Child care subsidies are a needs-based targeted scheme typically administered as part of the provincial social assistance program.
6. Ibid., p. 7. Resolution 199.30.23/95.
7. The child care movement was in agreement that *for-profit* child care centres did not offer an affordable and accessible service, nor an environment for children, that equalled non-profits, arguable because for-profits were more interested in the bottom-line than in quality child care.
8. Martha Friendly, Child Care Policy in Canada: Putting the Pieces Together, (Don Mills: Addison-Wesley, 1995), p. 185. This discussion of universality and affordability taken from this source.
9. Non-standard work is generally taken to mean part-time work, self-employment, part-year employment, temporary or contract work and at-home paid work. See Harvey J. Krahn and Graham S. Lowe, Work, Industry and Canadian Society, (Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1993), p. 92.
10. Jane Pulkingham, “Remaking the Social Divisions of Welfare: Gender, “Dependency”, and UI Reform”, Studies in Political Economy (56), Summer 1998, p. 18,
11. NAC, Resolutions, 1996, pp. 17-18.
12. Readers are reminded that at this juncture, NWCI was known as the Council for the Status of Women (CSW).

13. CSW, Irish Women Speak Out - A Plan of Action, (Dublin: Co-Op Books, 1981), p. 66.
14. CSW, CSW Information Pack, 1986 p. 8.
15. CSW, Annual Report, 1989, (no page numbers), Annual Report, 1990, p. 24 and Annual Report 1991, p. 2.
16. Council for the Status of Women, Annual Report: 1986, p. 17; Council for the Status of Women, Annual Report: 1991, p. 2; National Women's Council of Ireland, Press Release, "Women's Council - Setting High Standards for National Childcare Plan", June 15, 1998. In Canada, the Child Care Expense Deduction, administered through the Income Tax Act, was created in 1971.
17. Mel Cousins, The Irish Social Welfare System: Law and Social Policy, (Dublin: The Round Hall Press, 1995), p. 9 and p. 12.
18. Eithne McLaughlin, "Economic Independence and Individualisation", Paper prepared for presentation to the Combat Poverty Agency, Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, December 10, 1997, p. 2.
19. NWCI, Proposals on Gender Equality Issues, National Programme for Social Partnership, November 1996.
20. Canada, Status of Women Canada, Women's Equality in Canada: Progress in Implementing the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, 1995; Canada, Status of Women Canada, Canada's National Report to the United Nations for the Fourth World Conference on Women, 1994, Canada, Status of Women Canada, Progress Toward Equality for Women in Canada 1985-1995: From Nairobi to Beijing, 1995. Ireland, United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, National Report of Ireland, (Dublin: Stationery Office, October 1994) and Ireland, Ireland's Combined Second and Third Reports under the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, (Dublin: Stationery Office, February 1997).
21. Margaret Ward, "Suffrage First - Above All Else! An Account of the Irish Suffrage Movement" in Ailbhe Smyth, ed., Irish Women's Studies Reader, (Dublin: Attic Press, 1993), pp. 20-44. See also Louise Ryan, "A Question of Loyalty: War, Nation, and Feminism in Early Twentieth-Century Ireland", Women's Studies International Forum (20) 1, January-February 1997.
22. Alison M. Jaggar, Feminist Politics and Human Nature, (New Jersey: Roman & Littlefield, 1988), p. 35.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

24. Helen Levine, "The Personal is Political: Feminism and the Helping Professions" in Angela R. Miles and Geraldine Finn, eds., Feminism in Canada: From Pressure to Politics, (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1982), p. 177.
25. William D. Coleman, Business and Politics: A Study of Collective Action, (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), p. 48.
26. Ibid., pp. 48-49.
27. Status of women groups are described by Sandra Burt as multi-purpose promoting a range of interests such as abortion, employment opportunities, women's economic status and lesbian rights. Other types of women's groups include traditional groups, service groups and women's shelters. See Sandra Burt, "Canadian Women's Groups in the 1980s: Organizational Development and Policy Influence", Canadian Public Policy (16) 1, March 1990, p. 20.
28. The call for a Commission came most vigorously from the English women's movement and was supported by the Federation des femmes du Quebec (FFQ) formed in 1966. In the wake of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, support from a Quebec women's group, such as the FFQ, made the establishment of a Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada politically feasible for the federal government. See Monique Begin, "The Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada: Twenty Years Later" in Constance Backhouse and David H. Flaherty, eds., Challenging Times: The Women's Movement in Canada and the United States, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), pp. 22-23 and Ruth Roach Pierson, et.al., eds., Canadian Women's Issues, Volume 1: Strong Voices, (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1993), p. 5.
29. Canada, Royal Commission on the Status of Women, Report, (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1970), p. ix. For an analysis of the successes and failures of the RCSW 20 years later see Caroline Andrew and Sanda Rodgers, eds., Women and the Canadian State, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997).
30. Ibid., pp. 395-418.
31. Jill Vickers, Pauline Rankin and Christine Appelle, Politics As If Women Mattered: A Political Analysis of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), p. 26. "Radical feminists" related that the Commission failed to analyse how women's oppression resulted from "...an economic system based on the exploitation of many by a few powerful owners and a social system dependent on racial, national and sexual chauvinism". See Ruth Roach Pierson, et.al., Canadian Women's Issues, p. 6.
32. Canada, Royal Commission on the Status of Women, Report, pp. 83-84.

33. Ibid., Recommendations No. 14 and No. 15, p. 397.
34. Ibid., pp. 270-271.
35. Ibid., Recommendation No. 118, p. 411.
36. Jill Vickers, "The Intellectual Origins of the Women's Movement in Canada", in Challenging Times, pp. 40-45.
37. Jill Vickers, "Bending the Iron Law of Oligarchy: Debates on the Feminization of Organization and Political Process in the English Canadian Women's Movement, 1970-1988" in Jeri Dawn and Janice L. Ristock, eds., Women and Social Change: Feminist Activism in Canada, (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1991), p. 80. See also Jill Vickers, "The Intellectual Origins of the Women's Movement in Canada", in Challenging Times, pp. 40-45 and Jill Vickers, et.al., eds., Politics As If Women Mattered, p. 37.
38. As Nancy Adamson, et.al., put it, "While grass-roots feminists were taking the movement to the streets and declaring war on the government, institutionalized feminism made the government the target of its campaign to end women's inequality." The well-established, institutional feminists groups that comprised the Ad Hoc Committee included, among others, the Canadian Federation of University Women, Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women, Canadian Home Economics Association, the Catholic Women's League of Canada and the Canadian Union of Public Employees. See Nancy Adamson, Linda Briskin and Margaret McPhail, Feminists Organizing for Change: The Contemporary Women's Movement in Canada, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 51-52.
39. NAC, Status of Women News, Vol. 5, No. 2, December 1978; NAC, "An action that will not be allowed to subside: NAC's first twenty five years", Presented at the NAC AGM, 1997.
40. Les A. Pal, Interests of State: The Politics of Language, Multiculturalism and Feminism in Canada, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), p. 224 and 228.
41. National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), Presentation to the Standing Committee on the Secretary of State, December 16, 1986.
42. Jill Vickers, Pauline Rankin and Christine Appelle, Politics As If Women Mattered, p. 66.
43. Ibid., pp. 268-272.
44. Ibid., p. 269.

45. Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 74 from a Government of Canada, Secretary of State, Women's Program documents dated 1974.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 217.
47. In 1981, the FFQ formally broke with NAC. They would later, however, work together on some feminist issues.
48. NAC, Status of Women News, Volume 6 No. 1, Winter 1979-80.
49. NAC, Constitution, May 1988, Revised April 1989, p. 1.
50. Lorraine Greaves, "Reorganizing the National Action Committee on the Status of Women 1986-1988", in Jeri Dawn Wine and Janice L. Ristock, eds., Women and Social Change: Feminist Activism in Canada, (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1991), p. 102, pp. 106-107.
51. Jill Vickers, et.al., Politics As If Women Mattered, p. 215.
52. Sylvia Bashevkin, Living Through Conservative Times: Women on the Defensive, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), p. 15.
53. NAC, "Government Preempts Women's Lobby", News Release, May 8, 1987.
54. Sylvia Beshevkin, Living Through Conservative Times, p 124.
55. Leslie A. Pal, Interests of State, p. 232.
56. NAC, Executive Report to the Membership - 1993, "Taking Our Place: Feminism in the 90s", Conference and Annual General Meeting, June 4 to June 6, 1993, pp.1-3.
57. Editorial, "Who Needs NAC?", THIS Magazine, March/April, 1999, p. 28.
58. Editorial Board, "Interview with Judy Rebeck", Studies in Political Economy (44), Summer 1994, p. 61.
59. Montreal Gazette, "Women can't be ignored in vote: Prof", March 13, 1984, p. B4; Globe and Mail, "Women's groups take new direction", May 13, 1985, p. 5; Linda Hossie, Globe and Mail, "A feminist of steel and silk", March 21, 1985, p. L5.
60. NAC, "Overlapping Jurisdictions: A Pitfall in Supplying Services to Women", 1980, p. 3. Emphasis in original.
61. NAC, "The Funding of Social Services for Women", October 1983, p. 3.

62. NAC, "Day Care and the Federal Government: A Proposal for Reform", Submission to the Federal Task Force on Day Care, October 31, 1984, p. 18.
63. Martha Friendly, Child Care Policy in Canada: Putting the Pieces Together, (Don Mills: Addison-Wesley, 1995), p. 142; Katherine Teghtsoonian, "Neo-Conservative Ideology and Opposition to Federal Regulation of Child Care Services in the United States and Canada", Canadian Journal of Political Science (26) 1, March 1993, p. 108.
64. Martha Friendly, Child Care Policy, p. 142. The socialist wing of the day care movement was critical of defining child care as "universally accessible" since it moved away from their goal of *free* child care. Universal child care was considered to be less class-based and more closely associated with other universal social programs, such as health, pensions and education. See Susan Prentice, "The "Mainstreaming" of Daycare", Resources for Feminist Research (17) 3, 1988, p. 60.
65. NAC, The Economic Outlook, March 17, 1978; The Impact of the Proposed Amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act on Women Workers, November 27, 1978; The Problem is Jobs...Not Unemployment Insurance, January 28, 1986; Brief on the Canadian Jobs Strategy, November 3, 1987; The Problem is Still Jobs...Not Unemployment Insurance, August 1989; A Critical Time for Canada's Unemployment Insurance Programme, January 16, 1990; Presentation to the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development Concerning Bill C-12, An Act Respecting Employment Insurance in Canada, April 1996.
66. Katherine Teghtsoonian, "Neo-Conservative Ideology and Opposition to Federal Regulation of Child Care Services in the United States and Canada", Canadian Journal of Political Science (26) 1, 1993, pp. 97-121.
67. REAL Women of Canada, Brief Presented to the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development, Re: Consultation on Social Security Review, December 1, 1994, p. 5.
68. REAL Women of Canada, Overview: Canada's New Women's Movement, <http://www.realwomenca.com>, April 20, 1999.
69. Two well-established women group's prompted the creation of the Ad Hoc Committee - the Irish Housewives' Association and the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs. Council for the Status of Women (CSW), History of the Council for the Status of Women, p. 1.
70. Ireland, Commission on the Status of Women, (Dublin: The Stationery Office, December 1972), Chapter 1, p. 7.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 131. Recommendation No. 17(i).

72. Ibid., p. 130. Recommendation No. 19(i) and (ii).
73. Ibid., p. 143 and 144. Recommendation No. 21.
74. CSW, Newsletter, No. 1, July 1981, p. 4; History of the Council for the Status of Women, p. 1, 1986; CSW, Annual Report 1993; and Annual Report 1996.
75. Yvonne Fitzsimons, "Women's Interest Representation in the Republic of Ireland: The Council for the Status of Women", Irish Political Studies (6), 1991, p. 43.
76. CSW, Council News, No. 5, Summer 1987, p. 1-2.
77. CSW, Personal interview, July 1999.
78. CSW, Annual Report 1992, p. 12.
79. CSW, Newsletter, No. 4, April 1982.
80. CSW, CSW Information Pack, Section 1, 1986, p. 1.
81. CSW, Newsletter, No. 1, July 1981, p. 4 and Newsletter, No. 2, December 1981, p. 1.
82. Linda Connolly, "The Women's Movement in Ireland, 1970-1995: A Social Movement Analysis", Irish Journal of Feminist Studies, Vol. 1, No. 1, March 1996, p. 54. It should be noted that while no *structural* links existed, by the early 1980s, both streams advocated similar policy goals, albeit underpinned by differing feminist principals and methods to institute change (e.g., divorce legislation, access to abortion services and/or information).
83. Ailbhe Smyth, "The Contemporary Women's Movement in the Republic of Ireland", Women's Studies International Forum, Vol. 11, No. 4, 1988, p. 332 and 334. See also Linda Connolly, p. 56.
84. Yvonne Fitzsimons, "Women's Interest Representation in the Republic of Ireland: The Council for the Status of Women", Irish Political Studies (6), 1991, p. 40.
85. Ireland, The Women's Representative Committee, Progress Report on the Implementation of the Recommendations in the Report of the Commission on the Status of Women, (Dublin: The Stationery Office, December 1976), Forward.
86. Ibid., p. 1.
87. In 1977, the work of the Women's Representative Committee was transferred to the newly-created Employment Equality Agency directed to monitor the implementation of Irish equality legislation under EU Directives.

88. Hilda Tweedy, A Link in the Chain: The Story of the Irish Housewives Association 1942-1992, 1974, mimeo, pp. 54-55.
89. CSW, Irish Women Speak Out - A Plan of Action, (Dublin: Co-Op Books, 1981), p. 7.
90. Ibid., p. 64.
91. CSW, Women At Home: A Report of Nationwide Get-Togethers of Women, 1983, p. 1.
92. Ibid., pp. 11-13.
93. CSW, Annual Report 1986, p. 2.
94. Yvonne Fitzsimons, "Women's Interest Representation in the Republic of Ireland", p. 41. Yvonne Fitzsimons also relates that the CSW, due to increased diversification, began to experience internal tension, between radical and reformist groups, regarding tactics to promote social and policy change and the organizational goals of the Council . See Ibid., p. 41.
95. CSW, Annual Report 1986, p. 1.
96. Yvonne Galligan, "The Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women", Irish Political Studies (8), 1993, p. 125.
97. Ireland, Second Commission on the Status of Women, Report to Government, (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1993), p. 6.
98. NWCI, Annual Report 1996, p. 8.
99. Personal interview, Carmel Foley, Executive Director, Employment and Equality Agency, Dublin, May 1998.
100. Ibid.
101. Dail Eireann, Parliamentary Debates, Official Report, Volume 427, Comprising period from 26 February 1993 to 12 March 1993, pp. 11-20; Official Report, Volume 42, Comprising period from 27 April 1994 to 19 May 1994, pp. 1814-1822.
102. Eileen Connolly, "The Republic of Ireland's Equality Contract: Women and Public Policy" in Yvonne Galligan, Eilis Ward and Rick Wilford, eds., Contesting Politics: Women in Ireland, North and South (Oxford: Westview Press, 1999), p. 81.

103. Maria Jepsen, Daniele Meulders, Olivier Plasman and Phillippe Vanhuynegem, "Individualisation of Social Rights and the Equal Opportunities Between Men and Women", Beyond Equal Treatment: Social Security in a Changing Europe, Report of the Conference of the Irish Presidency of the European Union, Dublin, 10-12 October 1996, p. 182.
104. Ireland, Statistical Information on Social Welfare Services, (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1996), Table A6, p. 7.
105. Personal interview, Mel Cousins, Special Advisor to the Minister, Department of Social Welfare, Ireland, April, 1998.
106. Yvonne Galligan, Women and Politics in Contemporary Ireland: From the Margins to the Mainstream, (London: Pinter, 1998), p. 61. The EEA is an agency established to oversee the implementation of *The Employment Equity Act, 1977*.
107. This idea comes from Jill Vickers, et.al, Politics As If Women Mattered, p. 209.

Chapter Four

Sphere Two - Why Policy Institutions Matter

In Chapter Three, NAC's and NWCI's policy goals in the sectors of child care and unemployment insurance were explored as the starting point to discern and analyse the processes associated with policy transformation. In this chapter, we investigate four specific child care and UI policy events in which NAC and NWCI organized their efforts to articulate their policy goals. In an effort to dissect the various elements of policy transformation - that is, NAC's and NWCI's institutional access and participation in policy advocacy along with the revealing the ideas underpinning government-sponsored policy proposals - these policy events will allow us to specifically assess: 1) particular institutional contexts in which NAC and NWCI advocated their policy goals, 2) the policy institutions involved in the policy process within that institutional context, and 3) a context to interpret the policy language and ideas conveyed by those policy institutions which framed the policy debates of the events analysed and how this policy language was different or similar to that articulated by NAC and NWCI. In Canada, the child care policy event analysed is the National Child Care Strategy and subsequent *Canada Child Care Act*. In Ireland, we look at the Working Group on Childcare Facilities for Working Parents. As for UI, this study examines the Commission on Social Welfare and the Commission of Inquiry on Unemployment Insurance conducted in Ireland and Canada respectively.

Policy institutions, that is lead departments and other governmental organizations,

such as cabinet, the legislative arena, commissions and working groups, were implicated in the transformation process in several ways. First, within government there existed an internal hierarchy amongst policy institutions. This meant that some policy institutions had greater influence over the policy agenda and development than others, thus structuring the policy development process. This hierarchical structure varied between the two countries, shaping NAC's and NWCI's access to government and hence the way in which these organizations policy demands were transformed inside government. Second, policy institutions were conveyors of a certain kind of policy language that either went part of the way to meet the policy demands of NAC or NWCI, or transformed their policy goals. This transformation took place by blocking and ignoring the policy goals of NAC and NWCI or by redefining and changing their policy goals.

Where policy institutions were situated within the legislative and decision-making structures determined what actors and groups had access to the policy development process. This structure shaped how and where NAC and NWCI had the opportunity to voice their policy ideas and goals to both political and bureaucratic authorities. Particularly during high profile policy events, groups such as NAC and NWCI automatically looked to them to advocate and promote their policy demands. At the same time, and as a consequence of political pressure mounted on governments, there has developed in both governments a network of women's policy agencies (WPAs), albeit less so in the Irish case to promote women's policy issues and women's equality. They thus provided NAC and NWCI with a more readily available and accepting institutional access point to take on and promote their policy goals. Women's policy agencies were,

to some degree, an inside policy ally. Yet depending on the relative place of these WPAs within the hierarchical structure of policy institutions in each country, access through WPAs had the effect of reducing the influence of NAC and NWCI on policy developments.

In the conclusion of Chapter Two, we argued that institutions and agencies within government are not neutral conveyor belts which simply input and output policy choices. As enduring fixtures on the political landscape, institutions are manifestations of gendered social relations which have sustained and supported “male” values. Institutions were considered in this study then, as “instruments of social organization that exercise collective power over a number of generations”. Indeed, some feminists have argued that institutions are structures of domination and oppression, since they are set up “...to organize and control”.¹ With this in mind, Kathleen Staudt’s reminder is well taken. That is, when studying and analysing women’s engagement with institutions within government, analysts must “...unpack institutions to examine power relations among and within the institutional parts”.² And both NAC and NWCI came up against a formidable system of power relations within the governmental structure. These structures organized a clear hierarchy of policy institutions. Some of these institutions were open to NAC and NWCI, while others were not. In particular, we refer here to the lead departments mandated responsibility to develop and administer UI and child care policy, along with commissions of inquiry and working groups struck by government authorities, juxtaposed to the overwhelming power concentrated within the central decision-making institutions, such as cabinet.

Over the time frame of this study, NAC and NWCI advocated their child care and UI policy goals to an array of policy institutions. Representatives from NAC and NWCI periodically met with Ministers of lead departments or representatives in those departments. With respect to these lead government departments, NAC looked to the Department of Employment and Immigration and later Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) when advocating their UI policy goals.³ NWCI advocated their UA/UB policy goals to the Department of Social Welfare.⁴ During the 1980s, NAC advocated their child care policy goals to Health and Welfare Canada, and later HRDC. In Ireland, given the overall lack of any child care policy and a single policy institution mandated with the administrative responsibility, NWCI looked to a number of different policy institutions responsible for particular features of child care services. At times, this included the Department of Health, largely responsible for child care services for children at risk, the Department of Education, responsible for early childhood education services and the Ministry of Labour who, over the time of this study, reviewed child care services for working parents. This chapter, however, looks particularly at policy events rather than institutions. By exploring policy events we can trace the transformation process to discern where NAC and NWCI advocated their policy goals and what happened thereafter.

The policy events analysed in this chapter introduce women's policy agencies as potential policy allies of NAC and NWCI. Calls for women's policy agencies were advocated by the women's movement and from the United Nations which recommended to member governments that a women's policy machinery be created to represent and

promote issues of importance to women.⁵ In part a response to these demands, and recommendations by the RCSW in Canada, institutions were created within government structures directed to advance the status of women. In Canada, these institutions included Status of Women Canada (SWC) and the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW).⁶ In Ireland too, the Second Commission on the Status of Women recommended the establishment of a dedicated ministry within government.⁷ The presence of WPAs in Ireland has been much more sporadic than in Canada. At various junctures, there was a Ministry of State for Women's Affairs (MSWA) and later the Ministry of Equality and Law Reform.⁸

Sometimes referred to as state feminism,⁹ it has been argued that women's policy agencies provide an alternative set of structures within government in "...contrast to the structures of the welfare state or of the liberal state, which have excluded feminist policy from political debate...".¹⁰ It has been suggested, for instance, that the presence of an "insider", women-friendly ally provides a direct link for women's groups to navigate the machinery of government and to decipher the processes of policy development. A further promise of women's policy machinery is that these agencies could act as a counter-weight to mainstream policy language by interjecting a gender perspective into policy development. WPAs have attempted to undertake this task by way of "gender proofing" memorandums to cabinet, policy proposals prepared by departments and presented to cabinet for decision, and by the development of gender-based policy frameworks which outline a step-by-step guide to assist policy makers on how to be more gender sensitive.

Although a women's policy machinery offers many promises, and may have had a

role in “educating” policy makers and political leaders on women’s issues, the findings of this study indicate that the relative success of women’s policy agencies depended upon factors that were either out of the agency’s control, that is, a lack of political and policy clout within government, or contingent upon the government’s overall commitment to promoting women’s equality.¹¹

This chapter begins with an analysis of policy events in the child care sector. It then investigates policy events in the unemployment insurance sector. The chapter finishes with a discussion of what we have discovered about the process of policy transformation.

Child Care - Canada

A Special Committee of the House of Commons was established in November 1985 by the Progressive Conservative government to report on “...the future of child care in Canada in the context of the changing needs of the Canadian family...”.¹² The Report of the Special Committee, *Sharing the Responsibility*, was issued in March 1987 offering a number of recommendations framed around the principle of providing choice to parents through the income tax system via child care tax credits and subsidies provided by the provinces as funded under the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP).¹³ The Special Committee also recommended that the federal government introduce a *Family and Child Care Act*, and establish a Secretariat in Health and Welfare Canada to administer the legislation.¹⁴

On the heels of the Special Committee on Child Care, in December 1987 the government announced the coming implementation of a National Child Care Strategy.

The National Strategy committed \$6.4 billion over seven years with the goal of increasing the capacity of existing subsidized spaces and the creation of 200,000 new subsidized spaces at the provincial level.¹⁵ The strategy was comprised of four components.¹⁶ First, a fund of \$100 million was to be administered under a new Child Care Special Initiatives Fund to finance research and public awareness programs on different aspects of child care. Second, \$60 million was to be spent over six years to fund child care needs for aboriginal peoples. Third, there was to be an additional tax assistance for parents of \$329 million per year. Fourth, a further allocation of up to \$4 billion over seven years was to be spent under a new *Canada Child Care Act* to replace federal transfer payments to the provinces under the Canada Assistance Plan. In July 1988, the government introduced the *Canada Child Care Act (Act)*, Bill C-144, in the House of Commons. As was normal legislative practice, Bill C-144 was referred to a legislative committee for review after debate in the House of Commons in August and September 1988.¹⁷

NAC pursued their policy goals in a presentation to the Special Parliamentary Committee on Child Care in June 1986 and later published a critique of the National Child Care Strategy in June 1988. The National Strategy and the *Act* did meet some of NAC's policy goals. That is, the National Strategy and the *Act* committed the federal government to increase spending and financial assistance to the provinces in order to increase accessibility to child care spaces. Moreover, the National Child Care Strategy and the *Act*, were in their own way, a federal response and policy direction. This policy event indicated, however, that NAC's ideas and strategies regarding child care were

largely ignored by government. The model for delivering the National Child Care Strategy, for example, conflicted with the goals NAC had articulated to the Special Committee. Whereas the National Child Care Study stipulated that the government would continue to rely on use of tax measures as a service delivery method, this failed to meet NAC's goal of the development of a *national* child care system. Indeed, the use of income tax measures, which placed an emphasis on assisting targeted individuals, such as working parents, was contrary to NAC's position that a child care system had to be funded that based on the principles of universality and accessibility.

More troublesome for NAC was that the *Act* was not the kind of national policy that they had long been seeking. Although the preamble of the *Act* did mention the need to improve the "availability, affordability, quality and accessibility" of child care services, this was largely a symbolic statement of intent. That is, the *Act* did not stipulate any principles or objectives in the preamble to compel provinces to adhere to a set of standards which would give force and effect to a *national* policy. Moreover, whether symbolic or not, the provisions of the *Act* contradicted with the preamble and were viewed as a "regressive step for child care".¹⁸ That is, if passed, the *Act* would not only prohibit the development of a comprehensive child care system, it would restrict participating provinces from using the cost-sharing mechanism in place at the time under CAP. This was because the new federal-provincial cost-sharing provisions of the *Act* were dramatically different from the system in place since the *Act* placed a legislated ceiling on the amount of money transferred, whereas CAP was open-ended.¹⁹

As noted above, the language of the National Strategy and the *Act* also

transformed the intent of NAC's child care policy goals. The National Strategy and *Act* were framed around implementing certain child care services for the taxpaying parent rather than for women. Neither in the National Strategy or in the *Act* was there any substantive recognition of the need for child care to improve women's economic independence or promote women's equality. Federal government child care policy thus reflect the government's preference for limited intervention by way of income tax measures as an appropriate and effective policy response to Canada's need for child care.

The institutional context in which the National Strategy and the *Act* were developed facilitated this interpretation. It was, after all, the Progressive Conservative Party who made an election promise to NAC in a 1984 leaders debate, dedicated to women's issues, that promised "economic and social justice" for women would be achieved through better child care.²⁰ The child care initiative was being driven by central policy agencies of the Prime Minister and cabinet, where neo-conservative ideas dominated and it was these ideas that eventually framed the National Child Care Strategy and the *Act*. NAC's demands for a national child care policy to benefit women as a social collective were thus translated into policy ideas and strategies that minimized government intervention and placed an emphasis on individual working parents (e.g., through income tax deductions).

Yet at the same time, NAC's policy goals found expression in the relative openness of the legislative arena. The Special Committee held public hearings across Canada in order to gauge opinion and ideas about the state of child care. Moreover, when Bill C-144 was introduced in the House, it was the subject of some legislative debate.

However, this meant that NAC's ideas were open to being challenged by competing ideas about the regulation of child care articulated by some members of the Progressive Conservative government. As Katherine Teghtsoonian demonstrated, for instance, when Bill-C144 was debated in the House, some social conservatives in the Progressive Conservative government were opposed to federal regulation of child care arguing that parents knew what was best for their children as primary care givers in the family home.²¹

The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW) also participated in the policy process by way of a presentation of a brief to the Special Committee. The ideas and strategies of CACSW in part mirrored those advocated by NAC, most notably in their recommendation that policy development be undertaken with the view to building a child care system as an essential service akin to education and health. CACSW advocated that a strong federal presence was necessary in order to implement a child care system that was comprehensive and accessible. Moreover, the CACSW suggested that the Special Committee consider child care in light of the fact that Canadian society, the family and the workplace, had undergone dramatic changes ostensibly to remind the Committee that women's traditional role within the family had too changed.²² Although the CACSW's policy recommendations were those that NAC themselves had advocated (i.e., child care as an essential service and therefore a government responsibility particularly in light of changing social and economic circumstances), the agency did not directly plead the case of NAC regarding women's need for child care to promote women's economic independence or equality. CACSW's policy recommendations transformed NAC's goals by degendering the language referring

to populations such as parents and Canadians as users of child care services. However, in a brief to the legislative committee studying the *Act*, CACSW was much more critical. Their concern was that Bill C-144 was merely a "legislative shell" that did not resolve many of the fundamental problems with the current child care system, referring to the absence of national standards.²³ The lack of national standards was a policy idea long advocated by NAC.

The extent to which the government would have amended the *Act* to interject any of NAC's or CACSW's policy ideas, however, remains unclear. Bill C-144 died on the order paper when a general election was called in November 1988. What we do know is that after the Progressive Conservatives were re-elected, the priorities of the government shifted. This was confirmed in February 1992 when the Minister of Health and Welfare Canada stated that, due to fiscal constraints and the burgeoning deficit, the government was unable to implement a national child care policy. Rather, they were going to focus on developing targeted programs for children at risk.²⁴ In this regard then, NAC's child care policy goals were bumped in favour of policy objectives focusing around the special needs of children.

In Ireland, the transformation process was quite unlike the child care policy debate in Canada. As the following discussion relates, the transformation process took place within a bureaucratic setting rather than the legislative arena.

Child Care - Ireland

In 1990, the Minister of Labour established a Working Group on Childcare

Facilities for Working Parents to advise the government on child care measures that were appropriate to Irish conditions.²⁵ However, the Working Group was directed by the Minister of Labour to focus on certain key policy objectives, which included:

- focusing on child care initiatives that could be undertaken by employers or individuals including services through public-private partnership;
- considering potential support from the European Union; and
- identifying child care measures that could be pursued by employers and workers to help workers combine family and work responsibilities.²⁶

Membership on the Working Group was by way of government appointment. These appointments included a senior bureaucrat each from the Department of Labour and Department of Health, and a representative from Foras Aiseanna Saothair (FAS), a government agency responsible for job training. Anne McKenna, the Irish Expert Member of the EC Child Care Network, was also appointed to the Working Group. A few months later, the Working Group was expanded to include representatives from the social partners. These appointees included a person each from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) and the Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC).

The Working Group only met fifteen times over a four year period (between 1990 and 1994). In February 1994, their final report was submitted to the Minister of Equality and Law Reform, recommending a number of measures, the highlights of which included: 1) that government policy and action be directed toward encouraging employers to devise a variety of child care services including in-house activities, making adjustments to work schedules of employees, providing leave arrangements to employees and other child care measures including after-school and holiday schemes; 2) that government should encourage central government policy institutions such as the National Economic and

Social Council (NESC) to focus on the employment potential of co-ordinated childcare services; 3) that government take a more proactive role, supported through public spending, in increasing the number of spaces in existing child care facilities; 4) that future collective agreements should address the setting up and financing of a wider range of workplace childcare schemes; and 5) the establishment of an agency, situated in a single government department, to promote and facilitate child care policy development.²⁷

Participation in the Working Group by organizations external to government was by invitation only. Indeed, NWCI was one of only nine organizations asked by the Working Group to submit a brief.²⁸ This closed, bureaucratic process was starkly different from the institutional setting of the policy event analysed above in two ways. First, the policy debates surrounding the National Strategy and the *Child Care Act* were part and parcel of the formal decision-making process. This process involved important policy and government actors, ranging from cabinet to Members of Parliament in the House of Commons. Second, as part of this legislative process, policy debates were held in public first by the Special Committee on Child Care, who held hearings across Canada, then subsequently via legislative review and debate of the *Canada Child Care Act* in the House of Commons.

At first blush, the bureaucratic venue of the Working Group was unproblematic appearing to work to NWCI's advantage. That is, the terms of reference of the Working Group - creating child care spaces or centres in the workplace - was a policy goal advocated by NWCI. Thus, the wholesale transformation of NWCI's policy goals did not take place as it had for NAC during the policy debates of the National Child Care

Strategy or the *Canada Child Care Act*. For instance, the issue of reconciling family responsibilities and work had long been a specific policy goal of NWCI. Indeed, NWCI had clearly advocated for the development of child care services for working parents, or as they put it, for the working mother.²⁹ This was unlike the Canadian case, largely because at this point in time, women's participation in the paid labour market was still considerably lower in Ireland than it was in Canada (see Chapter One, Table A). NWCI, therefore, was open to the idea of workplace child care as one way to encourage women's entrance into the paid labour market. This is not to say that the issue of reconciling work and family was not an issue for NAC - it was as far as advocating for women's right to work to be economically independent. However, the specific issue of *workplace* child care was not one of NAC's clearly stated policy objectives.

However, the Working Group's focus on a generic, degendered parent ultimately blocked the possibility of analysing women's need for child care as *working mothers*. Although the Working Group did acknowledge women's increased participation in the work force, and that women often worked part-time, there was no analysis of women's particular relationship to the labour market, how women's work patterns were unlike men's nor the expectations surrounding women's role in society as the primary caregiver. The analysis of the Working Group merely lumped together women's and men's need for child care as *parents* rather than delving into women's specific need for child care as *women* in relation to their domestic duties and paid work.

The Working Group's analysis of child care was not meant to be an exhaustive investigation, but rather a specific overview of child care for working parents. However,

given that the review was an internally-driven administrative process set within the bureaucracy and outside of the formal decision-making processes (e.g., cabinet and legislative review), the recommendations of the Working Group did not move onto the political agenda. Indeed, the recommendations of the Working Group eventually fell of deaf ears and were shelved by the government along with other internal reviews of child care that had been undertaken years past.³⁰ Ultimately, then, any of the policy goals of NWCI that were included in the Working Groups's final report were ignored by government.

Unemployment Insurance - Ireland

In 1983, a newly-elected government established a Commission on Social Welfare (Commission) to:

...review and report on the social welfare system and related social services and to make recommendations for their development having regard to the needs of modern Irish society...³¹

The Commission's work was the most comprehensive review of the social welfare system since 1947 when the Department of Social Welfare, responsible for the administration of social welfare, was established.³² Members of the Commission³³ were appointed by government representing various policy sectors, which included individuals representing government, employer groups, labour unions, farmers, research institutes and charitable organizations.³⁴

The final report of the Commission was published in July 1986 which opted, according to the Chairman of the Commission, for evolutionary rather than radical reform

of the social welfare system. That is, any changes or reforms would be to the existing system rather than by replacing the social welfare system.³⁵ With this evolutionary approach in mind, the Commission developed five objectives and principles which they felt should underpin the social welfare system. These principles - adequacy, redistribution, comprehensiveness, consistency and simplicity - were used to guide the Commission's evaluation, and ultimately were very important in light of the Commission's final recommendations.³⁶ In brief, these principles meant that first, payments under the social welfare system must be adequate to meet prevailing living standards and that payments were an important part of income distribution in Irish society. Second, it was also thought that the social welfare system had to be comprehensive so as not to exclude any "category" of need. Third, for the system to be comprehensive, policies in other areas had to be consistent with the social welfare system, along with being developed and administered within a system that was as simple as possible for claimants and administrators alike.³⁷

The Commission received 259 submissions from the public, one of which was from the NWCI. In their brief, NWCI advocated their policy goals to the Commission framed around their perspective that the social welfare system was "...piecemeal, discriminatory and inequitable" which reflected outdated attitudes of women that were no longer accepted to be the "norm" in Irish society.³⁸ NWCI reminded the Commission that they had been advocating for the standardization of social welfare payments for some time, relating to the Commission specific examples how the social welfare system discriminated against women reporting that a married woman's unemployment benefit

entitlement was three weeks shorter than for men or for single women, and that women could not claim unemployment assistance unless she was dependent on a husband, and had dependents (children) herself.³⁹

In the final report, the Commission identified four priority areas: 1) improving basic payments for those with the lowest payments, 2) more adequate support for families reliant on social welfare, 3) broadening the social insurance base to all income earners such as farmers and priests, and 4) developing better computerization and upgraded systems for the delivery of service.⁴⁰ The first priority was that of providing adequate payments to recipients. The Commission recommended that action had to be taken to bring the most inadequate social welfare payments within recommended levels. The second priority area evolved around improving the existing child income support system. The third priority area recommended that immediate action be taken to include groups typically excluded from the social welfare system. The fourth and last priority item recommended improving service delivery.

For this study, the first and third priority areas were most relevant. Due in part to the principles that guided the review of the social welfare system noted above, the Commission's recommendations transformed NWCI's policy goals away from being about how the social welfare system discriminated against women and perpetuated women's dependency, to being about providing adequate benefits for claimants - the first priority area noted above. The Commission recommended that social welfare recipients should be "...entitled to a common basic payment instead of the present system whereby rates of payment vary according to the scheme under which the payment is made".⁴¹ As

well, the Commission considered the hierarchical system of payments in place, with the highest benefits going to the elderly and the lowest benefits going to the unemployed, to be unfair. Taken together, John Curry, then Chairman of the Commission, wrote later that low, inadequate benefits, along with a variation in the payment structure, reflected a "popular notion" that some recipients were deserving of benefits, while other were not.⁴² As for the inclusion of groups normally "excluded" from the social welfare system, the third priority area stipulated by the Commission, this had to do with providing benefits to self-employed income earners. It was not about how the social welfare system either left women out or how social welfare system discriminated against women. Ultimately, NWCI's policy goals, then, were transformed from being about addressing women's dependency, toward alleviating poverty.

In the final analysis, the Commission only made cursory mention in their report of Ireland's "changing social patterns" and how this influenced the structure and administration of the social welfare system. In this vein, the Commission noted that the,

...development of the social welfare system has, over the years, been based on certain key assumptions about, for example, marriage, the family, the role of women in society and their participation in the labour force. To a large extent, many of these assumptions still under-pin the whole system...⁴³

However, there was no specific mention or recognition that these assumptions were framed around women's "dependency". Consequently, there was no specific acknowledgment women's experience as social welfare recipients, nor were there any specific recommendations to government to implement individualization. Indeed, the Commission simply recommended to the government that Ireland's changing social patterns was a "key research area" that needed to be undertaken and reviewed in the

future by the Department of Social Welfare.⁴⁴ Since the Commission decided upon "evolutionary reform" rather than radical change, they focused on the programmatic features of the social welfare system rather than the principles underlying the program and the subsequent policy consequences.

The government of the day did not react well to many of the recommendations of the Commission, stating that:

...in the present circumstances and for the immediate future it would be beyond the capacity of the country to fully implement the Commission's proposals. This is an unpalatable reality but is must be borne out in mind in the context of considering all of the Commission's proposals.⁴⁵

It is here we see how the institutional setting of this review contributed to the transformation of NWCI's policy goals. First, the mandate of the Commission did not specifically direct the Commission to analyse women's experience as beneficiaries of the social welfare system, nor how the implementation of individualization could address women's dependency. Moreover, given the nature of the review, the government of the day was not obliged to implement any of the recommendations of the Commission - since it was just that, a review. There was no institutional impetus on the part of cabinet or legislators to embrace the findings of the Commission.

Second, even if the Commission was willing to analyse the issue of women's dependency, it was not surprising that the Commission focused on other social welfare issues, particularly given the diverse interests represented on the Commission. That is, since social welfare had not been reviewed for several decades, it would have appeared quite appropriate for the Commission to tackle pressing policy issues, such as inadequate benefits, as a way to address the problem of pervasive poverty in Ireland at the time.

Indeed, in the mid-1980s, Ireland had one of the highest levels of poverty in comparison to other European Community countries.⁴⁶ The Commission was obviously responding to this immediate reality. However, it was also a reform measure that benefitted a wide cross-section of Irish society, rather than focusing on women's policy needs.

We now turn to the Commission of Inquiry on Unemployment Insurance undertaken in Canada. Readers will note that the institutional arena was similar in some respects. The outcome was also quite like the situation in Ireland, in that the final report met with a negative reaction from government, albeit for different reasons.

Unemployment Insurance - Canada

In the 1985 Budget Speech, the government announced their intention to strike an inquiry into the unemployment insurance system. In July 1985, the Commission of Inquiry on Unemployment Insurance (Commission) was established to "...inquire into the role of the Unemployment Insurance Program within the context of the Canadian social security system...".⁴⁷ The Commission's membership included three individuals from the private sector, two labour union representatives and an academic.⁴⁸

The Commission traveled across Canada holding public hearings from October 1985 to February 1986, while also holding a series of roundtable discussions and consultations. By the end of July 1986, almost 1,000 submissions had been received by the Commission.⁴⁹ NAC advocated their policy goals in a rather detailed brief presented to the Commission. NAC situated their policy goals within an extensive analysis of the economy and women's labour market participation. NAC urged the Commissioners to

consider their review framed around the perspective that the unemployment insurance system (UI system) itself was not the problem. Rather, the problem was high unemployment and a lack of jobs.⁵⁰ In referring to the possibility that the Commission would recommend to government that UI benefits be decreased given the increase of women into the paid labour market and subsequent unemployment of women placing a burden on the system, NAC recommended to the Commission that women not be treated as "secondary earners".⁵¹ Indeed, NAC reminded the Commission that women had a right to work just as men did.

Specific policy goals advocated to the Commission covered many aspects of the UI system. First, NAC recommended that UI be extended to cover more part-time workers. This was considered an important issue in 1986, given the dramatic increase in part-time employment, a sector of the labour market disproportionately comprising women.⁵² Second, NAC recommended that UI benefit levels be restored to 66 2/3% of earnings. This was an issue for women, NAC argued, since women comprised a disproportionate share of the poor.⁵³ Third, NAC also advocated for the elimination of the two week waiting period, along with the extension of benefits of up to 26 weeks, to the then maximum of 52 weeks.⁵⁴ Fourth, NAC recommended amending the *Unemployment Insurance Act (Act)* to ensure uniformity in qualifying for UI benefits.⁵⁵ NAC was referring to a stipulation in the *Act* that meant that people re-entering the labour market after a period of absence, or people entering for the first time, were required to work twenty weeks to qualify for benefits. NAC had long argued that this rule adversely affected women since they were often at home undertaking caregiving duties, or for other

reasons, were unable to enter the labour market as easily as men. Fifth, NAC urged the Commission to reinstate the 1971 provision of three weeks as a maximum disqualification period for workers. Again, an issue for women as workers, since they were often fired for absenteeism. This was also an issue for NAC since women were less likely to have union protection to undertake an appeal for unfair dismissal or for other "just causes" such as the inability to find child care and work place sexual harassment.⁵⁶ Finally, NAC was determined in their policy goal that the Commission reject any change that would institute the calculation of benefits based on family income. NAC made specific reference to this issue since there were indications that the Commission was entertaining this kind of change to the UI system. The maintenance of the individualization of UI benefits, a policy goal strongly advocated by NWCI but yet to be instituted in Ireland, was viewed by NAC as a "...as a thinly-veiled attack upon women's income and independence".⁵⁷

In January 1986, the CACSW also presented a brief to the Commission, strongly reiterating NAC's argument that UI was an important issue for women who experience the labour market differently from men. That is, CACSW recommended that any proposed changes to the UI system had to be assessed as to any potential adverse or differential impacts on women as workers.⁵⁸ NAC had an institutional ally in CACSW since the policy recommendations put forward by CACSW mirrored those presented by NAC. However, when the Commission released its report, it was obvious that many of NAC's and CACSW's policy concerns were not taken into account.

Indeed, in November 1986, the Commission's report was released in a swirl of

controversy. The two labour union representatives, in a dissenting supplementary statement, vehemently opposed the majority Report for a number of reasons, two of which are relevant for this discussion. First, they argued that the reasoning underpinning many of the recommendations would hurt women. Indeed, the dissenters attacked the Commission's use of "scrupulously neutral" language arguing it only continued to mask a "...strong systemic bias against women workers."⁵⁹ They were dismayed that the Commission fell into outdated thinking which ultimately put forward policy proposals "...that fail[ed] to acknowledge the dual role of women as labour force participants and primary care givers."⁶⁰ Second, the labour representatives did not agree with the Commission's perspective that regional benefits to seasonal workers was an inefficient income supplement and therefore should be cut.⁶¹ This is important to note since this recommendation also did not sit particularly well with some cabinet Ministers in government, especially those with constituents, such as fishers, who depended on regional benefits.⁶²

The Commission did not undertake any measure of a gender analysis of the impact of UI reforms on women akin to the analysis presented in the dissenting report. Although there was cursory analysis of women's participation in the work force and acknowledgment that women dominated the part-time labour market, the Commission's investigation was framed around notions of the gender-neutral worker. This degendering was further buttressed by the Commission's focus on the language and perspective of the degendered UI recipient. Therefore, there was no specific analysis of why the annualization of benefits would be detrimental to women. Overall then, the

Commission's final set of recommendations to government ignored and blocked NAC's policy goals. For example, contrary to what NAC was seeking, the Commission recommended the retention of the six week disqualification period for voluntarily leaving work and the two week waiting period after applying for UI benefits. The Commission did recommend, however, that UI benefits be extended to more part-time workers. However, the key recommendation of the Commission, the annualization of benefits, was completely contrary to what NAC was seeking since it would be profoundly detrimental to women. Annualization was also strongly opposed by the union representatives. What annualization meant was that benefits would be calculated based on annual insurable earnings rather than on weekly insurable earnings, as had been the practice. Under annualization, if the claimant worked a full 52 weeks prior to filing for unemployment, there was no problem. However, three quarters of claimants actually qualified for UI with *fewer* than 50 weeks of work the year before filing.⁶³ Therefore, most claimants filing for UI would have less benefits under annualization. For example, for every week that a claimant was unemployed the 52 weeks prior to filing, the weekly UI benefit would be reduced.

With this in mind, then, it was argued by NAC that the annualization of benefits would have grave consequences for women. After the publication of the Report, NAC argued that women would be many of the workers who would have decreased UI benefits since they often worked in industries (e.g., textiles, food processing) that routinely laid-off workers for part of the year.⁶⁴ And, women often worked in types of employment that were seasonal, such as the tourist industry. Moreover, as the labour reps on the

Commission pointed out in their dissenting statement, women start out with lower incomes than men, due to the wage gap, resulting in their unemployment benefits being lower as well *regardless* of the UI benefit rate.⁶⁵

Promising some sort of response to the Commission's controversial recommendations, the government sent the Report to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration (Standing Committee) for further review. The Standing Committee issued its report in March 1987 outlining its own recommendations for reform. Although NAC did not appear before the Standing Committee, some of their policy goals were taken on by the Standing Committee.⁶⁶ For example, the Standing Committee recommended a uniform entrance requirement of ten weeks, the abolition of special requirements for new-entrants and re-entrants and a common regular benefit period of 50 weeks. More importantly, the Standing Committee did not consider annualization to be a viable policy option.⁶⁷ Given the controversies surrounding the Report, and the fact that the government caucus was not in agreement over which way to move ahead in reforming the UI system, many of the recommendations of the Commission were not implemented. Instead, the Minister opted to institute a few new service delivery initiatives rather than fundamental change.⁶⁸

Because of the negative reaction to the Commission's key recommendation, no significant policy action was taken thereby forestalling any detrimental changes to this source of income security for women. And this was in part a reflection of the institutional context of this policy event. First, the presence of union activists on the Commission acted as a counter perspective. Because the key recommendation the

Commission, that is annualization, would have hurt most workers - male or female - the labour union representatives stepped in to protect the interests of the unemployed worker, rather than the generic depoliticized UI recipient. This counter perspective was also gendered, again in recognition that workers are of two sexes.

As well, like the Commission on Social Welfare, the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry were formulated by an "independent" review body. Therefore, the government did not necessarily have to heed any of the Commission's recommendations - there was no particular institutional compulsion to do so. However, given the controversies surrounding the final report, it was politically wise for the government to acknowledge and respond to the report. They did so by forwarding the report to a House of Commons Standing Committee for further review who rejected the ideas of calculating UI by annualization. One can infer from this outcome that since members of the Standing Committee were politicians, as Members of Parliament, they were cautious in implementing reforms that could potentially alienate a wide cross-section of voters.

Discussion

These four policy events highlight the way in which the institutional context, in conjunction with a certain policy language, transformed NAC's and NWCI's policy goals. Now that we have reviewed these four policy events we can categorize the transformation of NAC's and NWCI's policy goals this way:

Box 4.1 - Transformation of Policy Goals
Policy Goals Blocked and Ignored **Policy Goals Redefined and Changed**

<i>Canada Childcare Act</i> (NAC)	Commission on Social Welfare (NWCI)
Working Group on Childcare (NWCI)	
Commission of Inquiry on UI (NAC)	

A hierarchy of policy institutions influenced the transformation process by structuring what policy actors and institutions were involved in the process and how NAC and NWCI participated. This hierarchy was evident in two ways. First, in only one of the four instances discussed above were key decision-makers directly involved in the process. This was the *Canada Child Care Act*, a piece of government legislation supported by cabinet and debated in the House of Commons. The three other policy events - the Working Group on Childcare Facilities for Working Parents, the Commission on Social Welfare and the Commission of Inquiry on Unemployment Insurance - involved policy institutions that were removed from the key decision-making process. The two commissions were both "independent" bodies with non-governmental members appointed by government. The Working Group, however, was staffed by representatives from various government departments and the social partners, although there was no central government representation on the Working Group.

A number of items are important here. First, the *Canada Child Care Act* was the only policy event discussed above that directly involved central agency actors and agencies. However, because it was so central to the Progressive Conservative government's overall political agenda, the policy ideas and objectives were also under the

tight control of the government which clashed with NAC's. Indeed, Joan Grant Cummings, past President of NAC, argued that the cabinet system was the major institutional barrier relating to the acceptance and realization of NAC's policy goals. Joan Grant-Cummings stated that since cabinet was responsible for governing the entire country, certain key goals were prioritized which framed the government's overall policy direction. These goals, she stated, were largely economic in character which included program and government expenditure restraint in conjunction with the protection of the free market economy (e.g., free trade policies). This was so, she argued, because successive federal governments, here the Progressive Conservative government under Brian Mulroney, had considered the "equality agenda" to already have been "done".⁶⁹

Regarding the Working Group and the two commissions of inquiry on UI, NAC and NWCI could have had some hope that their ideas would be seriously considered and interjected into the final report, since the Working Group and the two commissions were relatively independent from the government's policy vision. However, because these entities were far removed from the decision-making process, the danger too was that the recommendations would also clash with the government's policy agenda - or simply ignored by government. We saw this situation unfold regarding the Commission on Social Welfare and the Commission of Inquiry on UI. In both of these instances, the respective governments of the day rejected some of the findings of the inquiries, albeit in different ways and for different reasons. The Commission of Social Welfare came up against the government's cautious spending objectives, while the Commission of Inquiry on UI was confronted with political outfall.

Finally, NAC's and NWCI's participation was dictated by a top-down, authority-based institutional context. That is, NAC and NWCI were only able to passively engage in the review processes as outsiders, speaking to (and not with) a range of experts appointed by government. This process, presenting briefs to standing committees or commissions and inquiries from "across the table", maintained the "routine process" of policy making only to "...serve the political and social interests which institutions were designed to create in the first place".⁷⁰ And those interests were certainly not feminist, as defined by either NAC or NWCI.

Moreover, within this institutional context, NAC and NWCI presented their briefs to the various authorities as one group among many, the exception being the Working Group on Childcare. This meant that NAC and NWCI had to fight for policy attention, especially considering that the Commission on Social Welfare received 259 submissions, while the Commission of Inquiry on UI in Canada received 1,000 submissions! It would have been very difficult, therefore, for NAC and NWCI to persuade commission members to make the connection between the women's equality agenda and unemployment insurance and interject those ideas and goals into the final recommendations.

The second way in which the hierarchy of policy institution was evident was by way of the placement of CACSW within the overall government structure. In two of the policy events analysed above, - the *Canada Child Care Act* and the Commission of Inquiry on Unemployment Insurance - CACSW presented briefs with the hope of interjecting a women's policy perspective into the debate and subsequent policy outcome.

Sometimes CACSW clearly reiterated the ideas of NAC. Overall, however, CACSW was an ineffective policy insider or policy ally for NAC.

The ineffectiveness of CACSW to act as a strong insider policy ally for NAC during the *Canada Child Care Act* and UI inquiry policy debates was not surprising given the agency's institutional constraints. These constraints were evident first given the institutional placement of CACSW within the bureaucratic hierarchy and second, by the political context within which CACSW operated as a government agency. CACSW was constrained by an institutional setting and an operational environment that often worked in conflict with, or in opposition to, the agency's objectives of promoting women's equality.

These institutional constraints were apparent from two vantage points - at the meso level and at the macro level. At the meso level, as an agency directed to provide policy advice to government on women's issues, CACSW possessed no, or very little, policy clout. The agency had to rely on their powers of persuasion to compel policy actors, and more importantly cabinet, to incorporate a women's perspective into policy. Given this, CACSW's placement within the federal government it is argued here, reflects an unequal structure of representation. That is, women's voices, as articulated through NAC's policy demands, were segregated into policy agencies which mirrored and perpetuated women's marginalized position within society. Given this unequal structure of representation, CACSW was unable to act as an effective policy advocate and institutional access point for NAC. Furthermore, although CACSW strived to promote and influence policy developments with NAC's policy goals in mind, the organization

functioned within a particular political and policy context. As a government agency, CACSW was caught between balancing the interests of government, its “political master”, with the interests of an organization such as NAC. Inevitably, the interests of government prevailed as reflected in the *Canada Child Care Act*.

At the macro level, Canada’s federal structure of administration and governance prohibited CACSW from substantively influencing policy developments in the child care sector, because this policy area was the responsibility of provincial/territorial governments. Just as CACSW could only advise or attempt to persuade the government to incorporate NAC’s policy demands within its own policy territory, CACSW could only persuade and attempt to collaborate with provincial and territorial authorities in much the same way.

With respect to policy language, the four policy events analysed above point to the significance of how language, as a driver of policy ideas, significantly influenced policy transformation, having particular import for NAC and NWC and policy advocacy. Much of the policy language framing the policy events analysed above did not attend to the different realities of women’s and men’s experiences as “workers” in the labour market or as “UI beneficiaries” when unemployed, or as primary caregivers. As well, the language of policy was institutionalized or normalized, making it very difficult for NAC and NWC to interject a counter language around women’s equality.

First, as we saw with the *Canada Child Care Act*, the language and ideas of the government framed what the government was willing to do when it came to child care. And, as noted above, the government of the day was willing to only go so far - in stark

contrast to what NAC was seeking. Of course, the language of the *Canada Child Care Act* was steeped in politics - it was a manifestation of the government's policy strategy quite independent from what may have been expected by NAC.

Second, all the policy events analysed above were conveyors of a degendered bureaucratic language which either blocked or redefined NAC's and NWCI's policy aspirations. These terms framed and problematized this policy sector in two contradictory ways. First, global terms (e.g., worker, UI claimant or social welfare recipient) completely made void women's particular experience with the labour market and unemployment to those who develop public policy within the institutional hierarchy. Second, these same terms, as products of the policy's history, were actually highly gendered, since they reflected the experience of a worker conceptualized around the norms of the "male" worker. So in two ways, the policy language hid the gender consequences of the UI policy debates analysed above.

The language of policy surrounding child care was no less benign than it was for UI. The use of terms such as "parent" and "working parent" were indications of this. This policy language reflected a preponderance to frame and think about child care as a family and/or parental responsibility within the domestic sphere of the household. This set of ideas, of course, reflected the socio-political culture in both countries, rooted in notions of individual responsibility in relation to the care of children.

In Ireland, these terms and categories, that is "working parent", were also influenced by a policy language often articulated by the European Commission Network on Childcare who was represented on the Working Group on Childcare.⁷¹ A focus on the

child care as an employment support was not surprising given the EU's historic focus on economic and employment issues. In fact, in 1992, the EU Council of Ministers adopted a Recommendation on Child Care that, while not legally binding on member countries, did have some political force behind it since the Irish government at the time agreed to it in principle.⁷² The Recommendation identified four initiatives to be undertaken by member countries to facilitate the reconciliation of work and family responsibilities: provision of child care while parents are employed or engaged in training or education; special leave for employed parents; making work environments conducive to the needs of workers with children and sharing responsibility for the care of children by both men and women.⁷³

Conclusion

This chapter's aim was to analyse how policy institutions were implicated in the transformation of NAC's and NWCI's policy goals in child care and unemployment insurance. But what of the context in which these institutions functioned? Since we know these policy events and policy institutions were embedded in a particular policy environment, what influence would the broader political surrounding have on policy transformation? Chapter Six analyses this third and final sphere of policy transformation.

Chapter Four - End Notes

1. Jill Vickers, Pauline Rankin and Christine Appelle, As If Politics Mattered: A Political Analysis of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), p. 134.
2. Kathleen Staudt, Policy, Politics and Gender: Women Gaining Ground, (West Hartford: Kumarian Press, 1998), p. 61.
3. In 1993, a major institutional reorganization created the Ministry of Human Resources Development Canada. This "super-ministry" was created to consolidate federal labour market and social security programs that included: 1) the former Department of Labour, 2) social and income security programs from the former Department of Health and Welfare, 3) social development and education programs from the former Department of Secretary of State, and 4) unemployment insurance and labour market programs for Employment and Immigration Canada. See Canada, Human Resources Development Canada, Annual Report 1994-1995, (Ottawa: Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1995), p. 1.
4. The Department of Social Welfare had been the lead policy institution since its establishment in 1947.
5. Demands from women's groups for the establishment of women's policy agencies began in earnest during the second wave of the women's movement. In the 1960s, the United Nations already had their own institutional structure devoted to the advancement of women. See Dorothy McBride Stetson and Amy G. Mazur, "Introduction" in Dorothy McBride Stetson and Amy G. Mazur, eds., Comparative State Feminism, (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1995), p. 3.
6. The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women was established in 1973 to provide an independent, arms-length source of advice to government on women's policy issues. Status of Women Canada was the outgrowth of a women's policy office in the Privy Council Office (PCO) originally established in 1971. The office was eventually moved out of the PCO and renamed Status of Women Canada in 1976.
7. Second Commission on the Status of Women, Report to Government, (Dublin: The Stationery Office, January 1993), pp. 225-226.
8. The Ministry of State for Women's Affairs was created in 1982. Upon the election of a new government, this Ministry was merged into the Prime Minister's office in 1987. On the recommendation of the Second Commission on the Status of Women to re-establish a WPA, the Department of Equality and Law Reform was established in 1993 and later merged with the Department of Justice in 1997.

9. State feminism refers to the "...activities of government structures that are formally charged with furthering women's status and their rights". See Dorothy McBride Stetson and Amy G. Mazur, eds., Comparative State Feminism, pp. 1-2.

10. Ibid., p. 2.

11. For a comparative analysis of the role and influence of women's policy agencies see Amy G. Mazur, ed., State Feminism, Women's Movements, & Job Training: Making Democracies Work in a Global Economy, (New York: Routledge, 2001).

12. Canada, House of Commons, Sharing the Responsibility, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Special Committee on Child Care, Issue No. 1, From Thursday, October 9, 1986 to Thursday, March 6, 1987, p. 93.

13. Canada, House of Commons, Sharing the Responsibility, p.p. 85-86. See also Susan D. Phillips, "Rock-A-Bye Brian: The National Strategy on Child Care" in Katherine A. Graham, ed., How Ottawa Spends, 1989-90: The Buck Stops Where?, (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1989), p. 171.

14. Canada, House of Commons, Sharing the Responsibility, p. 87. The Family and Child Care Act was recommended to complement the Canada Assistance Plan in the provision of federal funds to licensed child care centres, family day care homes and family support services through cost-sharing with the provinces and territories. See Sharing the Responsibility, p. 87.

15. Ibid., p. 166.

16. The following information on the four components of the strategy taken from: National Action Committee on the Status of Women, Smoke and Mirrors? Or a Federal National Child Care Strategy? A Critique of the Federal Government's National Child Care Plan, January 1988, p. 2 and Susan D. Phillips, How Ottawa Spends, pp. 166-167.

17. Susan Phillips has written that the *Child Care Act* received a "whirlwind debate" of less than three days due to the impending federal election. See Susan D. Phillips, How Ottawa Spends, p. 171.

18. National Action Committee on the Status of Women, Brief to the Legislative Committee on Bill C-144: The Canada Child Care Act, September 8, 1988, Executive Summary.

19. Susan D. Phillips, How Ottawa Spends, p. 195.

20. Ruth Roach Pierson, Marjorie Griffin Cohen, Paula Bourne and Philinda Masters, eds, Canadian Women's Issues, Volume I: Strong Voices, (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1993), p. 314.

21. Katherine Teghtsoonian, "Neo-Conservative Ideology and Opposition to Federal Regulation of Child Care Services in the United States and Canada", Canadian Journal of Political Science (26) 1, March 1993, p. 119.
22. Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, A Brief Presented to the Special Committee on Child Care, June 10, 1986, p. 26.
23. Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Brief to the Legislative Committee on Bill C-144, September 6, 1988, p. 18.
24. Nancy Wood, Glen Allen and Luke Fisher, "Who Cares?", Maclean's, May 31, 1993, p. 35. Minister Benoit stated that children suffering from physical or psychological problems should come before day care.
25. Working Group on Childcare Facilities for Working Parents, Report to the Minister of Equality and Law Reform, (Dublin: The Stationery Office, February 1994), p. 1.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.
28. The NWCI was unable to locate a copy of the brief for the author's perusal. Fortunately, Appendix C in the final report of the Working Group listed a number of the recommendations put forward by NWCI. See Working Group on Childcare Facilities for Working Parents, Report to the Minister of Equality and Law Reform, pp. 72-75. A few of the other organizations invited by the Working Group to submit briefs were the Employment Equality Agency, Day Nursery Management Committee, Irish Pre-school Playgroups Association and The National Children's Nursing Association.
29. NWCI, Annual Report 1989, no page numbers and Annual Report 1990, p. 24.
30. These two previous reviews took place in 1983 and 1985. For a synopsis of the recommendations of these two reviews, see Working Group on Childcare Facilities for Working Parents, Report, pp.68-71.
31. Commission on Social Welfare, Report, (Dublin: The Stationery Office, July 1986), p. 1. The government which established the Commission was a Fine Gael/Labour coalition.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
33. Readers should note that at this point some of these members (e.g., government, farmers, labour unions and employer associations) were not referred to as social partners since the first social partnership agreement was not agreed to until 1987.

34. Members were: John Curry, Chair (Director of the National Services Board, a government agency), Tony Brown and Eithne Fitzgerald (labour party activists), Bob Cashman (Society of St. Vincent de Paul), Peter Cassells (Secretary General, Irish Congress of Trade Unions), Dick Doyle (Superintendent, Community Welfare Office with the Easter Health Board), Stanislaus Kennedy (Director, Focus Point, a charitable organization for the homeless), Ann Lavan (University College, Dublin), Hugh MacNeill (employer representative), Eugene McCarthy (Federated Union of Employers, now Irish Business and Employers Confederation), Frank Masterson (Irish Farmers Association) and David Rottman (Research Professor, Economic and Social Research Institute). This list of members is not contained in the report of the Commission on Social Welfare. The author is grateful to the library staff of the Institute of Public Administration in Ireland for directing this information via e-mail, after requesting the information from John Curry (former Chair of the Commission) who, at the time of writing, was an Instructor at the Institute.

35. John Curry, Irish Social Services, (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1993), p. 34. John Curry was appointed Chairman of the Commission on Social Welfare. His reflections on the Commission are contained in this book.

36. Commission on Social Welfare, Report, p. 7.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

38. Council for the Status of Women, Submission to the Commission on Social Welfare, February 1984, p. 4 and p. 6.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

40. John Curry, Irish Social Services, p. 40.

41. Commission on Social Welfare, Report, p. 15.

42. John Curry, Irish Social Services, p. 39.

43. Commission on Social Welfare, Report, p. 417.

44. *Ibid.*

45. John Curry, Irish Social Services, p. 41.

46. Niamh Hardiman, "Inequity and the Representation of Interests", in William Crotty and David E. Schmitt, eds., Ireland and the Politics of Change, (London: Longman, 1998), p. 128. The Chair of the Commission, reported a few years later that Irish governments had responded to the need to increase social welfare benefits, although others (e.g., the NESF) felt that these increases did not substantially improve the relative

standard of living of recipients. See John Curry, Irish Social Services, p. 41 and NESF, Income Maintenance Strategies, Forum Report No. 5, (Dublin: The Stationery Office, July 1994), p. 5.

47. Commission of Inquiry on Unemployment Insurance, Report, (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada), November 1986, Opening Letter. The Terms of Reference of the Commission were quite extensive. See *Ibid.*, pp. 333-334. This Commission is commonly known as the Forget Commission, named after its Chairman.

48. Membership included: Claude Forget, Chairman (consultant in the private sector and Vice-president of the C.D. Howe Institute), Roy F. Bennet (private sector management consultant), M.O. Morgan (university academic), Jack Munro (President of the International Woodworkers of American Regional Council No. 1), Guylaine Saucier (President of a forestry products firm) and Frances J. Soboda (Vice-president of the Canadian Labour Congress, Vice-president, Nova Scotia Federation of Labour). Commission of Inquiry on Unemployment Insurance, Report, pp. 403-405.

49. Commission of Inquiry on Unemployment Insurance, Summary Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Unemployment Insurance, (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada), November 1986, p. 5.

50. National Action Committee on the Status of Women, The Problem is Jobs...Not Unemployment Insurance, A Brief to the Commission on Inquiry on Unemployment Insurance, January 28, 1986, pp. 1-3.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

56. *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 32. *The Participation Guide* is mentioned in NAC's Brief and in the Brief presented to the Commission by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

58. The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Brief Presented to The Commission of Inquiry on Unemployment Insurance, January 1986, p. 1.

59. Commission of Inquiry on Unemployment Insurance, Report, p. 454.

60. Ibid.

61. Commission of Inquiry on Unemployment Insurance, Report, pp. 427-516. Leslie A. Pal, "Sense and Sensibility: Comments on Forget", Canadian Public Policy (XIV) 1, March 1988, p. 8.

62. Ibid. Pal relates that John Crosbie, the Transport Minister and an MP from Newfoundland opposed the idea of cutting regional and fishing benefits. The author presumes this was because these kinds of benefits were particularly important for workers in his province.

63. Ibid., p. 435.

64. National Action Committee on the Status of Women, "Forget recommendations would be detrimental to women", Feminist Action, Vol. 2, No. 2, January 1987, p. 3.

65. Commission of Inquiry on Unemployment Insurance, Report, p. 457.

66. The Standing Committee refused NAC the opportunity to present a brief arguing that they would only hear from groups who had not already presented a brief during the Commission's review process. National Action Committee on the Status of Women, Minutes of Meeting of the Employment Committee, March 1, 1987, p. 2.

67. Leslie A. Pal, "Sense and Sensibility: Comments on Forget", Canadian Public Policy, p. 9.

68. Ibid., p. 12.

69. Personal interview, Joan Grant Cummings, Past President, NAC, March 9, 2000. The equality agenda had ostensibly been completed in the 1970s under the Liberal government of Pierre Trudeau.

70. Anne Marie Goetz, "Introduction: Getting Institutions Right for Women in Development" in Anne Marie Goetz, ed., Getting Institutions Right for Women in Development, (London: Zed Books, 1997), p. 6.

71. European Commission, Employment & Social Affairs, Work and Childcare: Implementing the Council Recommendation on Childcare: A Guide to Good Practice, (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1996); European Commission Network on Childcare, The EC Childcare Network, 1986-1996: A Decade of Achievements, (European Commission, 1997).

72. Norin Hayes, "Organization and Support of Childcare in Ireland", Irish Journal of Feminist Studies (1) 2, 1996, p. 17. See also Council Recommendation of 31 March on Childcare, (92/241/EEC).

73. Ibid., p. 18.

Chapter Five

Sphere Three - Assessing the Policy Context

The final sphere of policy transformation had to do with the context of policy making. The policy context was especially salient since the role and influence of policy institutions, as well as NAC's and NWCI's relationship with government authorities, were situated within a particular country-specific setting or policy context. Here, contextual influences were considered to be part and parcel of a range of factors that constituted the "background of policy making".¹

In this study, the policy context had three particular aspects that were significant for policy transformation. First, in both Canada and Ireland, a particular regime of gender relations structured what policy goals advanced by NAC and NWCI were possible, and which were not. Second, macro-political institutions, that is federal and unitary forms of government in Canada and Ireland respectively, structured how NAC's and NWCI's policy goals were received by policy makers, while also influencing the success or failure of securing policy attention and policy change. In Canada, federal structures of governance presented a number of problems for NAC. Notable of these were undertaking policy advocacy in a fragmented system of interest representation, dealing with the politics of federal-provincial relations and how unemployment and child care policy issues were framed in jurisdictional terms rather than in terms of women's equality. In Ireland, a neo-corporatist interest representation system through social partnership, situated within unitary structures of government, opened participation to

NWCI in comparison to NAC. These policy discussions, however, were framed around economic debates over capital and labour as oppose to gender and equality. Third, in both Canada and Ireland neo-liberal ideas and policy strategies influenced government thinking and policy developments, and hence the policy context, presenting a serious challenge to the acceptance of NAC's and NWCI's policy goals.

In Part I, this chapter begins with a discussion on the regime of gender relations in Canada and Ireland. Part II presents an analysis of macro-political institutions. We then move on to Part III which investigates the influence of neo-liberalism.

Part I - Women and the Welfare State

Much has been written about women's "pivotal" relationship within modern liberal-democratic welfare states, as consumers of services, paid workers or as unpaid community workers.² Through various government regulations and public policies, women and men have been *tied* to welfare states in very different ways structuring their access to social services, income security benefits, access to child care and certain types of employment in the paid labour market. In effect, welfare state strategies and policies have restricted women's choices and have legitimized women's dual dependency on men and the state by reinforcing their subordinate role within the family and by ghettoising women in the low-waged, non-decision-making echelons of the labour market.³ Men's and women's respective attachment to the welfare state have also structured social, economic and sexual relations between men and women, both within public sphere of the paid labour market and in the private, domestic sphere of the household/family.

Gosta Esping-Andersen has suggested that we tend to equate the welfare state with post-war capitalism and that it ushered in a “...new political commitment, a rewritten social contract between the state and the people”.⁴ For women, however, “political commitments” that shaped welfare states, at least those associated with Western liberal-democracies, were institutionalized when “...the dominant view of work and family life dictated a strict division of labour between the sexes. Men were expected to earn the market wage to provide for dependents; women were largely confined to the private, domestic sphere, taking care of the “personal” needs of the family.”⁵ As a consequence, women have been “written in” to welfare states as mothers, wives and dependents, whereas men have been “written in” as independent breadwinners/fathers and household heads.

Gender Regimes in Canada and Ireland

A welfare state built on the male breadwinner model is a situation wherein one finds “...married women excluded from the labour market, firmly subordinated to their husbands for the purposes of social security entitlements and tax, and expected to undertake the work of caring (for children and other dependents) at home without public support”.⁶ By applying Jane Lewis’s typology of welfare state regimes to understand the extent to which countries have “...moved away from the male breadwinner model”, we can understand the importance of the policy context and its influence on the transformation of NAC’s and NWCI’s policy goals. Jane Lewis has described Ireland as a “strong male breadwinner” welfare state given a historical preponderance to strictly demarcate public and private space to ensure women’s domestic and family role,

juxtaposed to women's exclusion from paid employment and social security benefits.⁷ Applying the same classification, the Canadian welfare state could be characterized as a "modified male breadwinner" welfare state given women's relatively high level of participation in the paid labour market post-WWII in comparison to Ireland. The breadwinner model was also further "modified" in the Canadian context due to policy initiatives that have not been developed in Ireland, such as the elimination of dependent allowances in the UI system, as well as the availability of CAP funding for the delivery of child care at the provincial level and the opportunity for parents to deduct child care expenses through the income tax system.⁸

But, how does the conceptualization of the Canadian and Irish welfare states as either strong or modified breadwinner regimes of gender relations help in an analysis of policy transformation? It is a reminder that something else was going on, beyond government spending reduction strategies or NAC's and NWCI's lack of power or access to government institutions, in relation to the acceptance or rejection of NAC's and NWCI's policy goals. And that "something else" was deeply held ideas about women and women's role in society and the economy. We come to appreciate this by thinking about women as being situated within a regime of gender relations. This helps us to understand the policy context from a historical perspective regarding cultural, as well as bureaucratic/governmental, assumptions about the role of women and the way in which policy histories, rooted in a legacy of women as primary caregivers and secondary wage earners, have had lasting significance. That is, during the time frame of this study, policy developments in child care and unemployment insurance were tied to past decisions and

past conceptions of Canadian and Irish women regarding their place within the home and the paid labour market. Due to this legacy, even in the 1980s and 1990s - a time well beyond the days of the traditional household - the policy context continued to be non-conducive to the kinds of policy goals in child care and unemployment insurance that NAC and NWCI were seeking. Here the author is thinking about how governments consistently resisted to think about *women as women*, to develop policies for *women as workers*, and most perplexing, as women who give birth who are often still situated as primary caregivers. Rather, governmental authorities continued to develop policies around conceptions of women who happen to work or who either happen to, *and should*, care for children. This thinking perpetuated the status quo which impeded the possibility of governmental authorities considering child care as a public good (rather than a women's responsibility or family responsibility) and for considering reforms to the UI system that met the specific needs of *women as workers*.

These policy legacies were set in place by state-sanctioned expressions of patriarchal values and an historically-set demarcation between private unpaid work from public, paid employment. In Canada, this strict demarcation was in part secured through the development of the unemployment insurance system based upon the concept of the "family wage".⁹ As Ruth Pierson relates, the dominant framework during the early development of the unemployment insurance system in the 1930s defined men, in their role as breadwinners, as "deserving" of a wage sufficient to support unwaged children and an unwaged, housekeeping wife. This dominant framework underpinned the guiding principles of Leonard Marsh's *Report on Social Security for Canada* (1943), which

Pierson argues, is widely regarded as the founding text of the Canadian welfare state.¹⁰ Conceptions of the male breadwinner, juxtaposed to the proper role of women as “wife and mother”, were replete in the 1930s when the need for an unemployment insurance system was being debated by public officials. Ruth Roach Pierson carefully documents that during these debates, and in the resultant legislation, unemployed women either had a “shadowy presence” or did not appear as a “person in her own right”.¹¹ For example, the 1935 *Unemployment Insurance Act* and 1938 unemployment insurance legislative debates provided for “dependent allowances”, defined as “...the wife or dependent husband of the insured person, or a female having the care of the dependent children of the insured person”.¹² Although there is recognition in this definition that men actually may have been a “dependent” of a wife, policy developers at the time did not consider this to likely be the case. It was expected that dependents of women claiming unemployment benefits would be “relatively unimportant.”¹³ During this time frame, dependent allowances were seen as “common sense”. Not only were men given the further ability to support his family, women and children would not have to be forced into employment, or obliged to take up “unsuitable work”.¹⁴

Other, less direct, measures were implemented during this time frame to control women’s access to unemployment insurance benefits. Differential qualifying periods for eligibility were instituted to reward the “steady worker”, i.e., the male breadwinner. Although changes were implemented in the 1940 Act, bringing some increased access to benefits for the less regularly employed, most women were largely excluded from unemployment insurance anyway. These exclusions hit women hard, since they targeted

traditional “women’s” occupations, such as teachers, nurses, civil servants and domestic service providers. As Ruth Pierson relates, between 30 to 40 per cent of women in the paid labour were prohibited from accessing UI coverage.¹⁵

During WWII, women entered paid employment in unprecedented numbers. However, as Ann Porter related in her study of UI, post-WWII reconstruction labour market policies were highly gendered since they were aimed at moving women out of well-paid wartime manufacturing jobs into part-time, insecure jobs in the low-paid manufacturing sector and the fledgling service sector. These measures included closing day cares, the renewal of civil service regulations barring women from federal government work, and streaming women into post-war training programs in domestic services, household management, waitressing and hairdressing.¹⁶ Furthermore, discriminations structured into the unemployment system continued. Perhaps the most flagrant measure targeted at women in the UI system during this time was Regulation 5A. Brought into effect November 1950, the regulation disqualified married women from collecting UI benefits for a two year period following her marriage unless she was able to prove her attachment to the labour force. This restriction was eventually lifted in November 1957, although requests, notably from business interests, for the reinstatement of a married women’s regulation continued until into the early 1960s.¹⁷

In Ireland, the strict demarcation between public and private space was set in place by the modern Irish social security system, which owed its philosophical foundations to the British *Beveridge Report* of 1942. The *Beveridge Report* treated married women as “a special insurance class” since an “expectant mother”, it was argued,

should not be placed under pressure to continue to work and her earnings should otherwise be considered secondary.¹⁸ Once married, a female contributor to the social insurance system received a marriage grant which closed her contribution record - work experience gained after marriage required establishing a new contribution record.¹⁹ This policy was reinforced by the Irish government by the marriage bar, which was reversed in 1973, prohibited the recruitment of married women into the civil service, local authorities and health boards, and some private sector firms, leaving some women with a patchy record of employment and inadequate levels of contribution into the insurance system.

Significant shifts in family structure and women's participation in paid work, and hence gender relations, have taken place over the last several decades in Canada and Ireland pushing these political systems away from the traditional breadwinner/dependent wife model. Nonetheless, even though the traditional breadwinner model has deteriorated, policy legacies had lasting consequences with respect to the acceptance of NAC's and NWCI's policy goals as discussed above. Moreover, these policy legacies must be considered in conjunction with how both Canada and Ireland fit the "liberal form of welfare state" wherein social provision is limited and shaped to preserve individual initiative and market forces creating a policy context that is often *also* antithetical to achieving women's equality.²⁰ One only needs to look to Canada's tendency to use policy instruments, such as income tax deductions, to defray the costs of child care. While measures such as this provided choice and flexibility to parents as taxpayers, they also ensured the continuance of a non-interventionist role for government in the provision of child care. Indeed, one may comfortably argue that reliance on these kinds of policy

instruments, in a market-model of service delivery, inhibited the introduction of other ideas about how to develop child care, such as those advanced by NAC (e.g., a national child care policy).

In Ireland, a policy context built on individualism was somewhat tempered given the country's history. Roman Catholicism, in conjunction with defending their independence from the British, infused into the Irish psyche an attachment to the state that was less present in the Canadian context. As a special advisor to the Minister of Social Welfare related during an interview, there has been in Ireland a "strong expectation" that the state will take on a role either in the economy or in the provision of social welfare benefits and assistance.²¹

Yet, women's role within the household had deep cultural roots in Ireland. Following Ireland's independence from Britain in 1922, a "constitutional preference" for the maintenance of a strong family unit incorporated women into the Irish welfare state based on their familial and marital status.²² Although fervently opposed by some women during the drafting of the document, the 1937 Constitution of Ireland contained articles that endorsed a patriarchal system which have had profound and lasting effect for women. Key articles in this regard include:²³

Article 41(1) In particular the State recognises that by her life within the home, the women gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved.

Article 41(2) The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home.

Article 45(2) The State shall endeavour to ensure that the strength and health of

workers, men and women, and the tender age of children shall not be abused and the citizens shall not be forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their sex, age or strength.²⁴

The inclusion of these articles were reflective of Catholic morality and the influence of the Roman Catholic church hierarchy in Irish life and politics.²⁵ Catholic hegemony, especially through socialization processes in the public education system and the pulpit, cemented specific patriarchal attitudes and a sexual morality directed towards women and the valorization of motherhood in Irish society.²⁶ The strength and success of the Catholic church was rooted in its association with Irish nationalism as a source of identity in opposition to English colonial dominance. The Catholic Church provided continuity and stability for the new state after independence. Yet for Irish women, this continuity has been far too stable, exacerbated by the Constitution's remarkable rigidity, since any change to the Constitution requires public referendum.²⁷

The role of Catholicism and the "central role [of the family] as a key symbol in the ideology of Irish society" has been evident in early policy debates.²⁸ It was claimed by early Irish nationalists, for instance, that the introduction of the 1933 *Unemployment Assistance Act* had "undermined parental authority" and that "a peasant economy such as ours, based on the patriarchal principle, cannot survive" the introduction of legislation that facilitated paid employment outside of the family dwelling.²⁹ Indeed, in 1954, the Irish Republic was described as a:

...clerical state...[which] combines the ecclesiastical monarchy of Rome with a modern, streamlined parliamentary system in a unique mixture, and the two organisations live in genuine amity most of the time because the state does not venture to challenge clerical authority directly and because the church is usually discreet enough to assert its power unobtrusively.³⁰

Although the overt influence of Catholicism has abated over the years and social values in Ireland have become far more secularized, two prominent Irish feminists have reflected that while Roman Catholicism had a foot-hold in other European countries (e.g., Poland), the Irish experience was unique given how long the Catholic Church influenced society and politics without any substantial opposition.³¹ During the time frame of this study, there was no direct participation of the Church hierarchy in policy debates or decision-making. What was clear, however, was the legacy of Catholicism and how it continued to shape and influence the expectations of women's place within the household. As Sylva Langford stated to the author in 1998, "those in power, mainly men, had no felt need for child care"... "nor were they that concerned with minding the kids", going on to say, that since "men had no experiential perception of [child care]...in Ireland, there is still the perception that kids should be minded by women".³²

In both Canada and Ireland, the regime of gender relations was rooted in liberal individualism which compromised NAC's and NWCI's ability to achieve policies that required government involvement and public expenditure. This was because policy recipients (i.e., women) were and are likely to be conceptualized by policy developers as degendered "individuals", which ultimately ran counter to NAC's and NWCI's project of representing women as a social collective. And in conjunction with these ideas, the suitable role of government intervention in both the home and economy was residual anyway in both countries, which again did not provide the kind of policy context required nor the kinds of government involvement NAC and NWCI were looking for (e.g., the

implementation of national policies and substantial government funding). Within this gendered liberal policy context then, NAC and NWCI often confronted a “policy wall”.³³ Although NAC and NWCI confronted substantial challenges, as noted in Chapter Four and further discussed in Chapter Six, windows of opportunity did present themselves allowing NAC and NWCI to chip away at these barriers.

Embedded within the particular regime of gender relations discussed above were macro-political institutions which linked groups within civil society to government authorities. We now turn to this discussion.

Part II - Federal and Unitary Structures of Governance

Many analysts have highlighted the importance of understanding how and why a country’s governance structures organize institutional arrangements and policy making processes. In this study, macro-political institutions, that is federalism and unitary structures, mattered for NAC and NWCI since these interest representation arrangements either erected barriers which prohibited policy advocacy, or provided potential avenues for policy attention.

For NAC, policy advocacy and success in realizing their policy goals were influenced by federalism from two vantage points. One vantage point had to do with the structures themselves, while the other had to do with how federalism framed the policy issue.

As far as structures were concerned, sub-regional offices across Canada allowed NAC to more effectively represent their member organizations. As an organization with

a unitary structure, these sub-regional units were dependent on the head office. NAC also organized at the federal level to be closer to politicians and bureaucrats in Ottawa.

Organizing at the federal level was considered paramount, since much of NAC's work, as an umbrella organization, was lobbying policy makers in Ottawa. As well, during the 1980s, NAC had a Toronto office, albeit small, for administrative purposes.

Although federal structures provided multiple entry points for NAC to engage in policy advocacy, it nonetheless presented them with challenges. For example, although NAC, as a national, broad-based organization had some resources at its disposal, it nonetheless was dependent on vulnerable forms of financial resources, such as government funding and membership dues. Limited resources made it all the but impossible for NAC to sustain policy advocacy at both levels of government. These financial struggles eventually led to the closure of the Ottawa office in 1995.³⁴ Less visibility in Ottawa, along with the organization's inability to be ready and available to engage in networking and policy advocacy, impacted NAC's capacity to mount and sustain their lobbying efforts. Ultimately, NAC's unitary structure was an ineffective organizational structure for policy advocacy in a federal system.

Federal structures were particularly problematic for NAC when advocating for a national child care policy. Given that child care is a provincial responsibility, the federal government, and provincial governments in response, were able to easily point the finger at the other level while shrugging their shoulders over responsibility for policy development and funding. This sort of blame avoidance, while not so much an issue when the federal government was willing to transfer funds through the Canada

Assistance Plan (CAP), became a tactic of successive governments beginning most notably with the election of the Mulroney government in 1984. Governments touted the need to ensure viable and innovative federal-provincial partnerships in the development and implementation of policy and programs, often couched in terms of respecting provincial jurisdiction. As discussed further in Case Study #1 in Chapter Six, this rhetoric became even more pronounced during the Social Security Review, culminating with the introduction of the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST). The introduction of the CHST, presented by then Finance Minister Paul Martin in his 1995 Budget Speech, fundamentally shifted both federal-provincial relations and the social policy context. In effect, the CHST terminated the CAP by subsuming three programs: Established Programs Financing which funded health care and post-secondary education and social assistance transfer payments to provinces under CAP. The CHST, a single block funding mechanism, was claimed to have been designed to provide more flexibility to provinces to ensure that "...restrictions attached by the federal government to transfer payments in areas of clear provincial responsibility...be minimized".³⁵ However, in the absence of conditions of spending, the case under CAP, provinces were free to spend money as they saw fit. This meant that monies would not necessarily have to be spent on social assistance, the program mechanism which funded child care at the provincial level. This shift in the funding structure between the federal government and the provinces, and the retreat of the federal government in social policy, was characterized by some social policy advocates as potentially "devastating" to child care.³⁶ It was argued that child care, a policy already highly fragmented since it is not an "entrenched" public service like

health care or public education, would become all the more vulnerable.

In policy terms, federalism directed the policy issue of child care away from women's equality. This was because policy debates about expanding child care were often cast in terms of jurisdiction, that is who's responsible, which effectively put the brakes on framing the policy issue in other terms, such as defining child care as a women's equality issue or women's employment issue. A good example of this can be found in the promises made by the Liberal Party under Jean Chretien. In the 1993 Liberal Party *Red Book*, and during the federal election, the Liberal Party committed itself to increasing regulated child care spending, with an additional \$720 million over three years applied to funds already spent under the Canada Assistance Plan.³⁷ After the successful election of the Liberal Party, the Chretien government eventually put the wheels in motion, when it was announced on December 13, 1995 by the Minister of Human Resources Canada that the government was seeking consensus from the provinces to establish a "...national program that will contribute significantly to the enhancement of child care...".³⁸ This national program, however, was contingent upon the agreement of all provinces and territories. In 1996, the new Minister of Human Resources Development announced that the initiative would not be realized given insufficient interest among the provinces.³⁹

Feminist academics have been highly critical of federal structures as a gendered system of governance. As a seemingly degendered institution, and one that appears to be innocuous, federalism was highly problematic for NAC since their policy issues did not fit neatly into "jurisdictional boxes". As Linda Trimble has argued, "...federalism

obscures other sources of conflict, prevents non-territorial issues from being addressed in political debates and resolved with public policy, and even restricts the definition of 'politics' itself'.⁴⁰ In the tug and pull between the federal and provincial governments, as a policy issue for women's emancipation, child care became depoliticized - that is, pulled out of the private realm of women's lives as primary care givers, and institutionalized in the public realm of federal-provincial negotiation. Moreover, a fragmented interest representation system had consequences regarding NAC's search for a national child care policy since neo-conservative and later neo-liberal policy objectives, as advanced by the Mulroney and Chretien governments, discussed further below and in Case Study #1 respectively, were easily guised under the rhetoric of pursuing a conciliatory approach to federal-provincial relations.

If federalism was a structural barrier to the implementation of a national child care policy/strategy in Canada, did a more centralized interest representation system within a unitary system of governance provide more opportunity for NWCI to voice and realize their policy goals? In one sense, neo-corporatist arrangements under the social partnership, structured around a unitary system of governance, did set clear boundaries as to where within the governance structure, and to whom, NWCI felt it important to advocate their policy goals. It was quite clear to them that certain institutions, such as social partnership bodies - e.g., the National Economic and Social Forum (NESF) and the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) - were important access points. However, identifiable institutional actors did not make policy advocacy any easier or successful. This was because the acceptance of NWCI's new ideas and policy strategies

required a constellation of factors coming together, notably capturing the agreement of a diverse sets of interests - government authorities and the social partners. Unlike a federal system that was more permeable, albeit perhaps too permeable for NAC's liking, unitary structures further reinforced an already highly institutionalized and hierarchical policy making arrangement, strictly demarcating who took part in policy development, while also framing the content of those discussions.

A form of tripartitism has been part of Irish policymaking since the 1940s.⁴¹ It began with a series of general wage agreements, via centralized and decentralized collective bargaining, from 1946 to 1976. In 1979, the government became much more involved in these negotiations which gave rise to a series of "national understandings" wherein unions and employers agreed on pay increases and the government agreed on a number of non-pay issues (e.g., tax reform). In 1987, the first national social partnership agreement was negotiated, discussed further below.⁴²

Ireland is a country with a history of Catholic corporatism. Just after the establishment of the new state, the Catholic Church endeavoured to integrate people into an "organic society" built on the principles of partnership and solidarity. This ensured, for the Catholic hierarchy, the maintenance of a traditional society in an "unfolding capitalist economy".⁴³ More currently, there has been a considerable debate amongst observers of Irish politics whether to characterize social partnership as a form of neo-corporatism. Some analysts clearly viewed the pattern of government, economic and labour relations that developed in Ireland as neo-corporatist.⁴⁴ Others have argued that the "institutionalization of consensus seeking" never moved beyond "the defence of their

individual sectional interests” thereby avoiding a “close involvement” in policy making.⁴⁵

Nonetheless, we know that some organized interests, represented by peak organizations such as the Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC), the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) and the Irish Farmers Association (IFA) *did* have a privileged place in the policy process and did dialogue with government on wage agreements. We also know that this “dialogue” had been taking place, in varying forms, for several decades.⁴⁶ To facilitate and organize these dialogues, a set of institutions eventually developed at the national level to provide the participation of these peak associations (e.g., NESC, NESF).

According to Sile O’Connor, Director of the NESC at the time of writing, social partnership did not fit the traditional European model of neo-corporatism given the absence of a strong left-wing political party.⁴⁷ Indeed, she pointed out that the Labour Party, Ireland’s centre-left political party, never formed a government, nor did this political party ever capture a strong electoral presence in any of the coalition governments. It was the centre-right political parties - Fianna Fail and Fine Gael - who were consistently supportive of the Irish model of social partnership. The OECD agreed with this assessment, stating that social partnership was more akin to “concertation” due to the limited provision of social insurance to the most vulnerable, unlike the traditional neo-corporatist systems such as Sweden.⁴⁸ As Michel Peillon reminds, however, although Ireland may not have actually developed into a full-fledged neo-corporatist system akin to Sweden, it has nonetheless resorted to neo-corporatist practices and implemented some neo-corporatist principles.⁴⁹ With this in mind, then, it is quite appropriate to describe the Irish policy making system a liberal variant of democratic

corporatism, the main aspects of which are: 1) an ideology of social partnership shared by government and business expressed at the national level; 2) a system of centralized and concentrated interest groups; and 3) the voluntary and informal coordination of conflicting objectives through negotiation.⁵⁰

Pluralism and liberal-corporatism are two different institutional ways in which organized groups in civil society participate in the political system. In Canada, NAC's engagement in policy advocacy was structured by a pluralistic political environment. It has been argued, that pluralistic political systems are "ideally suited" for new policy issues, since pressure from civil society can push governments to act especially as public awareness takes hold.⁵¹ However, it has also been demonstrated that "excessive penetration" of interests can result in "policy stalemate".⁵² And this was the situation that NAC confronted, in that their policy goals competed with other organized interests for government attention. This exacerbated their difficulties in being heard in a fragmented system of governance. This was the case, discussed in Chapter Four and in Case Study #1 when NAC participated in the Social Security Review. Given the vast number of groups who offered policy solutions to the federal government, NAC's policy proposals became just one set of many. Unlike the scenario in Ireland, there was no possibility for a "privileged" or institutionalized place in policy debates.

In contrast, social partnership in Ireland provided the promise of more "democratic participation" given the potential for more equitable distribution of power between interests represented on the NESC.⁵³ Corporatist systems are also said to set up structures that facilitate consensus and cooperation. A gender deconstruction of social

partnering, however, revealed a number of disjunctures between the goals of social partnership and NWCI's participation. First of these was the tension between differing conceptions of what social partnership was intended to accomplish. On the one hand, the NESC - a key member of this group - viewed social partnership as a process of negotiating, deal-making and trade-offs between the differing participants. On the other hand, social partnership was also expected to foster interdependence, solidarity and consensus.⁵⁴ The problem, however, was that the dominant paradigm - economic growth and stability - as negotiated in wage agreements between government, labour and business interests - marginalized *non-economic* issues such as child care and the dependency issues embedded in the social welfare system. Katherine Zappone, former Executive Director of NWCI, related to the author that NWCI was attempting to interject a feminist perspective into negotiations, while the other traditional social partners were "...not operating from a really radical critique of the dominant economic paradigm".⁵⁵ Another past member of NWCI's Executive, Carol Fawsitt, agreed stating that although it was "extremely attractive to be there...and it was important to be there", going to the social partner table to "problem solve" on an "issue by issue basis" did not benefit women, especially when attempting to deal with women's structural discrimination which required analysing women's policy issues in a holistic way via a critical perspective.⁵⁶

Social partnership agreements were characterized by one other NWCI member, Ursula Barry, as just "...inspirational statements about equality", since these negotiated deals were, after all, wage agreements between capital and labour. Therefore, although one of the outcomes of social partnering was the clear stipulation of particular targets on

wage increases and other employment-related issues between employers and unions, there were no comparable “targets” set for equality measures.⁵⁷ This situation led some to characterize NWCI’s experience with social partnership as “participation without power”.⁵⁸ What participation there was, appeared to initially centre on resolving long-standing inadequacies of the social welfare system. During the negotiations that eventually led to the agreement, *Partnership 2000*, NWCI, along with other community-based groups, insisted that government make further spending commitments to increase social welfare rates to those recommended by the Commission on Social Welfare.⁵⁹ NWCI’s demand for new spending for child care was a non-starter. In essence then, NWCI found it difficult to interject their policy goals since they clashed with the so-called “bread and butter” issues of social partnership that focussed on the interests espoused by labour and business.⁶⁰

Policy contexts in Canada and Ireland, however, were not just influenced by macro-institutional structures. We now turn to the role of ideas which significantly affected government thinking, and hence, the policy context.

Part III - Prevailing Policy Ideas - The Impact of Neo-Liberalism

At its core, neo-liberal principles rest on three premises: that institutions, such as the state and the market, should reflect and promote the motivation of individual self-interest, that governments provide a minimum of public goods and that the efficient allocation of resources is maximized through markets.⁶¹

In the 1970s, Canadian governments were generally committed to the tenets of the

Keynesian welfare state built around a consensus that the state held primacy over the “invisible hand” of the market.⁶² By the late 1970s, neo-conservative ideas (and later neo-liberal ideas) increasingly influenced government thinking, prompting a significant realignment of governing practices along with fiscal restraint and program restructuring.⁶³ In Canada, the emergence of a neo-liberal consensus stimulated a lively debates about the “state” of the welfare state. In Ireland, there was no corresponding debate, nor assault on the welfare state. Indeed, it has been suggested that there has been very little large scale welfare restructuring nor wide-ranging debates about the role and function of the welfare state.⁶⁴ Neo-liberal rhetoric, specifically targeting the underlying principles of the welfare state was much more muted in Ireland than in Canada. This is not to say, however, that neo-liberal ideas were altogether absent in the Irish context. Indeed, neo-liberalism was an important component of the policy context, not least because of Ireland’s membership in the European Union (EU). The EU after all, is a regional trading regime built around the tenets of fostering unfettered economic exchange and movement of goods between member nations. *The Single European Act*, passed by referendum in Ireland in 1987 and the *Treaty of Maastricht* (economic and monetary union), passed in Ireland in 1992, were clearly underpinned by the ideas of neo-liberalism. Moreover, these agreements no doubt influenced Irish government thinking about the need to be, and remain, competitive by fostering the liberalization of trade and reducing spending. For more on this, we turn to neo-liberalism’s effect on public policy developments in Canada and Ireland.

Canada

For NAC, the neo-liberal agenda of successive governments, since the election of the Progressive Conservative government in 1984, significantly reshaped gender relations via a neo-liberal practice of restructuring arguing that “...the state should neither protect domestic industry from global pressures nor provide a comprehensive social welfare system for its citizens”.⁶⁵ The neo-liberal consensus advanced by successive federal governments, was based on the liberalization of trade, ensuring economic competitiveness, the curtailment of spending on social services, deficit reduction and welfare state restructuring. This consensus heralded a profound shift in the policy environment and policy prescriptions. Of these were the introduction of the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST), a campaign of privatizing government run services, the restructuring of how NAC, and other women’s groups received funding from the federal government (see Chapter Three) and particular program changes, such as those which transformed UI into EI (see Chapter Six).

The neo-liberal lexicon and policy strategy were not gender neutral. Indeed, the emergence of neo-liberalism, on the heels of neo-conservatism under the Mulroney government, presented NAC with a number of substantial challenges. Foremost of these was confronting the “restructuring discourse” of neo-liberalism which sought to “radically shrink the realm of political negotiation by increasing the autonomy of market forces and of the family.”⁶⁶ As Judy Rebick, past President of NAC stated, the women’s movement in Canada was increasingly confronted with government’s preoccupation with deficit reduction and the subsequent marginalization of women’s policy issues. This was

because many of the programs women depended upon, such as income security through unemployment insurance and child care, required a continued spending commitment from government. Indeed, the neo-liberal consensus was considered to be “antithetical” to NAC’s task and policy ideas. As a leading feminist academic put it:

At worst, feminists have been accused of not representing the core of Canadian women but, instead, a radical fringe of man-haters, lesbians, and leftists determined to undermine the family and traditional values. More broadly, it is argued that feminist organizations such as NAC do not represent the mainstream of Canadian women.⁶⁷

In this ideological context, women and their policy demands were constructed to be “special interests” effectively marginalizing equality-seeking groups, such as NAC, by denying the social significance of these groups, or by portraying them as self-interested lobbyists.⁶⁸

Policy development and implementation of policy programs were affected by this neo-liberal consensus. We analysed one such policy program in Chapter Four - the National Child Care Strategy and the *Canada Child Care Act*.

As discussed in Chapter Four, the *Canada Child Care Act* was opposed by women’s groups because of the increased monies slotted to go to tax assistance to parents, one of the four components of the *Canada Child Care Act*, since this kind of measure would not be of benefit to many working parents.⁶⁹ Moreover, the continuation of the income tax system as the main policy instrument to deliver and “build” child care reflected a neo-liberal bias of using the least intrusive government measure rooted in a market model of service delivery providing choice to those parents who were willing, and able, to claim the expense. This type of child care provision had long been opposed by

NAC since it ran counter to the development of a child care system and a national child care policy.

Confronted with the retreat of the federal government regarding program development and spending, juxtaposed to the limited “political space” for NAC to advocate their policy goals to government, the task of representing women as a social collective became all the more difficult. Due to the emergence of a “restructuring discourse” rooted in neo-liberalism as Janine Brodie has referred to it, NAC was increasingly put on the defensive to *keep* programs that had been won in years past, rather than being able to concentrate on persuading government authorities to develop *new* programs, such as a national child care policy, or to reverse detrimental reforms to UI implemented during the 1980s.⁷⁰

With unemployment in September 1984 at 11.2%, and a projected average for the year 11.4%,⁷¹ economic growth and reducing the federal deficit was the major theme in an economic statement presented by then Finance Minister Michael Wilson in November 1984, outlined in *A New Direction for Canada: An Agenda for Economic Renewal*. With zealous attachment to reducing the deficit juxtaposed to substantial overhaul of social programs, the Tory government indicated that many universal programs would be re-evaluated, perhaps even terminated, so that “...scarce resources [could] be diverted first to those in greatest need”.⁷² This review was in part undertaken by the Neilsen Task Force on Program Review struck by the Progressive Conservative government just following the election in 1984. The Finance Minister’s budget speech reiterated these sentiments stating that the actions of his government represented a “...fundamental break with past.

For too long, government decided what is best for Canadians. Government set priorities, directed activity and subsidized effort. My budget calls for Canadians, not government, to choose what is best for Canada. And it challenges Canadians by rewarding success, not subsidizing effort”.⁷³

One of the more critical political events during this time period had to do with the Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada, or the Macdonald Commission, which reported while the Conservatives were in power in 1985. The MacDonald Commission recommended that Canadian governments:

- a) adopt a market-driven development strategy;
- b) facilitate adjustment by reducing regulation on industry; and
- c) create new opportunities for private-sector growth.⁷⁴

This “public philosophy”, based on market liberalization, social adjustment and limited government, had a profound influence on future of the social policy context, largely because this public philosophy undercut the ideas that underpinned the post-war Keynesian welfare state.⁷⁵ For many women in NAC, the neo-liberal consensus was put on the top of the political agenda by the MacDonald Commission. They considered this act to be one of the defining moment in Canadian politics given the consequent shift in the policy context.

With this shift in the policy context, the Department of Finance, and budgets from this department, eventually took centre stage. That is, due to Canada’s emphasis on fiscal and economic problems in a globalizing and international political economy, budgets started to become “more than just a budget” under the Brian Mulroney government when they began to shape and influence both social policy and economic

priorities. Indeed, it has been argued that budgets and the “fiscalization of policy discourse” became the dominant social policy paradigm, with a concomitant concentration of power in the Department of Finance, while weakening social policy departments which continued under the Liberal Party led by Jean Chretien (See Chapter Six, Case Study #1).⁷⁶

These policy ideas and strategies were not, however, just advocated by Canadian policy authorities. Indeed, they also emanated from outside sources. Balancing budgets, curtailing government spending, reforming the UI system from a “passive” to “active” program, along with a shifting emphasis on the “individual”, were all advocated by the OECD in their highly influential *Jobs Study*. As Leah Vosko recounts, the OECD urged governments to reform economic and social policies “that have made societies and economies rigid and stalled their ability and even willingness to adapt”, which had a major impact on the overhaul of UI into the Employment Insurance system.⁷⁷

In Canada then, a neo-liberal agenda had consequences for NAC’s ability to successfully advocate their policy goals. NAC confronted a policy language which appeared to be degendered (e.g., individuals), but was actually highly gendered. This policy language was situated within an overall unwelcoming policy context. That is, the policy ideas and strategies advocated by neo-liberal supporters acted as a barrier to the acceptance of policy goals advocated by NAC on behalf of women as a *social collective* and for policy outcomes that required government spending and a federal role in policy development.

Ireland

In Ireland, a neo-liberal agenda also influenced the government's thinking and policy developments. The Irish economy was able to weather a slowdown in economic growth, felt worldwide, in the mid-1970s, largely due to increased public spending and borrowing. During the 1980s, however, Ireland had one of the worst economic performances in Europe, the result of the international recession, domestic adjustment to reduce public finance and balance of payments deficits.⁷⁸ Indeed, because of poor economic performance up to 1987, along with rising government debt, unemployment averaged 13 per cent compared to an average of 9.2 per cent for the then twelve EC countries. This meant that any overhaul to the social welfare system would not quickly find its way onto the political agenda.⁷⁹

This was the policy context within which the first of four consecutive three-year national social partnership agreements, the *Programme for National Recovery* (PNR), was negotiated in 1987. This wage agreement outlined a strategy, based on a consensus between government officials and the traditional social partners (e.g., trade unions, employer groups and farmers), to target serious economic, employment and fiscal crises in the Irish economy.⁸⁰ The PNR's aim was to develop a modern competitive economy and reaffirm Ireland's full participation in the international economy and European Community. The Programme also included a commitment to "diminishing or removing social inequities...".⁸¹

However, it was clear that the goal of "diminishing or removing social inequities" was framed around neo-liberal ideas. As one observer of Irish politics relates, the

Taoiseach at the time, Charles Haughey, leader of the then Fianna Fail government, promised unions that no major privatizations of state-owned industries would be undertaken.⁸² Having said that however, there was also an unstated strategy on the part of political leaders that neo-liberal objectives were essential to securing the future success of the Irish economy. The social partners, then, increasingly accepted the need to implement three core principles of neo-liberalism: i) reduce public spending, ii) cut taxes to encourage entrepreneurship of individuals and industry and iii) implement wage reductions.⁸³ Some of these policy ideas were advanced by the NESC, although in a more muted form. In preparation for the development of the next national agreement, their influential document, *Strategies for the Nineties: Economic Stability and Structural Change*, offered an overall economic and social policy strategy framed around three components:

- a consistent economic strategy for budgetary, monetary and exchange rate policy designed to achieve the continuation of economic stability;
- a continuation of the consensus on income developments of the last three years which provides improvements in competitiveness;
- a radical policy programme covering industrial and agricultural policy, manpower policy, tax and social welfare reform, public sector reform... designed to:
 - a) improve the economy's internal efficiency, enhance international competitiveness and overcome barriers to long-run development; and, b) obtain fundamental reform of policies which generate social inequalities while minimizing any adverse economic impact.⁸⁴

The second national plan, *The Programme for Economic and Social Progress* (PESP), was negotiated in late 1990 to cover the years 1991 to 1993. In the meantime, an election installed a new leader of the Fianna Fail, Albert Reynolds. At the end of

1993, the NESC reported that “...[w]ere it not for the persistence of unemployment there would be much about which to be satisfied in recent Irish economic performance”.⁸⁵ As economic conditions improved in Ireland, the Irish government also reiterated its commitment to develop child care and increase social welfare rates, falling short of substantively addressing the discriminatory features of the social welfare system. The social partners agreed to increase social welfare rates in accordance with the Commission on Social Welfare, as resources allowed.⁸⁶ What was interesting for women, however, was that the PESP committed the government to review the recommendations of the first Commission on the Status of Women and “to stimulate the development of child care services by employers...”.⁸⁷ Furthermore, the PESP reported that matters of equal treatment, as stipulated at the EU level, would be taken into account in the “context of the future development of the [social welfare] system” making specific reference to the treatment of households.⁸⁸

Programme for Competitiveness and Work (PCW), the third national agreement, was negotiated at the end of 1993 to cover the period 1994 to 1996. The PCW was considered a success by the NESC who pointed to a growth in GDP of 7 per cent between 1994 and 1995 and falling unemployment from 15 per cent in 1994 to 12 per cent in 1996.⁸⁹ The PCW, under “social equity” reported that the concept of dependency would be examined in the context of the social welfare system and that progress would be made on the development of child care facilities for working parents.⁹⁰

The most recent national plan, *Partnership 2000 for Inclusion, Employment and Competitiveness*, covered the period from 1997 to 1999. During this period, Bertie Ahern

and his Fianna Fail party formed governments, initially in 1997. *Partnership 2000* was negotiated under far different economic conditions than the first national program was ten year earlier. In 1997, the GDP improved significantly, and because that increase was greater than in any other European Union country, Ireland was now being referred to as the “Celtic tiger”.⁹¹

Each of the last three national agreements stressed the link between economic growth, improved standards of living and social equity. In the mid-1990s, the social partners had to deal with increasing pressure from community groups to expand the social partnership. It was eventually recognized by the traditional social partners that to meet stated economic growth goals, and to continue on a path of economic renewal through social partnership, the promotion and maintenance of social cohesion was necessary.⁹² This tactic was not entirely unexpected. As Peter J. Katzenstein reminds, in corporatist systems, “...important social actors are systematically included in the policy network, thus acquiring a stake in the continued operation of that network even if they are dissatisfied with particular policy outcomes.”⁹³ In 1996, social partnership was expanded to include NWCI, along with other community groups, presumably because they had been publicly recognized by the government as the “official voice” of women.⁹⁴ In October, NWCI gave a presentation at the opening session of the negotiations for a new national agreement. They informed government officials, and the traditional social partners, of their objective as an umbrella group and also reiterated a number of their key policy goals, particularly highlighting the need for a child care policy framework.⁹⁵ In the final negotiated agreement, *Partnership 2000*, the social partners made a commitment to

“social inclusion” and reinvigorated the policy goal of “gender equality”. One concrete response to this commitment was the establishment of an Expert Working Group on Childcare, chaired by the Department of Equality and Law Reform, directed to devise a national child care framework.⁹⁶ However, as noted earlier in this chapter, the inclusion of NWCI in the social partnership presented them with a number of challenges. Indeed, it was very difficult for NWCI to counter the overriding economic focus of social partnership and neo-liberalism.

Conclusion

This chapter analysed three particular features of the policy context in order to indicate specific challenges and opportunities that had a role in inhibiting or promoting NAC’s and NWCI’s policy goals. In both countries, a regime of gender relations, macro-political institutional arrangements and systems of interest representation structured NAC’s and NWCI’s engagement with government, albeit in different ways. A fragmented system presented a number of obstacles for NAC, while in Ireland, unitary structures and social partnering gave NWCI a way to participate in policy debates, although not in a substantive way. As well, in both jurisdictions, NAC and NWCI confronted neo-liberal ideas and policy strategies that clashed with their policy goals.

In Chapter Six, two case studies synthesize the complexities of policy transformation analysed in the preceding three chapters.

Chapter Five - End Notes

1. Definition taken from Stephen Brooks. See Stephen Brooks, Public Policy in Canada: An Introduction, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 43. According to Stephen Brooks, contextual influences include political culture, the constitution, the characteristics of the economy and society and globalization.
2. Lena Dominelli, Women Across Continents: Feminist Comparative Social Policy, (New York: Harvester, 1991), p. 12; Gregg M. Olsen and Julia S. O'Connor, "Understanding the Welfare State: Power Resource Theory and Its Critics" in Julia S. O'Connor and Gregg M. Olsen, eds., Power Resources Theory and the Welfare State: A Critical Approach, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), p. 17.
3. Lena Dominelli, Women Across Continents, p. 12.
4. Gosta Esping-Andersen, Social Foundations of Postindustrial Economies, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 34. Esping-Andersen is careful to remind us as well that there is a difference between the term "welfare state" and "welfare regime". A welfare regime is the "...combined, interdependent way in which welfare is produced and allocated between state, market, and family. See *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.
5. Isabella Bakker and Katherine Scott, "From the Postwar to the Post-Liberal Keynesian Welfare State" in Wallace Clement, ed., Understanding Canada: Building on the New Canadian Political Economy, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), p. 289.
6. First quote taken from Jane Lewis, "Gender and Welfare Regimes: Further Thoughts", Social Politics (4) 2, Summer 1997, p. 168. Second quote taken from Ann Shola Orloff, "Comments on Jane Lewis's "Gender and Welfare Regimes: Further Thoughts", Social Politics (4) 2, Summer 1997, p. 189.
7. Jane Lewis, "Gender and the Development of Welfare Regimes" in Power Resources Theory and the Welfare State, pp. 229-249. Jane Lewis' *strong, modified* and *weak* male breadwinner typology has been challenged by other feminist analysts of welfare state categorization. For an interesting debate between Jane Lewis, Ann Shola Orloff and Jane Jenson see Social Politics (4) 2, Summer 1997.
8. Dependent allowances, a feature of the UI system in the early days (1930s) were added UI allowances given to a men supporting dependents in the family home. For a thorough analysis of the history of the UI system and its gender effects see Ruth Roach Pierson, "Gender and the Unemployment Insurance Debates in Canada, 1934-1940", Labour/Le Travail (25), Spring 1990.

9. Ruth Roach Pierson, "Gender and the Unemployment Insurance Debates in Canada, 1934-1940", Labour/Le Travail (25), Spring 1990, p. 82. See also Patricia M. Evans, "Divided Citizenship? Gender, Income Security, and the Welfare State", in Patricia M. Evans and Gerda R. Wekerle, eds., Women and the Canadian Welfare State: Challenges and Change, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), p. 95.
10. Ruth Roach Pierson, "Gender and the Unemployment Insurance Debates in Canada, 1934-1940" Labour/Le Travail (25), Spring 1990, pp. 82-83.
11. Ibid., p. 77.
12. Ibid., p. 85.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., pp. 95-99. It should be noted that male dominated occupations were also deemed "exceptions" from 1934 to 1940 (e.g., agriculture, logging, fishing). See Ibid., p. 98.
16. Ann Porter, "Women and Income Security in the Post-War Period: The Case of Unemployment Insurance, 1945-1962" Labour/Le Travail (31), Spring 1993, pp. 114-115.
17. Ibid., pp. 137-144.
18. Geoffrey Cook and Anthony McCashin, "Male Breadwinner: A Case Study of Gender and Social Security in the Republic of Ireland" in Women and Irish Society, p. 167 and 168.
19. Ibid., p. 168.
20. Julia S. O'Connor, Ann Shola Orloff and Sheila Shaver, States, Markets, Families: Gender, Liberalism and Social Policy in Australia, Canada, Great Britain and the United States, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 9.
21. Interview, Mel Cousins, Special Advisor to the Minister, Department of Social Welfare, Ireland, April 1998.
22. Nicola Yeates, "Gender, Familism and Housing: Matrimonial Property Rights in Ireland", Women's Studies International Forum (22) 6, November-December 1999, p. 609.

23. Pauline Conroy Jackson, "Managing the Mothers: The Case of Ireland" in Jane Lewis, ed., Women and Social Policies in Europe: Work, Family and the State, (Hants: Edward Elgar, 1993), pp. 74-75.
24. Ibid.
25. Maire Nic Ghiolla Phadriaig, "The Power of the Catholic Church in the Republic of Ireland" in Patrick Clancy, Sheelagh Drudy, Kathleen Lynch and Liam O'Dowd, eds., Irish Society: Sociological Perspectives, (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1995), p. 593. Along with sermons, missions and confessions, the Irish Catholic hierarchy controlled a network of private, state-funded secondary schools which put them in a strong position to impart conservative Catholic values and sexual morality. See Evelyn Mahon, "Women's Rights and Catholicism in Ireland" New Left Review (166), November/December 1987, pp.54-56.
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27. Dennis Kennedy, "Constitutional Change in the 1990s" in Neil Collins, ed., Political Issues in Ireland Today, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 35.
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29. Ibid., pp. 200-201.
30. Maire Nic Ghiolla Phadraig in Irish Society, p. 608.
31. Vicky Randall and Ailbhe Smyth, "Bishops and Bailiwicks: Obstacles to Women's Political Participation in Ireland", The Economic and Social Review (10) 3, April 1987, p. 197.
32. Personal Interview, Sylva Langford, Department of Equality and Law Reform, April 6, 1998.
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43. Kieren Allen, The Myth of Social Partnership in Ireland, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 38.
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45. Eunan O'Halpin, "Policy Making", Politics in the Republic of Ireland, p. 191.
46. Michel Peillon, "Interest Groups and the State in the Republic of Ireland", in Patrick Clancy, et.al., eds., Irish Society: Sociological Perspectives, (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1995), pp. 370-371. Dialogue between these bodies began under Sean Lemass who was Tanaiste in 1945-48, 1951-54, and 1957-59 and Taoiseach from 1959 to 1966. See "Biographical Notes" in Politics in the Republic of Ireland, p. 276.
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73. House of Commons. Debates. First Session, Thirty-Third Parliament, Volume IV, 1985, (23 May), p. 5012.
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**Part Three: Case Studies in Policy Transformation, Policy Outcomes
& Research Conclusions
Chapter Six**

The preceding three chapters analysed empirical data regarding the processes and factors that influenced the transformation of NAC's and NWCI's policy goals. To better understand these processes, it is helpful to analyse two case studies - the Social Security Review in Canada and the National Economic and Social Forum (NESF) in Ireland. The Social Security Review and National Economic and Social Forum were good candidates for a focussed analysis of policy transformation for a couple of reasons.

First, these case studies were both instances of government-directed social policy reviews undertaken in the mid-1990s. Child care and unemployment insurance were part and parcel of both reviews. Second, these two case studies allow us to better highlight the particular features of the three spheres of policy transformation - that is, the policy goals of NAC and NWCI, how these two organizations engaged in policy advocacy and interacted with government authorities, while also analysing the particular policy institutions involved in these reviews and the influence of the overall policy context. What differentiated these two social policy reviews, however, was that Social Security Review policy debates were far more extensive, largely taking place in the public domain. In Ireland, social policy discussions of the NESF were conducted predominantly by the one organization and within that organization, receiving very little public scrutiny. For this reason, there was more information, on the public record and reported in the

media, about the SSR than there was for the NESF. We begin with the Social Security Review then discuss the National Economic and Social Forum.

Case Study #1 - Canada

Social Security Review

In January 1994, the Speech from the Throne indicated the newly-elected Liberal government's intention to reform Canada's social safety net within two years. On February 8, 1994, the House of Commons directed the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development to:

...consult broadly, to analyse, and to make recommendations regarding the modernization and restructuring of Canada's social security system, with particular reference to the needs of families with children, youth and working age adults.¹

The Standing Committee's work was organized into two phases: the first wave entailed consulting with Canadians on their "concerns and priorities" regarding the social security system in order to produce an interim report. In his opening remarks to the Standing Committee, in February 1994, Lloyd Axworthy, then Minister of HRDC, stated that the objectives of the SSR on the part of the government were clear. These objectives were to address: the changing nature and "very difficult" needs of children and families; the question of young people and their transition to from school to work; the re-employment of working age adults; the independent living movement; and the issue of social assistance and how incentive-based systems can help individuals find employment.²

During the first phase of the Social Security Review (SSR) which took place from February to March 1994, the Standing Committee received approximately 200 briefs

presented at public hearings. The interim report, *Concerns and Priorities Regarding the Modernization and Restructuring of Canada's Social Security System* (LeBlanc Report), was tabled on March 25, 1994.

During the second wave of the SSR, which began in November 1994, the Standing Committee traveled across Canada with the government's Green Paper in hand which had been released on October 5, 1994. The Green Paper, *Improving Social Security in Canada*, outlined the government's recommendations for change, set within three broad themes - work, learning and security. The Green Paper received substantial media and public attention. The Standing Committee received over 1,000 submissions, reportedly hearing from more than 100,000 Canadians.³ The final report of the Standing Committee, *Security, Opportunities and Fairness: Canadians Renewing Their Social Program*, was released in February 1995 offering 52 recommendations for improvement.⁴

The SSR was initially welcomed by NAC, albeit with cautious optimism, given the review was being conducted amidst the government's deficit reduction strategy.⁵ Indeed, the Minister of HRDC had said as much in a speech in the House of Commons in January reporting that waste and duplication in the UI system had made the program too costly to administer in its present form.⁶ This cost-savings strategy was further cemented by way of the Finance Minister's Budget presented in February.

Four inter-related policy strategies framed SSR discussions: 1) deficit reduction, 2) economic competitiveness, 3) partnering with provinces and constituent groups and 4) individual self-reliance. In the first instance, the February 1994 budget delivered by the Minister of Finance, Paul Martin, made it well known that the SSR would have to adhere

to firm “savings parameters”, most notably in terms of reforming the unemployment insurance system and transfer payments to the provinces.⁷ These comments were made in the context of significant increases in the cost of the unemployment insurance system. According to an SSR supplementary paper, the UI program cost had grown from \$7.3 billion in 1972 to \$19.7 billion in 1992.⁸ Spending reductions and a “fundamental reform” of the Canada Assistance Plan were also considered inevitable in order to “...help people on welfare get jobs” and to restore an “...uneven impact on federal financial support...” to the provinces given the CAP ceiling imposed on Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia in 1990.⁹

In fact, major reforms to unemployment insurance were already well underway in October 1994, even though the Green Paper offered two options for reform. Option one outlined the design of a new employment insurance program, which would entail a fundamental overhaul of the UI program. The second option was an approach that would adjust the existing UI program, such as increasing entrance requirements.¹⁰ Nonetheless, by December 1995, prior to concluding the second round of the SSR, the Liberal government announced that a new *Employment Insurance Act* would be tabled in the House to replace the *Unemployment Insurance Act* and the *National Training Act*.

The Finance Department’s strategy to “balance the budget” was also clearly outlined in two SSR supplementary papers, *A New Framework for Economic Policy* and *Creating a Healthy Fiscal Climate*, both published in October 1994. These strategies were reiterated in the Green Paper, stating that one of the “biggest challenges to be faced was the affordability of programs” juxtaposed to a government debt load that was

“choking” its capacity to deliver the services Canadians needed and demanded.¹¹

Competitiveness, the second policy strategy, was neatly tied up with the need to shore-up economic growth and job creation, once again articulated by the Department of Finance’s economic strategies. The Green Paper echoed Finance’s position, stating that government policies had been slow to respond to technological, economic and social change and that in order to help “drive economic growth”, more investment, both inside and outside of Canada, were key to ensuring the creation of jobs. To be an “investment magnet”, however, Canada’s skills deficit needed overcoming, and the best way to link competitiveness with job creation was to ensure the development of a well-trained workforce.¹²

The third strategy framing the SSR and the Green Paper was the government’s goal to be more respectful of provincial jurisdiction in certain policy areas, such as education and social assistance. The policy language in the Green Paper made it clear that the federal government had no “intention of intruding where it should not”, with commitments to collaborating and cooperating with the provinces and territories to simplify access and minimize duplication of services.¹³ Forging partnerships with Canadians was also a goal of the government’s review of social programs, stating that Canadians too had to come up with “solutions” to securing Canada’s future. Part of those solutions included reforming the existing UI system to reduce “dependency”, thereby encouraging each Canadian’s “mutual responsibility” to “...help themselves”.¹⁴ Indeed, from the perspective of government, the objectives of the UI system had “...encouraged some individuals and employers to organize their work around the system, resulting in a

pattern of use of the program...” that was “...no longer consistent with a productive and dynamic labour market.”¹⁵

From the time of Axworthy’s remarks to the Standing Committee in February 1994, to the release of the Green Paper later that Fall, the main objectives of the SSR were transformed into: 1) helping Canadians get and keep jobs with skills to compete in a global labour force; 2) providing income support for those “in need” while fostering “independence, self-confidence and initiative”; and 3) ensuring the social security system’s affordability, not only with the aim of getting the government’s finances in order, but also with the intent to “end waste and abuse”.¹⁶

How NAC take part in this major social policy review? NAC participated in the SSR in two ways: through the formal and prescribed government channels, such as presentations to the Standing Committee and meetings with the Minister of HRDC, and by way of a parallel or “counter” national social policy review which was held in conjunction with the Federation des Femmes du Quebec (FFQ).¹⁷

NAC’s first presentation to the Standing Committee, during the initial phase of the review in February, addressed a number of essential elements of a “progressive” review of Canada’s social safety net. For the SSR to be progressive, NAC argued, social programs had to be thought about and reformed as a basic right of citizenship, in order to ensure universality and framed within a “non-sexist” approach to account for women’s “...unpaid but socially necessary labour carried out in the home”.¹⁸

NAC was critical of the SSR on terms of both process and substance. About the process, NAC argued that the tight timetable established for the SSR was unreasonable.

This was particularly so given the government had not received an electoral mandate from Canadians to radically reform social programs.¹⁹ The short timeframe was significant to NAC, since it did not provide enough time for groups like NAC to adequately research and write-up a thorough brief for presentation to the Standing Committee.

As to the substance of the SSR, NAC questioned why the SSR was being directed by a deficit reduction strategy, including the introduction of major reforms to the unemployment insurance system that seemed to render illegitimate the entire review process.²⁰ NAC favoured the maintenance of the UI system as income support for the unemployed and not as an “employment support” that may make eligibility for UI benefits difficult to access.²¹ NAC argued that UI had to be maintained as a federal program of income security, particularly given the rise of precarious forms of unstable employment that could potentially penalize women as frequent claimants.²² NAC pointed out that the globalization of the economy had hit women hard. Women were losing jobs as a result of shifts and deregulation in the labour market, and were also experiencing cuts in social services. Income security through unemployment insurance, then, was of grave importance to women.²³

As for child care, NAC pointed out that they were pleased with the Liberal government’s attention to child care. The Green Paper outlined that Canadians needed ways to reconcile work and family, while the Supplementary Paper on child care went even further stating that “good” child care had to address accountability, quality, affordability and availability.²⁴ These principles reflected those long advocated by NAC,

although NAC reminded the Standing Committee that some assurance had to be given to the development of a comprehensive *non-profit* child care system and national program given its importance to eradicating women's poverty and enabling women to enter the paid labour force.²⁵

The federal government's commitment to developing a national child care framework, however, was ultimately framed around reconciling work and family and promoting healthy child development rather than women's economic independence or women's equality. Moreover, success on this front hinged on entering into partnerships with interested provinces and territories, which at that juncture of the SSR, was yet to be determined.

At the same time that NAC participated in the prescribed government avenues for consultation, NAC continued to be cautious and critical. NAC feared that deficit reduction would dominate the SSR, hence reducing the likelihood of real positive change. This was in spite of Lloyd Axworthy's personal support for meaningful change and consultation. NAC, therefore, felt it necessary to engage in a more critical, broad-based grassroots consultation. From October 1-2, 1994, NAC and FFQ co-sponsored a "women's conference on social policy" in Regina. This "parallel" social policy review brought together over 250 women's groups from across Canada, including Quebec, and was also attended by Maria Minna, Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee. This gathering of women produced eight principles for social policy reform to serve as "...guidelines for the development of strategies for intervention in the current federal review of social programs and for ongoing development of a feminist vision of social

policy”.²⁶ These principles evolved around NAC’s overall policy stance to interject a feminist perspective into the SSR and to cast the reform in terms of women’s inequality. The complete list of these principles is attached as Appendix 3.

These feminist social policy principles were presented to the Minister of HRDC in a “national women’s consultation” held in Ottawa from December 3-5, 1994, which brought together over 80 women’s groups to discuss proposals contained in the Green Paper. The message to the Minister was clear - women’s equality had to be a central goal of the SSR. The meeting, however, ended acrimoniously, after Sunera Thobani, president of NAC, informed the Minister that proposed changes to the *Unemployment Insurance Act* would violate the Charter of Rights and Freedoms since lowering benefits for repeat users, many of which were women, clearly contravened the equality section of the Charter.²⁷ This left relations between the Minister and NAC strained and NAC all the more sceptical about the legitimacy of the review.

If NAC did not find support from the Minister, nor policy agreement from other government departments such as Finance, could they count on women’s policy agencies to advocate their policy demands? Status of Women Canada (SWC) did not assume a direct role in the SSR policy debates, although Sheila Finetone, the Secretary of State of SWC, pointed out to Members of the House of Commons, the social and economic disadvantages women faced and the need to take women into account during the review.²⁸ Her statements, however, were framed in full support and acceptance of the government’s policy objective to ensure the “sustainability and affordability” of government programs such as UI.²⁹ SWC did facilitate, however, women’s participation

in the SSR by organizing a teleconference between 18 women's groups and the Minister of HRDC in October 1994.³⁰

On the other hand, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW) was quite critical, taking on the role of defending women's rights. And the CACSW was well situated to do so, since they were included on a Ministerial Task Force struck by Lloyd Axworthy to provide direct advice to him and senior civil service officials involved in the SSR.³¹ In a 57-page detailed brief submitted to the Task Force, the CACSW fervently recommended that the SSR, in order to be effective and legitimate given the government's commitment to women's equality, had to be engaged within a gender sensitive framework that included, among other things, taking sex into account as an important variable. Here, the CACSW pointed out that the conceptual framework chosen by the government simply attended to three "populations" - youth/ children and families and working age adults. Women were absent from this framework rendering their experiences as policy recipients invisible. CACSW further urged the Task Force to disaggregate and analyze the data by sex prior to the development of policy options and beware of androcentric frames of reference.³² This would have required a feminist approach to policy analysis, rather than a gender-impact study.

To provide an opportunity for wider public participation in the SSR, the CACSW published a number of research notes in November 1994, written by various feminist activists, assessing the policy proposals and the potential impacts on women outlined in the various Supplementary Papers released by HRD. Two research notes specifically analysed proposals having to do with child care and unemployment insurance.³³ The

Supplementary Paper on child care was considered to be “impressive” in its analysis of the key issues that affect quality child care, yet disappointing since it did not commit the federal government to assuming a strong leadership role in the development of a child care system.³⁴ As well, the analysis of the government’s reform proposals regarding unemployment insurance was also considered deficient since the Supplementary Paper focused on the supply of workers (e.g., training, employability), with little concomitant analysis of the structures of the labour market and whether jobs would be available to women as “workers”.³⁵

As for policy outcomes of the SSR, on the child care front no *new* policies or legislation were developed. As mentioned in other sections of this study, Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) was eventually ended when the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) was introduced. This substantially changed the social policy context and government spending priorities. Following a commitment made by the Liberal Party in the *Red Book*, the federal government eventually promoted the idea of a national child care strategy in 1995, dependent on provincial-territorial agreement. This attempt ended in failure after agreement could not be reached.

As for UI, the overhaul of this long-standing program into “Employment Insurance” was a policy proposal of the federal government’s that had been vigorously opposed by NAC during the SSR consultations. The introduction of an hours-worked program based on the male norm of the average 35 hour week, penalized women as “re-entrants” and “newcomers” - as discussed in Chapter Seven. Moreover, the introduction of determining the family supplement benefit of EI based on *family* income rather than

individual income interjected into the program notions of women's dependency for the first time in its history. This specific reform had also been vigorously opposed by NAC, and was one of the social policy principles developed at the parallel conference in Regina. In a twist of fate, family entitlement was just the sort of discriminatory feature of the social welfare system that NWCI had long opposed.

The SSR was an interesting case study since a number of dimensions of policy transformation stood out. The first of these dimensions was the policy language that framed SSR debates. In Axworthy's opening remarks to the Standing Committee, and throughout both the Discussion Paper and SSR supplementary papers, there was marginal mention of women. Beyond disaggregating data by sex to indicate say, the number of women in the work force, there was no attempt to analyze the impact of policy on women.³⁶ More often than not, universal, de-gendered terms blanketed differences between men and women, gender divisions in the labour market and women's participation and experience with government programs. Rather than referring to the disadvantaged position of women, and how public policies often have differential impacts on women, women were treated and talked about as "Canadians", "individuals", "family members", "clients" or as "working age adults", especially apparent in the Green Paper. This framework of analysis and policy language rendered women invisible, transforming their experiences as being non-existent.³⁷

Moreover, the Finance Department's deficit reduction and economic strategy had two transformational effects. First, the neo-liberal discourse evolving around deficit reduction, welfare state retrenchment, individual self-reliance and federal-provincial

partnership in the development of certain social policies, clashed with NAC's policy goals centred around the need for government intervention in the development of national policies and advocating on behalf of women as a social collective. The pervasiveness of a neo-liberal discourse made it extremely difficult for NAC to interject an alternative, feminist set of policy ideas and policy goals. And even if there was some recognition on the part of the SSR players, it would have been unlikely that NAC's recommendations would have reversed an already institutionalized set of ideas about how UI would be reformed. Further, the policy strategies of the Department of Finance further defined the government's neo-liberal agenda effectively usurping one of the main goals of the SSR, consultation with Canadians.

The second dimension of policy transformation had to do with how NAC participated in the SSR. The SSR was a unique opportunity for Canadians to take part in shaping their future programs and services. Although there were concerns about timetables and access during the review, the process was relatively open, providing many avenues for citizen engagement, such as Town Halls, "having a say" via home-based workbooks and by presentations to the Standing Committee during two waves of consultation. NAC's experience indicates that the prescribed and formal avenue, that is presentations to the Standing Committee, however, was problematic, since presentations to the Standing Committee did not provide the most optimum way for NAC to articulate its policy goals during the review. Given the comprehensiveness of the SSR, it is conceivable to deduce that NAC's policy ideas and solutions were lost amongst the vast range of recommendations offered during the SSR by a multitude of individuals and

groups. It would have been difficult for NAC to penetrate through this “crowded policy table”, particularly given that many of these voices emanated from various women’s groups whose ideas about policy change would no doubt have competed with one another (e.g., social conservative ideas advocated by REAL Women versus feminist ideas advocated by NAC).

Although NAC met directly with the Minister of HRD, this also did not provide an effective vehicle for consultation. The polarization of ideas between the government and NAC about the guiding principles of the SSR, and the pending reforms to the UI system, ended the meeting acrimoniously. This situation weakened the relationship between NAC and the lead Minister. In effect, NAC’s position and voice were driven to the margins.

Because of this, NAC turned to another forum to ensure that a women’s voice was heard. By staging a parallel social policy review, NAC was able to break away from the confines of “consultation” within the state and engage in pressure politics. In building a coalition of women’s groups, which included Quebec, NAC attempted to appeal to a broad base of supporters to capture public support for their cause. Although this social policy review in and of itself would have acted as a catalyst for collective action and solidarity for the women and social policy activists who attended, the policy proposals produced by this gathering ultimately had little or no influence on policy outcomes.

The final dimension of policy transformation was how women’s policy agencies (WPAs) participated. SWC took on a facilitative role by encouraging Members of Parliament to think about women during the SSR and by organizing a meeting between

women's groups and the Minister. SWC, however, did not mount a counter-voice to the prevailing debates and framework of the SSR, nor did they offer any critiques of the Green Paper's policy proposals. The CACSW, on the other hand, assumed both a counter-voice and a critical role in the public realm. In what appeared to be an alliance, CACSW and NAC offered similar viewpoints about the SSR, notably that a feminist or gender analysis had to be part and parcel of the review's framework. The CACSW's position as an "insider" participant on the Ministerial Task Force provided the opportunity for a feminist voice to be directly interjected at the Ministerial level. The presence of two WPAs who advocated differing if not contradictory policy proposals may have in the end worked against NAC's policy agenda, since the government could easily make the case that they listened to women, and responded accordingly, while also being able to ignore policy proposals that contradicted their own.

An interesting product of the SSR was that the Final Report, *Security, Opportunities and Fairness*, challenged women's traditional gender roles and differences between men and women in a far more substantive way that had previously been the case during the SSR. In fact, one section of the report, called "securing equality", emphasized the importance of promoting women's equality. A further recommendation was that the SSR be subjected to a gender analysis to "...ensure women's increased and equal social and economic participation in the paid labour market".³⁸ The inclusion of a gender analysis in the final report indicated that NAC may well have had some influence. The Final Report used fewer de-gendered categories, such as "worker", and included a discussion about the structural discriminations women encounter due to violence, low

pay, unpaid household caring and poverty as an outcome of divorce or as lone parents. Recasting the SSR policy debates into gendered terms as outlined in the Final Report, however, fell on deaf ears. Once the dust settled after the SSR, NAC's recommendations to the Standing Committee and the Minister of HRD had been transformed - that is they were ignored or redefined - the end result being policy outcomes which ran counter to their policy goals.

An analysis of the SSR indicates that NAC had some procedural access, albeit along with hundreds of other Canadians, with no success in achieving the realization of their policy goals. Their UI goals were blocked, while their child care goals were redefined away from women's equality to the promotion of healthy children. Indeed, reforms to the unemployment insurance system represented a major set-back which will make it all the more difficult for NAC to reverse the detrimental aspects of the changes in the years to come. Although the next case study reveals that NWCI had more substantive access as a participant on the NESF, and their policy goals were reflected in many of the Forum's recommendations, the outcome was not all that different from the Canadian case.

Case Study #2 - Ireland

National Economic and Social Forum

The National Economic and Social Forum (NESF) was established in 1993 by a coalition government, under the Labour Party and Fianna Fail, as a way to include community-based organizations in national consultations on an array of policy issues.

As a government spokesperson saw it at the opening session of the NESF:

...a widely based democracy that reaches into all sections of the community has a major role to play in solving Ireland's problems. The exercise of power and influence must extend beyond traditional boundaries and bring together voices right across our community in a shared effort to identify and tackle our problems.³⁹

The formal terms of reference of the NESF were to:

...develop economic and social policy initiatives, particularly initiatives to combat unemployment, and to contribute to the formation of a national consensus on social and economic matters.⁴⁰

The NESF's work evolved around five specific areas: 1) job creation and obstacles to employment growth, 2) long-term unemployment, 3) disadvantage, 4) equality and social justice in Irish society and 5) the development of policies and proposals around these four goals. The NESF was established to work in two-year cycles and, during the time frame of this study, had been consistently renewed by successive governments since the organization's creation in 1993. Topics and policy issues for consideration by the NESF were either initiated by the Forum or were undertaken by request from the government. The NESF was originally under the purview of the Department of the Tanaiste (leader of the other party during a coalition government), being supported by a grant-in-aid. Since 1997, the NESF has been housed in the Department of the Taoiseach.

The work of NESF consisted of producing Reports and Opinions, which analysed policy issues, often containing a number of policy recommendations to government. Reports of the NESF contained detailed overviews of social and economic issues or government initiatives (e.g., social partner agreements). Forum Opinions, on the other hand, were shorter, more concise commentaries by the NESF on very specific policy

topics. This type of reporting was designed to expedite the group's response time on policy issues that were considered of immediate importance by the government.⁴¹ From 1993 to 1997, the NESF produced a variety of Reports and Opinions analysing an array of issues, including long-term unemployment, income maintenance, labour market development strategies, rural renewal, poverty and social inclusion. A complete list of these reports and opinions is provided in Appendix 4. NESF Reports and Opinions were submitted to government two to three weeks prior to publication in order to give the government some lead time to formulate responses and to issue press releases. The Reports were then distributed to the Oireachtas, government departments and any other interested parties.

Membership on the NESF consisted of what was referred to as "three broad strands" headed by an "independent" chair appointed by the government of the day.⁴² The first strand consisted of members of government and the Oireachtas. The second strand represented the traditional social partners - unions, farmers and business - while the third strand comprised of those groups and individuals normally outside of the policy process. NWCI was invited to participate on the NESF as one of the third strand community representatives, along with spokespeople from the unemployed, the disabled, Irish youth, the aged and the environmental movement.

NWCI's participation on the NESF built upon an established tradition of representation on government bodies charged with implementing or analysing women's policy issues (see Chapter Three). NWCI's involvement with the NESF reflected a stark difference between the evolution of the way in which NAC and NWCI related to

government officials. In Canada, a neo-liberal policy context increasingly made NAC wary of the effectiveness and legitimacy of participating on in governmental policy processes. In contrast, NWCI welcomed the opportunity to participate on government-struck bodies or departmental committees. Indeed, the NWCI stated that the NESF presented an opportunity to “...put forward new policies aimed at achieving greater equality and social justice...”.⁴³ NWCI had for several years actively lobbied for their inclusion on a range of government decision-making bodies viewing participation on the NESF as a step toward this goal.⁴⁴ NWCI was also able to use their participation on the NESF as a way to pave the way for their inclusion in the social partnership. Making their case to the NESF, NWCI argued that social partnering had to be broadened, to include community-based groups, since the social partnership agreements dealt with a diversity of issues, many of which had direct impact on women. Child care and employment equality were two examples of this.⁴⁵ As far as NWCI was concerned, it made sense to include them since they were considered to be the “official” voice of Irish women.

How did NWCI actually participate on the NESF? NWCI made a number of presentations to the NESF, and discussed their policy concerns during NESF committee meetings. NWCI representatives articulated to the NESF their policy goals that had long been of concern to the organization. They advocated, for example, for a national child care development plan be developed to ease women’s entrance into the paid labour market, the implementation of the individualization of social welfare benefits and the elimination of the dependency ethos in the social welfare system.⁴⁶ Many of these

policy ideas found their way into NESF Reports. For instance, NESF's Report No. 3 (1994) recommended that the social welfare system "...be neutral in its gender effects...".⁴⁷ Of particular note, however, were two other, more detailed, NESF Reports. In an analysis of income maintenance strategies, NESF's Report No. 5 (1994), framed the policy discussion around a number of challenges facing Ireland, that had been articulated by NWCII, such as the increase in lone parent families, changing social relations between men and women, emerging cultural diversity and the evolving nature of the family. This Report recommended that child care and family responsibilities had to be reconciled "...to end the discrimination against women's participation in training/employment schemes".⁴⁸ It further urged movement towards individual entitlement of social welfare benefits in order to address the discriminatory aspects of the system.

NESF's Report No. 6 (1995) went even further in its condemnation of the social welfare system, stating that one of the main deficiencies of the system was that it was "...planned, mainly by men, with the traditional life patterns of men in mind...".⁴⁹ The NESF claimed that the social welfare system had perpetuated women's role in society as dependents of men which had in turn prolonged their traditional role as home-makers. The NESF also made mention of how the EU could potentially play a role in promoting to member governments the need to improve social services to its citizens. Specifically, the NESF cited the EU's interest in developing a European Charter for Citizens and the EU's *White Paper on Social Policy*, both of which were likely to have an effect on future changes to public services and programs in years to come.⁵⁰

An opportunity to further interject their policy ideas and goals into national policy

debates came when the NESF was directed by the government to produce a series of six-monthly Opinions under the arrangements to benchmark and monitor progress of the *Partnership 2000 Agreement*. Specifically, the NESF was asked to monitor the national agreement's provisions on social inclusion and equality.⁵¹ This provided NWCi with an opportunity to be all the more involved in ensuring aspects of the *Partnership 2000 Agreement* were followed through. The NESF produced two Opinions, one dealing with the development of the equality provisions of *Partnership 2000*, and the other having to do with employment and training strategies. As for the Opinion on the equality measures, the NESF was quite adamant that it was now time for the government to take a leadership role to ensure initiatives of the *Partnership 2000* were acted upon, particularly given improvements in the Irish economy. The NESF recommended, therefore, that proactive public policies were required, along with appropriate commitments to staffing departments as well as providing appropriate budgets to departments to ensure follow through.⁵² In the context of these recommendations, the NESF reminded the government of the importance of child care, to facilitate women's participation in the labour force, and their commitment to address this issue through the Expert Working Group on Childcare established under *Partnership 2000* (discussed in Chapter Seven).

The establishment and work of the NESF highlights several aspects of policy transformation. First, evidence indicates that inclusion on the NESF proved to be a significant institutional access point, at the macro-institutional level, for NWCi to express their ideas and to directly interject their policy goals with respect to social welfare and child care. However, as a vehicle to instigate the acceptance and implementation of

specific policy goals, NESF membership presented NWCI with a number of serious challenges. Because the NESF functioned outside of traditional parliamentary accountabilities, as a non-elected body with no legislative powers, the Forum had to rely on persuading government authorities to both consider or implement their policy recommendations. As it was, in order for the NESF to promote their recommendations as legitimate and important, the NESF had to rely on public hearings, open plenary discussions and small scale meetings across the country to substantiate its claims - measures that may well prove to pressure a governmental response.⁵³ This raises a serious question as to the NESF's role and importance in the overall process of policy development. Since there has been very little academic analysis of the NESF, it is difficult to gauge this effectiveness and under what conditions the government of the day would actually be compelled to implement the Forum's policy suggestions. Nonetheless, the NESF felt that they had made a contribution, stating that its overall impact had been:

- strengthening the focus on unemployment, with particular emphasis on poverty and social exclusions;
- facilitating wider participation in the policy-making process by including those who had traditionally been left out;
- producing reports with practical and actionable recommendations; and
- creating and stimulating public debate on policy options and choices.⁵⁴

Yet, one still had to question whether the NESF actually possessed the capacity to compel the kind of policy change NWCI was seeking.⁵⁵ With no direct link between institutional access and policy outcome, one could argue that NWCI's inclusion was largely symbolic. The author, however, argues that inclusion on the NESF was an important first step, and one that no doubt interjected a much needed feminist voice on the NESF.

However, there was another structural problem. As noted above, inclusion on the NESF provided NWCI with substantive institutional access. It is more difficult, however, to assess NWCI's actual policy influence within the broad governmental setting. This situation, that is "participation without power", was well known to the NESF. Indeed, in an assessment of social partnering, a NESF report stated that there was a notion that some social partnership bodies exerted more power than others. Specifically, they were commenting on the perception that the National Economic and Social Council, as the ultimate power holder within this neo-corporatist policy making arrangement, usurped the work of bodies such as the NESF. In this scenario, NWCI may actually have been disempowered, rather than empowered. Although this may not be wholly the case, it points to a contradiction. On the one hand, NWCI's participation on the NESF had its benefits - inclusion, interjecting a feminist voice, representing Irish women's policy concerns to the public and government. Yet, on the other, actual policy influence was certainly not a guarantee.

Beyond these institutional constraints, it appears that NWCI was successful in interjecting a certain policy language. That is, the policy language contained in NESF Reports and Opinions often reflected NWCI's goals with respect to the individualization of the social welfare system and the need for child care. However, given the vast array of interests expressed and represented on the NESF, it is conceivable that NWCI would have to have been constantly vigilant about defending a definition of "equality" from a *woman's* perspective. This situation meant that NWCI's policy goals could potentially be in danger of being watered-down by other interests, or potentially moved off NESF's

agenda.

Conclusion

The case studies allowed us to take a closer look at the processes, actors, institutions and interests that influenced the transformation of NAC's and NWCI's policy goals. But just what were the outcomes of these transformational processes? How did policy transformation undermine the goals of NAC and NWCI? Chapter Seven provides answers to those questions with an analysis of policy outcomes in child care and unemployment insurance over the 24 year period of this study. This will allow us to discern the ways in which these outcomes either converged or diverged from the policy goals articulated by NAC and NWCI. Chapter Seven also offers this study's research conclusions.

Chapter Six - End Notes

1. House of Commons, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development, Issue No. 1, February 10, 1994, p. 1:3.
2. Canada, House of Commons, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development, Issue No. 1, February 10, 1994, p. 1:22-23.
3. James J. Rice, "Redesigning Welfare: The Abandonment of a National Commitment" in Susan Phillips, ed. How Ottawa Spends, 1995-1996: Mid-Life Crises, (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1995), p. 43-44.
4. Canada, Security, Opportunities and Fairness: Canadians Renewing their Social Programs, Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development, (Ottawa: Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1995), pp. 251-292 and pp. 293-309.
5. NAC, Notes for February 25, 1994 NAC Presentation to the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development, p. 1.
6. Geoffrey York, "Axworthy expects to save money with social overhaul", *The Globe and Mail*, January 21, 1994, p. A4.
7. Ken Battle and Sherri Torjman, How Financed Re-Formed Social Policy, Caledon Institute of Social Policy, April 1995, p. 6. See also Therese Jennissen, "The Federal Social Security Review: A Gender-Sensitive Critique" in Jane Pulkingham and Gordon Ternowetsky, eds. Remaking Canadian Social Policy: Social Security in the Late 1990s, (Halifax: Fernwood, 1996).
8. Canada, Improving Social Security in Canada, The Context of Reform: A Supplementary Paper, (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1994), p. 6.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
10. Canada, Improving Social Security in Canada, A Discussion Paper, (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1994), pp. 45-49.
11. Canada, HRDC, Agenda: Jobs and Growth, Improving Social Security in Canada, (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1994), p. 8.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 11 and pp. 26-27.

14. Ibid., p. 11, p. 25 and Canada, The Context of Reform, p. 31.
15. Canada, Improving Social Security in Canada, From Unemployment Insurance to Employment Insurance: A Supplementary Paper, (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1994), p. 15.
16. Ibid., p. 10.
17. The FFQ is an organization representing a coalition of feminist groups in Quebec. The FFQ had been a member of NAC until the group broke away in 1981 due to differences over NAC strategy and support on key policy issues particularly regarding the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Meech Lake Accord.
18. NAC, Notes for February 25, 1994 NAC Presentation to the Standing Committee on Human Resource Development, p.2 and p. 3.
19. Ibid., p. 6.
20. Ibid., p. 1.
21. Ibid., p. 4.
22. NAC, Presentation to the Standing Committee on Social Security Reform, November 8, 1994, p. 6.
23. Ibid., pp. 2-3.
24. Canada, Child Care and Development: A Supplementary Paper, (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1994), pp. 21-23.
25. NAC, Presentation to the Standing Committee on Social Security Reform, p. 7.
26. NAC, News Release, "Women's Groups Agree to Basic Principles for Social Policy Review", October 2, 1994.
27. The Winnipeg Free Press, "Women's group sees discrimination in plan to reduce UI repeat benefits", December 6, 1994, p. A4.
28. Hansard, Volume 133, Number 011, Monday, January 31, 1994, p. 659-662; and Hansard, Volume 133, Number 112, Monday, October 24, 1994, pp. 7108-7111.
29. Hansard, Volume 113, Number 112, Monday, October 24, 1994, p. 7108.
30. Status of Women Canada, "Social Security Reform", Perspectives (7) 3, 1994, p. 4. It is not clear whether NAC was one of the women's groups who participated in this

teleconference.

31. A select group of individuals and groups were invited to participate on this Task Force. Another invitees were the Canadian Labour Force Development Board, the Canadian Labour Market Productivity Centre and the National Council of Welfare. Hansard, Volume 133, No. 011, Monday, January 31, 1994, p. 612.
32. CACSW, Submission to Ministerial Task Force on Social Security Reform, March 1994, p. 3.
33. The CACSW also presented a brief to the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development on October 27, 1994. This presentation outlined much of their sentiments and arguments contained in their Brief to the Ministerial Task Force.
34. Suzanne Peters, Research Notes: The Social Security Review and Its Implications for Women, #2 Child Care: Notes on the Federal Government's Supplementary Paper: *Child Care and Development*, November 1994, p. 1 and pp. 5-6.
35. Monica Townson, Research Notes: The Social Security Review and Its Implications for Women, #4 Unemployment Insurance: Notes on the Federal Government's Supplementary Paper from *Unemployment Insurance to Employment Insurance*, November 1994, p. 6.
36. As mentioned, women were largely discussed in terms of data in the SSR documents, e.g., the rise of female labour in Canada, the number of women unemployed and other such statistics. See The Context of Reform: A Supplementary Paper, p. 2, 12, 13 and 27 and From Unemployment Insurance to Employment Insurance: A Supplementary Paper, p. 35.
37. This was noted by the CACSW in their Brief to the Ministerial Task Force, and reiterated by NAC in their presentation to the Standing Committee during the second wave of the SSR. See NAC, Presentation to the Standing Committee on Social Security Reform, November 8, 1994, p. 2.
38. Canada, Security, Opportunities and Fairness, p. 100.
39. Quoted in Glyn Davis, "Rethinking Policy Making: a new role for consultation?", Administration (45) 3, Autumn 1997, p. 26.
40. NESF, Second Periodic Report on the Work of the Forum, Forum Report No. 15, November 1997, p. 73.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

42. The Chair was considered “independent” because it did not represent any of the three stands. At any one time, there was generally about 49 members on the NESF in total. Plenary sessions of the entire NESF membership were held, in public, on a semi-regular basis. A Management Committee of about 13 members regularly met to organize and monitor the work of the NESF. Two Standing Committees, with equal representation from the three stands, typically met in private. Forum Reports were initially prepared by the Standing Committees. Ibid., p. 11.
43. NWCI, Annual Report 1996, p. 11.
44. CSW, Annual Report 1993, pp. 14-15.
45. NWCI, Submission to the NESF on Broadening the Social Partnership Process, May 1996, p. 2.
46. CSW, Presentation by Ina Broughall to the NESF, 29th November 1993 and Ibid.
47. NESF, Commission on Social Welfare - Outstanding Recommendations, Forum Report No. 3, January 1994, p. 3.
48. NESF, Income Maintenance Strategies, Forum Report No. 5, July 1994, p. 34 and 35.
49. NESF, Quality Delivery of Social Services, Forum Report No. 6, February 1995, p. 28.
50. Ibid., p. 24.
51. NESF, Partnership 2000: Development of the Equality Provisions, Forum Opinion No. 1, November 1997, p. 9.
52. NESF, Ibid., p. 3 and p. 34.
53. Glyn Davis, “Rethinking Policy Making: a new role for consultation?”, p. 27.
54. NESF, Second Periodic Report on the Work of the Forum, Forum Report No. 15, November 1997, p. 68.
55. NESF, A Framework for Partnership - Enriching Strategic Consensus through Participation, Forum Report No. 16, December 1977, p. 24.

Chapter Seven

Policy Outcomes, 1972 to 1996 & Conclusions

This study analysed the policy goals of NAC and NWCI in the sectors of child care and unemployment insurance, the organizational characteristics of NAC and NWCI, the institutional context into which those demands entered and the overall macro-political policy context in order to demonstrate how the processes or practices encompassed within these spheres of policy transformation redefined or blocked NAC's and NWCI's policy goals. These three spheres of policy transformation were developed to offer a feminist-institutional explanation for why child care and unemployment insurance policy developments had gendered outcomes. In this chapter, we can now broach the following question: Given policy transformation, what, in the end, was the degree of fit between what NAC and NWCI asked for and what actually emerged? How did policy transformation gender public policy outcomes in child care and unemployment insurance?

To begin this analysis, Part I overviews the policy process in Canada and Ireland in relation to the policy events discussed in Chapters Four and Six in order to draw out aspects of policy transformation analysed in the preceding three spheres. Part II of this chapter then presents significant policy outcomes in child care and unemployment insurance over the period of this study in order to set-up a discussion about the ways in which these outcomes either did or did not meet NAC's and NWCI's policy goals as a result of policy transformation. This chapter finishes with a discussion of this study's

conclusions and future research considerations.

Part I - The Policy Process in Canada and Ireland

Although NAC and NWCI were organizations that developed and institutionalized in different ways and adhered to different forms of feminism, as far as child care was concerned, their policy goals were remarkably similar. Both of the organizations advocated to government for the development of a national child care policy; one that would be universally available and publicly funded. We also know, however, that NWCI also advocated for the implementation of income tax relief for child care expenses that was already available in Canada. In the area of UI, NAC and NWCI policy goals were quite different reflecting context-specific realities. For most of the time frame of this study, NAC was reacting to government reforms that cut back benefit levels or restricted eligibility requirements. NWCI's task, in contrast, was no less grave since they were seeking a reconceptualization of the social welfare system that would address the way in with the UA/UB system perpetuated some women's dependency.

How NAC and NWCI articulated their goals to policy authorities was another distinguishing characteristic. In the 1970s and early 1980s, NAC found the policy process to be "relatively open" to them given their connection to the Liberal Party along with a "women-friendly" policy context. Upon the election of the Progressive Conservative government in 1984 and the emergence of a neo-liberal agenda, however, policy doors were largely closed to NAC with relations strained between the two under a less friendly policy context. As discussed in Chapter Four and Case Study #1, this

forced the transformation of their policy goals, since NAC increasingly advanced their policy goals through indirect means within a hierarchy of policy institutions removed from the centre of decision-making. This was the situation during the Commission of Inquiry on UI and the Social Security Review.

In contrast, NWCI advocated their policy goals through more direct participation via a policy process that was far more open than it had been for NAC. They were, for the most part, a policy insider given their participation on a government body which monitored the recommendations of the Commission on the Status of Women and through their membership on the Second Commission on the Status of Women. Their connection to the policy process was improved when NWCI was included as a social partner on key bodies such as the NESF and NESC. However, this study also revealed that this inclusion and participation were neither consistent, nor unproblematic. As Chapter Four related, NWCI was sometimes engaged in the same kind of policy advocacy as NAC by way of submitting briefs or giving presentations to policy authorities such as the Commission on Social Welfare and the Working Group on Childcare. So, like the situation in Canada, NWCI encountered a hierarchy of policy institutions that led to the transformation of their policy goals. Moreover, as NWCI's experience on the NESF related in Case Study #2 in Chapter Six demonstrated, NWCI encountered significant challenges even when included as an insider on social partnership. The NESF was not part and parcel of the government's inner decision making system. This meant that the NESF did not possess the kind of institutional and subsequent policy clout necessary to get NWCI's policy goals onto the government's agenda. Moreover, although NWCI was

successful in gendering policy debates while on the NESF, this organization tackled a number of issues espoused by various interests which in effect crowded the policy table.

Finally, these policy processes were shaped by a particular policy context in Canada and Ireland which presented similar challenges for NAC and NWCI. A regime of gender relations and policy trajectories made path dependent certain ideas about women and child care and their place within the labour market which erected barriers to the acceptance of NAC's and NWCI's policy language and goals (e.g., child care as a social good rather than as an individual or family responsibility). Moreover, ideas underpinning Canada's and Ireland's liberal welfare state regimes buttressed these gender regimes (e.g., individualism, limited government intervention) further constraining the potential of implementing policy initiatives that required both government intervention and spending, such as a national child care policy and fully accessible unemployment insurance benefits.

In Canada, NAC also encountered a federal macro-political structure which fragmented the policy system while also often redefining the issue of child care in terms of jurisdiction rather than being framed around women's equality. For NWCI, a unitary macro-political institutional structure focussed policy advocacy, although it buttressed a policy making process that strictly demarcated who took part (i.e., social partners) and who did not. Finally, in both countries, neo-liberal policy ideas and political agendas were advanced by successive governments. In Canada, these ideas were first espoused most visibly by the Progressive Conservative Party when they formed government, but continued later when the Liberal Party formed governments thereafter. The emergence of

a “restructuring discourse” in Canada shrunk political space for NAC to advocate their policy goals while also pushing up against a set of ideas and policy strategies that were largely antithetical to NAC’s policy agenda which effectively blocked their policy aspirations. Emanating from the European Union while also being advanced and supported by successive Fianna Fail governments, in Ireland, neo-liberal ideas were more muted, but of consequence. Neo-liberal ideas were emphasized and guided social partnership discussions framed around an economic paradigm that did not lend itself to interjecting NWCI’s policy goals which also blocked their policy aspirations.

Part II - Policy Outcomes - Child Care and Unemployment Insurance

Child Care

Canada:

In 1978, an income-tested refundable tax credit was introduced for low-income families with children as a supplement to Family Allowance. The Young Child Tax Benefit, along with Family Allowance, the refundable child tax credit and the non-refundable tax credit, were integrated in 1993 into a Child Tax Benefit. The basic Child Tax Benefit is income-tested with benefits taxed back once the family income exceeds \$25,921 and is available to families with a dependent child under age 18 with supplements made available for additional children. A Young Child Supplement is a measure to recognize parents who care for their own children full-time or for those who are unable to claim the Child Care Expense Deduction introduced in 1971. In the 1996 Throne Speech by the Liberal government, it was announced that a new consolidated

income security program for children may be created in negotiation with the provinces. The federal government eventually introduced the National Child Benefit in the 1997 budget. This benefit, however, was not about child care. On the contrary, it was a measure to address child poverty.

In the absence of a strong federal government presence, child care policy debates were often problematized, not as a program to promote women's economic independence or equality, but rather in terms of what jurisdiction had responsibility. What resulted was a "patch-work" of funding mechanisms and programs that varied greatly between provinces and territories.¹ As it stood, child care services and their costs were supported by parent fees, federal government and provincial-territorial governments, and in some jurisdictions, municipalities (e.g., Ontario). Although it has been argued that this allowed for community diversity, NAC and other child care advocates have argued that the absence of a national policy has only served to encourage the development of inequitable access to affordable, regulated child care and a lack of stable child care services overall.²

Barbara Cameron has argued that Canada's "patch-work of programs" was the result of a child care system founded upon, and operating within, a market model of service delivery. That is, child care services were viewed as a "market commodity" with governments taking a lead only when the market failed. This lead was normally undertaken by increasing the purchasing power of individual consumers or by assisting the poor through subsidization of child care fees through the social welfare system administered by the provinces.³ Policy instruments such as the Child Care Expense Deduction and the child tax benefit served to underpin a system based on individual need

rather than policy instruments which attended to women's needs as a social collective.

A market-model of policy development and delivery ran counter to the kind of child care system that NAC advocated, that is, child care as a "public good" supported by the federal government as a national, publicly-funded child care program akin to the education system. A national, publicly-funded child care system would emphasize different types of government policies, such as covering the operating costs of services or the capital costs of building day care centres to actually increase the number of child care spaces available.⁴

Due to a market model approach, the caring of children has largely fallen to women in the informal "private" sphere of the family. An ideology of child care as a family responsibility has significant consequences for women. First, the conception of the children as "best cared for at home" determined the degree of state intervention and therefore the type of policy instruments considered appropriate. This view was important since income tax deductions, such as the Child Care Expense Deduction, provided the most benefit to higher-income families thereby discriminating against middle-income families. Public policy outcomes, then, divided women by socio-economic class.⁵ Moreover, since the care of children was situated in the private sphere, women's caring is largely invisible which, in and of itself, had consequences for women. That is, "invisibility" had the effect of legitimating the low-status and low-pay of "women's work", either as underpaid waged workers in the public sphere or as unpaid caregivers in the private sphere, resulting in the devaluation of women's caregiving. Consequently, there emerged a general "resistance to considering women's responsibilities in the

private, domestic sphere as ‘work’ at all”.⁶ Although women in Canada entered the paid labour market more so than Irish women did, because of the lack of child care, women increasingly took up flexible forms of employment such as part-time work. In 1994, one in four employed women worked part-time, with women constituting nearly 70 per cent of all part-time workers - a pattern that had been relatively consistent over the last 25 years.⁷

Ireland:

There were a few significant policy outcomes during the time frame of this study. In 1991, the government passed the *Child Care Act*, to provide a range of protective services for “children at risk” up to the age of eighteen (i.e., abused, homeless, vulnerable). The legislation gave regional Health Boards the authority to supervise the implementation of the *Child Care Act*.⁸ However, a specific section of the *Child Care Act*, Part VII, stipulated that various government authorities could make “...regulations for the purpose of securing the health, safety and welfare and promoting the development of pre-school children attending pre-school services”.⁹ These pre-school services, which did not relate to the protection of children at risk, were defined as play groups, day nurseries, creches, day care centres or other similar services that catered to pre-school children. At the time of writing, however, this particular section of the *Child Care Act* had not yet been enacted by Irish authorities. As well, the *Child Care Act* exempted child care provided by individuals in their private homes - the so-called home-based care in the informal economy. The *Child Care Act*, therefore, was devised primarily to address the

needs of children at risk.

Child care was also provided via the Pilot Childcare Program developed by the Department of Equality and Law Reform and administered by Area Development Management Ltd., for child care provision in disadvantaged areas (e.g., inner-city Dublin). The actual objective of the program was to facilitate entrance of “socially excluded” mothers or fathers into employment, training or education. By 1997, the Department reported that funding had been approved for 141 community-based child care projects.¹⁰ Funding provided by the Department of Equality for the Pilot Childcare Program, however, was directed to start-up capital costs, leaving no funding for the actual operation of the day care in question. This was a serious oversight of the policy, NWCI argued, given these day care centres were located in disadvantaged communities with few resources to raise and cover the costs of running child care services.¹¹

Given a policy of non-action on the part of successive Irish governments, a model of private/domestic service delivery developed. Unlike in Canada, there were no tax exemptions for child care expenses incurred by parents. Rather, there was an almost total reliance on providing minimal government support for child care for those deemed “at risk” or in “social need”.¹² As a result, it is estimated, that 64 per cent of services are commercially run as opposed to 36 per cent being non-profit, a concern for many parents due to the high cost of for-profit services.¹³ Given the policy of the Irish government, a rigid two-tiered system of child care developed. In the first tier, child care services were available in for-profit centres, which were more available to those who could afford high fees. The second tier provided child care, through Local Health Boards and by the Pilot

Childcare Program developed by the Department of Equality, for parents in disadvantaged areas or for those who demonstrated need. This left the average middle- or working-class Irish woman unable to access affordable child care.

Due to the overwhelming absence of child care services, juxtaposed to strong social expectations that women were primary caregivers, women in Ireland did not enter the paid labour force to the same degree as women in Canada or other Western industrialized countries. Moreover, the composition of women's participation in the paid labour force mainly consisted of unmarried women - a situation that continued well into the mid-1990s.¹⁴ Even as women entered the paid labour market in record numbers, they continued to be severely under-served when it came to the provision of child care. Presumably, many women were having their kids cared for in informal and unregulated child care arrangements. What child care was publicly-supported, was available to wealthier women through for-profit services, or for low-income women in designated disadvantaged areas. Given the enactment of the 1991 *Child Care Act*, Ireland's two-tiered system further divided women by socio-economic class. Overall, then, publicly-funded child care services in Ireland were ad hoc and minimal.

Gendered policy outcomes in Canada and Ireland, from the 1972 to 1996, were:

Box 7.1
Child Care - Gendered Policy Outcomes

Canada	Ireland
<p>* market-model of service delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - child care users viewed as “individuals” rather than “women” - caregivers purchase a service one can afford (dividing women by class) - reliance on policy instruments (e.g., income tax deductions) benefiting higher income consumers/women 	<p>* private/domestic model of service delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - due to the moral legacy of the Catholic Church, women’s role as caregivers firmly rooted in the family and household (excluded women from entering the paid labour market) - lack of paid employment facilitated women’s economic dependence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - child care territorialized rather than problematized as a women’s equality issue, or - problematized as a way to alleviate poverty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - low level of state-supported child care services provided to women in very low-income and disadvantaged areas (a rigid two tier system)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reproduces women’s exclusion from the full-time paid labour market while perpetuating women’s role as primary caregivers within the household 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - available child care, due to high cost, accessible only to middle or higher income women (dividing women by class)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1991 <i>Child Care Act</i> - defined the care of children as those “at risk”

The Fit Between Policy Goals and Policy Outcomes

The assessment provided above indicates that policy outcomes in child care did not meet the objectives of NAC. No national policy was developed, leaving in place a market model of service delivery and policy development that did nothing to encourage the building of a universally accessible child care system. Indeed, the federal government’s non-interventionist predilection toward child care was completely contrary to what NAC had been seeking. The building of a universally accessible child care system, one that is open for any women, required government intervention and spending. Ultimately, successive federal governments in the Canadian context, oddly enough, completely ignored the highly gendered aspect of child care - that it was and is women who are the primary caregivers. Instead, minimalist government intervention, via income

tax deductions, were designed to target families to encourage parental choice.

Ultimately, then, policy outcomes did very little to facilitate women's economic independence, and precious little to promote women's equality. Government authorities continued to develop policy around the notion of a woman as just another taxpaying individual who may or may not claim child care expenses through the taxation system. This thinking prohibited the possibility of developing a child care system or national policy to attend to women's structural discrimination *as women*. Contrary to NAC's position, child care was framed around notions of individual responsibility rather than public responsibility.

As in Canada, successive governments in Ireland consistently resisted the development of a national policy or national child care strategy contrary to the demands of NWCI. This study has revealed that there were still quite strong tendencies to consider child care as a women's responsibility within the family home. There was no pressing policy need for child care even in the most minimalist form (i.e., income tax deductions). The lack of government action, however, was also underpinned by considerations over government's position that there were limited resources to spend on child care, while also being able to highlight that the most vulnerable of children were at least being taken care of via the *Child Care Act*. As in the Canadian case, the choice of Irish governments to prefer a non-interventionist strategy did very little, if indeed anything, to encourage women's economic independence and women's equality as encouraged by NWCI.

Unemployment Insurance

Canada:

In 1979, UI benefit rates were reduced and eligibility requirements became much more restrictive. As Jane Pulkingham outlined in her recent study on UI, these policy changes shifted a number of aspects of the program. It increased the maximum disqualification period for “voluntary” leavers from 3 to 6 weeks in 1976, disentitled persons over 65 years, eliminated special benefit rates for persons with dependents or special benefits for low-income or persons experiencing prolonged periods of unemployment. These changes ultimately produced one benefit rate, 67 per cent, for all claimants. As well, these changes raised the minimum number of weeks of insurable employment for qualification from 8 to 10-14 weeks, depending on regional unemployment in 1978, lowered the benefit rate from 67 per cent to 60 per cent, introduced a repayment scheme for high income earners; and excluded coverage, or raised the qualifying requirements for workers deemed to have a marginal attachment to the labour force.¹⁵

From 1989 to 1990, the unemployment insurance system entered into a new phase with a shift in emphasis from a “passive” to “active” income security program.¹⁶ One of the first substantial changes was the privatization of the financing arrangements from a tripartite system to one financed by employees and employers. By 1993, these “active”, yet restrictive changes included a reduction in benefits, to 57 per cent of employment income, more strict claimant reporting requirements were imposed; and leavers, those individuals who voluntarily or through misconduct left employment, were disqualified.

Bill C-17 (1994) limited the duration of claims and reduced benefit levels and instituted more restrictive entrance requirements from 12 to 20 weeks.¹⁷

In 1995 a reinvented Employment Insurance (EI) system was promoted by Human Resources Development Canada as a “dynamic human investment approach to social policy” the overall objective of which was to remove disincentives and barriers to paid employment, reduce reliance and increase fairness in the system while reinvesting in Canadians to help them “find and keep jobs”.¹⁸ The implementation of the new EI system represented one of the most significant restructurings of the program during its history. Program eligibility and duration of benefits became based on the number of hours worked rather than the number of weeks, ostensibly to cover part-time workers. The hours-worked system is based on the average 35-hour week at a minimum of 420 to a maximum of 700 hours to qualify.¹⁹ A new “intensity rule” gradually reduces the benefit rate for those who have collected more than 20 weeks while “re-entrants” and “newcomers” rules stipulate that claimants establish a reasonable attachment to the labour force prior to collecting benefits.²⁰ Under EI, re-entrants would have to accumulate the equivalent of 26 weeks of 35 hours worked, the stipulation that 910 of those hours were in the previous 52 weeks, or 61 weeks of 15 hours worked.²¹

Jane Pulkingham has argued that gender and marital status were often used in Canada to “subvert ‘genuine’ insurance principles” since the philosophy underpinning UI entrenched particular dependency relations by way of the program’s differential treatment of men and women.²² We saw this via the gender impacts of seemingly gender-neutral categories. The UI system’s classification of marginal workers, re-entrants and repeat

users had particular consequences for women since it was women who often took on non-standard work and precarious forms of employment in the secondary labour market and were often unable to sustain prolonged attachments to the paid labour force due to caring responsibilities within the home.²³ In this sense then, these categories were highly gendered.

As far as NAC was concerned, recasting the unemployment insurance system to employment insurance had far reaching consequences for women. Since women generally worked fewer hours than men, women's qualification to receive benefits, as well as the level and duration of benefits, were greatly affected by the change from a week-based system to an hours-worked scheme. This unfortunate situation was compounded by the restrictions associated with seemingly degendered terms and categories such as "re-entrants" "newcomers" and "repeat users". The Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women reported, for example, that since the 35-hour work week has been set as the "standard", depending on the unemployment rate in the regional area, potential claimants will have to work anywhere from 420 hours and 700 hours. Under EI, women will need 700 hours of work or the equivalent of 29 weeks in order to qualify for pregnancy benefits, up from 20 weeks under the former system.²⁴

Changes to the family supplement, however, were viewed as one of the most "dangerous" elements of the reformulated EI system. Oddly, the family supplement, a benefit that increased the basic EI benefit rate for claimants with one or more dependent children in low-income families, was touted by government as one of the "women-friendly" aspects of EI, although analysis indicated that less women would be eligible for

the family supplement.²⁵ This was partly because the supplement was based on *family income* rather than individual income. This shift away from individualization was a first in the program's history, leaving some to feel that this could establish a precedent easily extended to the basic EI benefit.²⁶

Ireland:

Up to 1974, contributions to the social insurance scheme were made in the form of a "stamp" at a flat rate. In 1974, a pay-related social insurance system (PRSI) was introduced and expanded in 1979. Eligibility for social insurance was based on the employee's social insurance contributions, based on a percentage of earnings, financed by compulsory contributions by employees and employers. To be eligible for unemployment benefits, a certain number of contributions must have been paid by the claimant during their entire working life and second, a certain number of contributions and credits must have accumulated just prior to the claim. For example, in 1994, 39 contributions had to have been made by the claimant at any stage in their work life, including an additional 39 contributions paid or credited in the previous year.²⁷

In 1991, social insurance was extended to all workers earning over 25pds per week which added 25,000 "atypical" workers, predominately women, eligible to collect short-term unemployment benefits.²⁸ With the extension of social insurance to part-time workers, a new rule was introduced regarding eligibility to unemployment benefits. In order to qualify, claimants must have "sustained a substantial loss of employment in any period of six consecutive days".²⁹ In effect this means that a claimant must have lost one

day's employment *and* a reduction of earnings as a consequence of losing that one day's work. As Mel Cousins related, that means "that workers whose normal working week is less than four days will not be able to claim unemployment benefits for the full week unless they lose an additional day's work".³⁰ As well, entitlement to unemployment assistance is calculated on a daily basis. That is, if a claimant worked on a particular day, he or she was ineligible for unemployment assistance on that said day, although claimants are permitted to earn 15pds per day above the level of assistance.³¹

The "adult dependent" category, a classification to determine eligibility of various social welfare benefits, had for many decades been an integral part of the UA/UB system. In essence, this category (or way to calculate benefit levels and eligibility) was an expression of how the social welfare system was built around conceptions of the stereotypical heterosexual, husband-wife family. That is, if one qualified for a social welfare payment, often husbands, they were also eligible to receive an additional benefit for any dependents, typically wives and children. This system particularly discriminated against married women in the home since it was the husband who was entitled to the benefit - the spouse did not directly receive the benefit.

The existence of the adult dependent category, along with other discriminatory regulations in the social welfare system, became the focus of much policy attention when the European Community (EC) introduced a Directive on Sex Equality in social security schemes in 1979. The objective of Directive 79/7 was to implement equality in training and employment, compelling member countries to progressively introduce the principle of equal treatment in matters of social security. This Directive forced Irish authorities to

deal with discriminatory stipulations in the social welfare code, such as those legislated under the *Social Welfare (1981) Act*.³² The *Social Welfare Act* precluded married women from claiming unemployment assistance unless her husband was dependent on *her*. This automatically structured dependency into the system, since most married women were dependent on a husband - not the other way around.

It took almost eight years for the Irish government to fully implement the Directive, representing a major turning point in the philosophical underpinnings of the Irish welfare state and social welfare system. The Directive forced the Irish government to reform some parts of the social welfare system, including the equalization of benefit rates between men and women, as well as implementing equal duration times for married women in payments of unemployment benefits. The *Social Welfare Act (No. 2) Act*, introduced in 1985, gave equal treatment to men and women in social security in accordance with the Directive.³³ The measures stipulated in the *Social Welfare Act* were phased in 1986.

Another reform included the introduction of a “gender neutral” definition of the “adult dependent” category which was changed to “qualified adult” in 1997. The qualified adult category stipulated that either spouse was entitled to claim the other as an “adult dependent” provided that the putative dependent either did not have an income or an income that was below a certain threshold.³⁴ If the spouse’s income was above that threshold, the claimant lost the adult dependent payment. This eligibility rule was implemented by the government to off-set increases in the public expenditure brought on by reforms to the program.³⁵

One of the consequences of this reform, however, was that many poor and vulnerable families received a decrease in their total net incomes which in effect created a poverty trap for couples when one was in receipt of social security and the other was earning low pay. Eventually, this situation was challenged in the Supreme Court. One of the very first court challenges was *McDermott and Cotter v. Minister for Social Welfare* in 1985. In this case, two women argued that, due to the failure of the government to implement the Directive in a timely fashion, they were owed arrears of unemployment benefit dated back to December 1984. Irish court submitted two questions to the European Court of Justice for a preliminary ruling, asking whether the Directive had direct effect in Ireland since December 1984. The European Court answered in the affirmative.³⁶ In another case in 1988, it was successfully argued in *Hyland v. The Minister of Social Welfare* that married couples were discriminated against, and that such discrimination violated the Irish Constitution's commitment to the institution of marriage.³⁷

Until the application of the EC Directive in social security, the social welfare system has remained virtually unchanged since its inception in the early 1940s. Indeed, Nicola Yeates has argued that gender inequality was as “organizing concept” of the Irish social welfare system established in the mid-19th Century and remaining substantially unchanged to the present day.³⁸ A dependency ethos, wherein women were treated either as dependents of a husband or as a member of a household, structured eligibility and duration of benefits. In contrast, men were only considered dependents if invalid, or wholly or fully supported by a wife. Although some of the most egregious aspects of

social welfare law were reformed to honour an EC Equality Directive, individualization was not fully instituted by Irish policy authorities. Indeed, some have argued that the “redefinition” of the adult dependent category discussed above simply replaced notions of “assumed” dependency with a “factual” definition of dependency. In response to the recommendation of the Second Commission on the Status of Women that individualisation must be implemented in the social welfare system, Irish policy authorities stated that this kind of radical change would involve a “lengthy time frame and a major restructuring”.³⁹ They also stated that an “examination of the process and its implications was “ongoing”, pointing out that this type of major change to the social welfare system may “deprive many thousands of dependents, mainly women”, who receive benefits through their husbands.⁴⁰ Gendered policy outcomes in Canada and Ireland, from the 1972 to 1996, were:

Box 7.2
Unemployment Insurance - Gendered Policy Outcomes

Canada	Ireland
* focus on a particular type of “worker” based on the male norm as worker and breadwinner	* gender inequality an “organizing concept” of the social welfare system - based on man as breadwinner - adult dependent category
* particular categories of workers have differential impacts on women (e.g., marginal, re-entrant and repeat user categories) due to women’s different relationship to the paid labour market from men’s	* treatment of households in the social welfare system - UB/UA system based on household rather than individuals (men & women) with women put into a dependency relationship to men
* eligibility rules for basic benefits more difficult for women to meet * under EI, family supplement determined based on family income representing a retreat from individualization * under EI, qualifying for benefits more difficult for women working part-time	* given a lack of child care, and discriminatory unemployment insurance policies, women with children historically left out of the paid labour market

The Fit Between Policy Goals and Policy Outcomes

The policy outcomes in the UI sector ended being completely contrary to what NAC was seeking. The various reforms implemented, however, consistently worked against NAC's hopes for the restoration of a UI system that would assist women in their efforts to secure economic independence and equality. Reforms to the UI system, since the late 1970s, implemented restrictive eligibility requirements and categories of beneficiaries that consistently affected women's chances to receive UI benefits. Ultimately, successive governments did not consider the development and impact of UI reforms within the framework of *women's experiences* as workers in line with NAC's perspective.

The new EI system was especially contrary to the type of income security system through UI that NAC had advocated. As a former member of NAC argued, new EI reforms penalized women and contributed to the reprivatization of their labour power. Leah Vosko has suggested that the dichotomy between a conception of the "regular" worker, which historically formed the basis of the "male breadwinner", had been reinstated under the new employment insurance rules, since these rules were based on the working reality of the 35-hour male worker. Women, she went on to argue, had resurfaced as "new involuntary social exiles" since their paid, working realities did not suit the perceived "conventional" male norm.⁴¹

In contrast, NWCI had somewhat more success, since some of the most discriminatory features of social welfare legislation had been abandoned or reformed due to adherence to an EC Directive on social security. Changes to the social welfare system

to meet the criteria of the Directive clearly fit with NWCI's policy objectives. As discussed above, however, these reforms were not due to the goodwill of successive Irish governments, nor did a commitment emerge to eradicate dependency in the social welfare system. NWCI argued that the underlying assumption of the adult dependent category (and how dependency was structured into the social welfare system) may have been valid many years past, but did not reflect the modern reality of women in Ireland. Consistent inaction, however, only served to keep women in this subordinate and outdated role.

Conclusions and Future Research Considerations

This study has argued that policy institutions, as containers of gendered social relations, transformed child care and unemployment insurance policy goals articulated by NAC and NWCI into gendered policy outcomes that undermined the intent of those goals. The empirical evidence was organized in this study into three spheres of policy transformation to capture the complex interplay between the goals articulated by NAC and NWCI, the bureaucratic institutional setting, and the policy context which included macro-political institutional structures and interest representation systems.

Conclusions

This study has demonstrated that policy institutions, and institutional practices, have gendered outcomes. Policy institutions mattered for NAC and NWCI due to the way in which they facilitated the transformation of their policy goals in child care and UI into gender policy outcomes in two notable ways. First, NAC and NWCI participated in

policy advocacy within a context of a top-down authority-based institutional setting wherein certain bureaucratic and political practices maintained the routine processes of policy development around a male norm. This internal hierarchy of power relations, which was key to understanding policy transformation, was further buttressed by the marginalized placement of women's policy agencies. Second, and related to the first, policy institutions were conveyors of a language that degendered policy debates that either redefined or blocked NAC's and NWCI's policy goals. This policy language, through the use of global terms such as beneficiary, UI recipient or working parent, made void women's experiences and policy needs as workers, as the unemployed or primary caregivers.

Second, this study revealed that policy transformation was a dynamic that extended beyond the governmental or bureaucratic setting. Indeed, at various junctures, and to varying degrees, both NAC and NWCI were implicated in the transformation process. When much of our attention is directed toward analysing why governments do or do not respond in a certain way to societal demands, we often miss the ways in which groups in civil society themselves react in response to government action or inaction.

Third, although NAC and NWCI adhered to different types of feminism and underwent organization development differently, their policy goals were quite similar, especially in the child care sector. This study also demonstrated that NAC's and NWCI's policy goals were complex and multi-dimensional. They sought policy redress in the sectors of child care and UI (their action goals) in order to promote women's economic independence (their defining goal) all leading to the ultimate goal of women's

equality (their organizing goal). This complexity is significant for a number of reasons. At the basic level, child care and a non-discriminatory UI system, appear to policy makers, government leaders and even the public as remote or disconnected from the goal of women's economic independence and equality. This seeming disconnection provided opportunities for Canadian and Irish governments to acknowledge publicly that they were committed to, or working towards, women's equality without actually developing and implementing some of the kinds of concrete policies NAC and NWCI had long demanded.

Fourth, the insidious nature of policy transformation tells us much about why NAC and NWCI were unable to achieve their policy goals. That is, governments were able to easily relate to the public, and respond to NAC and NWCI, that they had tried to address the "child care issue", but were constrained to do so because of other, more pressing policy issues, such as child poverty or social inclusion. As well, successive governments in Canada and Ireland were able to make the appeal that fiscal constraint prohibited spending in child care.

Fifth, even despite the existence of different macro-political institutions and interest representation systems between the two countries, the consequences of policy transformation were the same for NAC and NWCI. For both of these organizations, significant institutional barriers were an important facet of the policy transformation process, although it played out differently in the two jurisdictions. In Canada, federalism redefined the issue of child care away from being about women, to being about jurisdiction, or who's responsible. Federalism also fragmented the interest representation

system presenting NAC with a number of challenges to effectively engage in policy advocacy. In Ireland, a unitary system (and later social partnership) clearly delineated who was in and who was out of policy discussions. Social partnership buttressed this rigidity, since these agreements survived changes in government, while also focussing policy discussions around economic and labour issues rather than women's equality issues. Ultimately, then, whether NAC or NWCI were insiders or outsiders of the policy development process did not matter when it came to policy outcomes. Being an insider only worked for NWCI when they were successful in gendering policy debates when they were a member of the NESF. However, as discussed above in Case Study #2, this success was restricted to just that. It did not translate into policy outcomes. For this reason then, NWCI continued to rely on other policy advocacy strategies, such as street demonstrations and public education campaigns which had been a major component of NAC's advocacy strategy.⁴²

Sixth, although policy institutions and macro-political institutions played a significant role in the transformation of NAC's and NWCI's policy goals, another important explanation of policy transformation had to do with the sets of ideas underpinning policy discussions. We saw this in three main ways. First, there were indications that a regime of gender relations, set within a liberal individualist political culture, influenced thinking around women's role as caregivers, although this was somewhat stronger in the Irish case, juxtaposed to the acceptable role of government (e.g., intervention, spending). In both jurisdictions, certain ideas about women became path dependent (e.g., women as care givers or secondary earners) which set in place

policy trajectories that were difficult for NAC and NWCI to counter. This further revealed to us why the policy goals of NAC and NWCI were often considered to be inappropriate or unacceptable to political authorities. Second, although mentioned above, it deserves repeating: certain ideas framed the definition of the policy problem away from women's equality towards other policy issues such as poverty or social inclusion. When doing so, however, these terms blocked NAC's and NWCI's perspective that poverty is a women's equality issue and indeed, that child poverty is also a women's equality issue. Government did not think of these terms or situations, that is being poor, in gendered terms. Third, the presence of neo-liberal ideas and political strategies in Canada dramatically changed NAC's relationship to government thereby shrinking the policy space (UI becomes EI which is about individual responsibility, not an income security program for women) and hence the potential acceptance of NAC's policy goals. This was also the case in Ireland, although less dramatically, wherein successive Irish governments focussed on economic development to the detriment of NWCI's policy goals that required government intervention and spending.

As far as differences between policy domains, it was expected at the outset of this research that policy transformation would play out differently between these two sectors because UI was an established and highly institutionalized policy sector compared to child care. The author anticipated that there would be more opportunity for NAC and NWCI to influence the child care sector, at least in terms of the debate, than the UI sector. This was not the case. Given the way in which ideas and language were such a strong force, and that successive governments in Canada and Ireland were very hesitant to enter

into the child care sector, NAC and NWCI encountered as many challenges in this domain as they did when advocating for certain UI or social welfare goals.

Finally, even in light of the many challenges NAC and NWCI faced over the time period of this study, it was clear that both of these organizations continued to defend and articulate their policy goals to their respective governments out of principle and necessity. That is, they continued to do so because access to a universal child care system and UI benefits were just too important for women, and for the feminist project, to abandon. They also continued to defend and articulate their policy goals due to pragmatism, recognizing the importance of how government action and inaction affects women's economic and social realities. Even for NAC, the state and government were too important to ignore.

Future Research Considerations

A number of outstanding issues emerged from this study. First, it was not clear from this study how policy transformation would play out at the local level. For example, would policy transformation be substantially different between regions in Canada? Would policy transformation unfold differently in Quebec than from the rest of Canada? Would the forces shaping policy transformation be the same when analysing the interface between provincial or municipal officials and locally situated women's groups rather than between a national government and a national women's organization? In Ireland, it would also be interesting to analyse the extent to which EU membership influenced other policy areas, and the extent to which NWCI's connection and networking with women's

groups at the EU level affected policy developments. With that in mind, it would also add to our understanding of the effectiveness and potentialities of women's policy agencies, within Ireland and at the EU, and how those entities interface with national and/or local women's groups.

In both jurisdictions, it would be important to study the processes and forces of policy transformation as they played out in other policy areas, particularly if there was a meeting of the minds so to speak on the part of women's groups and government officials. Here the author is thinking about the issue of violence against women, which in Canada, appears to have been a more concerted effort on the part of government, along with a measure of public support, to address the issue in comparison to child care.

Finally, our understanding of the politics of policy transformation would benefit greatly from an analysis of policy goals advocated by various types of interest groups, such as business associations or labour unions, and differing policy advocacy groups (say, poverty or job training). In doing so, we could broach other dimensions of policy transformation such as the interface between community-based groups and local governments and the way in which access to policy authorities influences that dynamic.

Chapter Seven - End Notes

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16. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
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19. Caledon Institute of Social Policy, Caledon Memorandum: Social Reinvestment, (Ottawa: Caledon Institute of Social Policy, 1997), p. 7.
20. HRDC, A 21st Century Employment System, p. 11 and p. 18.
21. Jane Pulkingham, "Remaking the Social Division of Welfare", p. 23.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 9 and 14. For comprehensive historical analyses of unemployment insurance, see Ruth Roach Pierson, "Gender and the Unemployment Insurance Debates in Canada, 1934-1940", Labour/Le Travail (25) Spring 1990 and Ann Porter, "Women and Income Security in the Post-War Period: The Case of Unemployment Insurance, 1945-1962", Labour/Le Travail (31) Spring 1993.
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38. Nicola Yeates, "Gender and the Development of the Irish Social Welfare System", in Anne Byrne and Madeleine Leonard, eds., Woman and Irish Society, (Belfast: Beyond the Pal Publications, 1997), p. 145.
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40. Ibid.
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42. In 1999, NWCI mounted a highly visible public education campaign on the need for child care.

Appendix 1

List of Organizations Contacted and Interviewees

Canada:

- * Helene Dwyer-Renaud (Director, Women's Bureau), Human Resources Development Canada
- * Lynn Westlake, Human Resources Development Canada
- * Laurell Ritchie (member Women and the Economy Committee), National Action Committee on the Status of Women
- * Joan Grant-Cummings (past President), National Action Committee on the Status of Women
- * Leah Vosko (member Women and the Economy Committee), National Action Committee on the Status of Women
- * Kerry McCuaig (Executive Director), Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care
- * Barbara Cameron (Professor), Political Science, York University
- * Nancy Jean Waugh (Policy Analyst), Status of Women Canada
- * Pat McLaughan (Policy Analyst), Status of Women Canada

Ireland:

- * Carol Fawsitt (past Vice-Chair) and Katherine Zaponne (Chief Executive Officer), National Women's Council of Ireland
- * Susan McNaughton (Policy Analyst), National Women's Council of Ireland
- * Communications Officer, National Women's Council of Ireland
- * Carmel Foley (Chief Executive and past member of NWCI), Employment Equality Agency
- * Sile O'Connor (Director), National Economic and Social Council
- * Ursula Barry (Professor and member of NWCI), University College, Dublin
- * Mel Cousins (Special Advisor to Minister), Department of Social Welfare
- * Sylva Langford (Chair), Expert Working Group on Childcare under Partnership 2000, Department of Equality and Law Reform
- * Frances Comerford, Department of Equality and Law Reform

Sample List of Interview Questions

Asked to NAC and NWCI:

- * What are your child care and unemployment insurance policy goals?
- * How do you define child care? Who is child care for?
- * How would you describe your organization? Who are your members? What kind of “feminism” do you espouse?
- * What are the most important institutional barriers (when speaking of policy access) in articulating your policy goals in child care and unemployment insurance?
- * How often do you meet with government officials? Who do you meet?
- * Are you consulted by government? In what way are you “consulted”?
- * Do you have regular contact with any women’s policy agencies?
- * Are women’s policy agencies effective in facilitating or supporting your policy goals?
- * Why use the term gender instead of feminist in your gender-based policy analysis framework?
- * Is there a bureaucratic language that “translates” your policy goals?

Asked to NWCI:

- * Is there a need for a dedicated women’s policy agency?
- * What are the strengths and weaknesses of social partnering?
- * After NWCI’s inclusion on the NESF, how did relations with government change? Do you think they viewed Irish women any differently?

Asked to Government Officials:

* Is there anything particular about the Canadian or Irish system of government that inhibits women's policy goals?

* How often, and to whom, did NAC and NWCI meet with officials from your department?

* How would you characterize NAC's and NWCI's relationship to government?

Asked to government officials in Ireland:

* What has been the role and impact of the EU on UA and child care? Where do you see the EU fitting with Irish policy making?

* What are the strengths and weakness of social partnering?

* Do you think social partnering substantially changed NWCI's relationship with government? How and what were the consequences?

**Women's Social Policy Conference
Eight Principles for Social Policy Review**

1. Social policy must be considered in the context of economic strategies. We recognize that the current reform of social programs is taking place in the context of the globalization of the economy.
2. Social Policy must be designed with a central commitment to eradicating poverty and to ending the inequality of women.
3. We must reject the language of the government which blames, pities, patronizes, and promotes discrimination against people on social assistance.
4. Funding to equality seeking groups is a government responsibility.
5. The poverty of children must be seen in the context of the poverty of families.
6. We oppose access to Unemployment Insurance based on family income because it increases women's dependency on men.
7. We are opposed to any form of coercion which ties any benefit to a work or training program. We are calling for the maintenance of the clauses in the Canada Assistance Plan which prevent these types of programs.
8. Genuine reform of social programs must be done with a framework or respect for the 3 national peoples who make up Canada (Aboriginal peoples, people in Quebec, people in Canada outside of Quebec), recognition of and respect for rights of women with disabilities, lesbian and gays, and recognition of the multiracial and multiethnic nature of Canadian society.

Source: NAC, News Release, "Women's Groups Agree to Basic Principles for Social Policy Review", October 2, 1994.

Appendix 4

**NESF Reports and Opinions
1993-1997**

NESF Reports

	<u>Date</u>
No. 1 Negotiations on a Successor Agreement to the PESP	November 1993
No. 2 National Development Plan 1994-1999	November 1993
No. 3 Commission on Social Welfare	January 1994
No. 4 Ending Long-term Unemployment	June 1994
No. 5 Income Maintenance Strategies	July 1994
No. 6 Quality Delivery of Social Services	February 1995
No. 7 Jobs Potential of the Services Sector	April 1995
No. 8 First Periodic Report on the Work of the Forum	May 1995
No. 9 Jobs Potential of Work Sharing	January 1996
No. 10 Equality Proofing Issues	February 1996
No. 11 Early School Leavers and Youth Unemployment	January 1997
No. 12 Rural Renewal - Combating Social Exclusion	March 1997
No. 13 Unemployment Statistics	May 1997
No. 14 Self-Employment, Enterprise and Social Inclusion	October 1997
No. 15 Second Periodic Report on the Work of the Forum	November 1997
No. 16 A Framework for Partnership - Enriching Strategic Consensus Through Participation	December 1997

NESF Opinions

No. 1 Interim Report of the Task Force on Long-term Unemployment	March 1995
No. 2 National Anti-Poverty Strategy	January 1996
No. 3 Long-term Unemployment Initiatives	May 1996
No. 4 Post-PCW Negotiations - A New Deal?	August 1996
No. 5 Employment Equality Bill	December 1996
No. 6 Pensions Policy Issues	October 1997

NESF Opinions under Partnership 2000

No. 1 Development of the Equality Provisions	November 1997
No. 2 Targeted Employment and Training Measures	November 1997

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