PM-1 3½"x4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT

1.0
1.1
1.25

2.8
2.3
2.0

2.5
2.2
1.8

3.0
3.1
1.6
NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.
SOCIAL POLICY AND THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN CANADA:
WHY THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO PLACE THE
ISSUE OF FAMILY-BASED SOCIAL PROGRAMMING ON THE POLITICAL
AGENDA

by

Wendy E. McKeen

Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario

A thesis submitted to the faculty of Graduate Studies and
Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Masters of Arts in Sociology.

August 1991
The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-315-70962-6
The undersigned recommended to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research acceptance of the thesis

SOCIAL POLICY AND THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN CANADA:
WHY THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO PLACE THE ISSUE OF FAMILY-BASED SOCIAL PROGRAMMING ON THE POLITICAL AGENDA

submitted by Wendy E. McKeen, B.A., M.S.W.
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

[Signature]
Thesis Supervisor

[Signature]
Chair, Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University
August 1991
Abstract

The initial assumption of this thesis is that family-based social programming is harmful to women - i.e. it reinforces their status as economic dependents and as secondary workers in the labour force - and therefore social programs should take a disaggregationist approach by employing the individual, and not the family-household as the basic unit of application. Why then has the women's movement in Canada not been successful in placing the demand for disaggregation on the political agenda? Part of the explanation lies in the fact that there has been a lack of consensus within the women's movement concerning the value of this approach in improving the lives of women. But the part of the explanation that I focus on is the transformative effect that the process of engaging in social welfare questions has had on the women's movement. In engaging in social welfare issues, the women's movement has been drawn into the world of the social policy community, and therefore into a meaning system or "universe of political discourse" that is thoroughly embedded in the ideology of the family. Feminism has been integrated into the social welfare discourse, but in a way that has not challenged its familialist underpinnings. The prevailing discourse on poverty, which is the substance of social welfare discourse in Canada, relies on a family-based notion of poverty, and therefore reinforces the familialism that is pervasive elsewhere in the discourse. In this ideological context a reform such as disaggregation, that entails an individually-based notion of poverty, would not be recognized and no reasonable actor would come forward with such a demand.
Acknowledgement

I would like to extend my thanks to all those who offered me assistance and support in the course of preparing this thesis. In particular, I wish to thank Professors John Myles and Rianne Mahon for their interest, excellent guidance, and encouragement.
For Victor
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .................................................. 1

Chapter One -- Theoretical Grounding for the Thesis .......... 4
   I -- Familialism ............................................... 4
   II -- Familialism in Social Welfare .......................... 9
   III-- The Research Question ................................. 19

Chapter Two -- Analytic Tools .................................. 26

Chapter Three -- The Current "Social Policy Community" in Canada .......... 41

Chapter Four -- The "Universe of Political Discourse" in the Social Policy Community .......... 53

Chapter Five -- Summary and Recent Developments ............... 86

Bibliography ...................................................... 95
INTRODUCTION

This thesis takes the standpoint of feminists who argue that the basic unit of application in social programs should be the "individual" and not the "family", since family-based programming constructs women as dependent on their spouse and privileges "the family" as a model for living.

The particular question that I address in this thesis is why women's groups in Canada have not been successful in placing this issue on the political agenda. This question is interesting because it is clear that women's groups are aware of the theoretical critique of family-based programming and have found it relevant to the Canadian situation. Canadian social programs have been found to be encouraging the dependency of women on their spouses. Some programs even explicitly support the traditional breadwinner family form above all others. Nor have feminists been completely silent on this issue. They have raised it at times, most often in regard to the occasional proposals by the state to transform individual-based programs to family-based ones. But the women's movement in Canada has failed to present a strong demand for an individual-based social security system.

The explanation lies to some extent in the ambivalence that women's groups feel towards this issue. Not all feminists are convinced that changing to individual-based programs is the best
approach to improving the lot of women. But another part of the explanation, which will constitute the main focus of this thesis, lies in the nature of the "universe of political discourse" that prevails in the social policy community and which binds women's groups who are involved in social policy questions. This approach treats the women's movement not as an isolated group, but one very much affected by relations to the state and other political players. My main argument is that while the social welfare discourse has been altered to reflect "feminist" goals as a result of the women's movement, feminism has not effectively challenged the familialism that is hegemonic within this discourse. The demands of the women's movement have consequently been shaped within the parameters of a familialist discourse. Under these conditions, "disaggregation" [i.e. individual treatment under social programs], which is essentially an anti-family notion, has not been able to emerge as a major demand.

In Chapter One, Part One, I locate my thesis within the feminist and leftist debate concerning the best approach to the family, whether to renounce it completely or to try to transform it. I take the perspective of the former approach. In Part Two I flesh out the feminist critique of family-based programming and its recommended solution, disaggregation. In this section, it is also argued that there is strong evidence to suggest that this analysis is applicable to the Canadian social security system. Part Three outlines the core question to be explored in this
thesis. Here it is argued that the ambivalence of women's groups is, at best, only part of the explanation for their failure to bring forward the demand for disaggregation in social policy.

In Chapter Two I argue that "women and welfare state" theories, although good descriptions of the way the state treats women, are not adequate as explanations, or therefore, as analytic tools for exploring the dynamics of struggle over welfare state policy. For this purpose, Paul Pross's concept of "the policy community", and Jane Jenson's concept of "the universe of political discourse" are much more useful.

Chapter Three describes "the social policy community" in Canada, focusing on the recent period, and locates within time and space women's groups as an actor within this community. In Chapter Four the prevailing "universe of political discourse" of the social policy community in Canada is described. Here the rigidity of the prevailing definition of poverty is highlighted, even though changes in the ideology of women and the family have taken place since the 1940s. This is where the main argument of my thesis is made, i.e. that while feminism shifted the "universe of political discourse" it has not ultimately challenged the essential familialism that remains so pervasive. The concluding chapter summarizes my argument and briefly discusses recent developments in the social policy community with respect to disaggregation.
CHAPTER ONE
Theoretical Grounding for this Thesis

I Familialism

My thesis can be located in the feminist critique of "the family" and "familialism". This thesis accepts the feminist critique of the family. Feminism has long identified the institution of the family as playing a central role in women's oppression. Radical feminists identify heterosexual marriage as the primary institution for the oppression of women and believe its abolition (at least, in its present form) is a necessary condition for women's liberation. Liberal feminists maintain that women are forced into the traditional, inegalitarian family because of a lack of opportunity to pursue other vocations. They do not oppose any kind of domestic arrangement as long as it represents a real choice on the part of the parties involved. Socialist feminists view the family as supporting capitalism, through its work in producing and reproducing the labour force. As housewives, women form a vital part of the reserve army of labour which is vital to the capitalist economy. The family is also the primary institution for producing gendered personalities which is fundamental to women's oppression. In recent years a substantive theoretical critique of the family, as both institution and as an ideology, has been put forward by socialist
feminist. The most powerful representation of this is found in Michele Barrett and Mary McIntosh's, *The Anti-social Family* (1982). As an institution, the family determines our initial class position. The way it passes on privilege or disadvantage reflects the principles of selfishness, exclusion, and the pursuit of private interest, as opposed to those of altruism, community, and the pursuit of the public good. Marriage, although less oppressive now than previously, is far from harmless. It dignifies the couple to the degree that relationships outside of marriage become "thinner and less meaningful" (54). The isolated privacy of the little enclosed group can become a prison, especially for women who are more vulnerable to victimization by the fact that their work (housework and "motherwork") is located within it. The division of labour within the family represents an unequal exchange in which the man's interest tends to predominate - with respect to housework, decision-making, distribution of money, and so on. This inequality provides the basis for an imbalance in men's and women's sexuality, reflecting male power and female dependence. The imbalance within the family creates the kind of sexuality that exists outside of it - prostitution, pornography, sexualization of the mass media, the male gay scene, and so on. Yet it is the family as an ideology that holds the most significance. Barrett and McIntosh describe the contemporary family as "the focal point of a set of ideologies that resonate throughout society", one which enjoys an "utterly hegemonic
status" (29,30). Barrett and McIntosh maintain that those who focus on the taking over of many of the family's functions by the state, and worry over the weakening of patriarchal authority and its consequences for society, are misleading us into believing that the family is in decline. Society is more profoundly familialized than ever before. We are continually addressed as belonging to it, despite the fact that only a minority of households fit the stereotypical model. The ideology of the family - the idealized image - permeates every aspect of our society. Social institutions, such as orphanages and homes for the elderly, are organized around the structure and values of family life. The media, advertising and entertainment is saturated with familial ideology. It is pervasive in popular fiction and children's books. What the family gains, by virtue of its privileged position, society loses. The over-valuation of family life condemns those outside of families to a lonely and pale existence.

This analysis calls for a strategy of working in the long term towards the eradication of familial ideology from the media and all public discourse. [1] In the short-term, it advocates changes to increase possibilities for greater choice, and to introduce greater collectivism in matters presently regarded as private family matters. With respect to state policy, a key strategy is to change all policies that currently privilege the family at the expense of other ways of living. The objective is not to replace familialism with individualism, but rather to
enhance individual autonomy so that people have greater freedom to have their needs met in ways less inadequate and oppressive than through the family.

Not all feminists share this analysis, or follow this approach. There is a debate among leftists over whether one should fight to replace the patriarchal family with a more egalitarian one or reject any kind of familism (e.g. see Kate Ellis, 1981). The Barrett and McIntosh view is critical of one that has gained credence among socialists and feminists, particularly in the U.S., i.e. that the left has to put forward its "own" view of the family rather than to attack it as an oppressive institution. The latter view rests on the idea that it is a political mistake to attack the family because of its enormous popular support. Adherents of this view also generally see the family as embodying progressive human values (altrusim, justice, commitment, humaneness) which are in opposition to those generated by capitalist market relations. For example, U.S. feminist Jean Bethke Elshtain has argued that feminism must accept the family as a prerequisite for any form of social life and that a particular ideal of the family is necessary to create a more humane society (Elshtain, 1982). As she states, "[m]y aim is to contest, not to abandon, the grounds of tradition, a terrain thus far handed over to the right" (1982:446). The 'reclaiming the family' perspective often entails defining every form of domestic arrangement as a family so that all social issues can be presented in relation to "the family". Barrett and
McIntosh have called such views "sloppy and reactionary" and see their proponents as simply pandering to the popularity of the family. They see it ultimately as a symptom of the left's failure to develop an adequate position on the family.

The Barrett and McIntosh perspective on the family is my animation for this thesis and the starting point of my critique of the approach taken towards the family by the progressive social policy reform movement in Canada. The approach taken by social policy and women's groups has been to replace the traditional patriarchal family form with its own version of the family, rather than attacking it outright. The new ideal is more flexible and egalitarian. It seems to include any domestic situation that entails at least a parent-child bond. It encourages women to be economically independent, and it promotes a more equal distribution of domestic labour. The practice of promoting "the family", however, does little to undermine the enormous privilege of the family in society. It seems only to shore up the familialist hegemony that already exists, and to ultimately legitimate even right-wing, authoritarian versions of the family. In reality, it serves to legitimize the traditional family form in which many people actually live and which constitutes the frame of reference for domestic life for us all. This thesis thus accepts the feminist analysis of familialism in the welfare state - that social programs that are based on "the family" encourage women's dependency, and therefore, they should be re-rooted away from "the family" and toward "the individual"
(the strategy known as "disaggregation").

II Familialism in Social Welfare

Certain feminists have thus argued that the practice of using "the family" as the basic unit of application assumes and encourages women's financial dependency and plays a significant part in perpetuating women's inferior status in society generally. Work along these lines has emphasized the way welfare state policies come wrapped in a fundamentally sexist ideology. According to Mary McIntosh most social security systems are structured such that the state relates to a married woman through her husband (McIntosh, 1978). Her eligibility for benefits is established through her husband. Married women are thus established as dependent upon their husbands, and therefore, are not fully dependent upon their own wages. As such, they are not fully proletarianized, but form a latent reserve army, which can be drawn into or pushed out of wage labour as required. Hence women are usually found in low-wage, marginal jobs. Although the assumption about the economic dependence of wives and co-habiting women does not reflect reality, McIntosh suggests that the "massive weight of the assumption" serves to keep down the numbers of women who would and could contribute financially, let alone become self-sufficient. It also makes it unwise for a
This kind of analysis has not led feminists to advocate the abandonment of social security payments. On the contrary, feminists like McIntosh see social welfare provisions as crucial for women in the short-run as a means of survival. Such policies also free women from dependency on men - a dependency which they see as unreliable and degrading. Direct dependency on a man entails a whole baggage of psychological dependence - lack of authority, deference, the need to manipulate personal relations, and so on, whereas, dependency on the state means benefits can be claimed as a right and beneficiaries can potentially join forces to demand their rightful claims. For such feminists, what is really critical is the reform of social policy so that it is based not on the family but rather the individual. The latter strategy treats women as separate and independent persons, regardless of marital or employment status. This involves ending the practice of combining the incomes of co-habiting individuals for the purpose of assessing eligibility for benefits.

Disaggregation would not just affect married women who are beneficiaries or potential beneficiaries of social security payments. All women are affected by the stereotype of women as dependents and all women face the lack of alternatives to such dependence. Lois Bryson has suggested that "the ramifications of 'legitimate dependence' are extraordinarily pervasive. . . [it] has critical repercussions for the way in which women conceive of their role in the paid workforce as a secondary one" (1983: 144,
11

145). The main argument for disaggregation is, as McIntosh suggests, that all women would have the right to full social security and all men would lose the right to state support for keeping their wives in dependence.

In the short-term disaggregation would bring more financial benefits to many women, although it might be painful for some women. Older women, especially those who lack labour force skills and experience, could be disadvantaged by such a policy. Thus Margrit Eichler has suggested there should be "grandmother clauses" in place so that no woman is negatively affected (1988). It is also important to fight simultaneously for better pay and working conditions in the labour force and an equal and ungendered division of labour in the home. In the long term disaggregation aims at bringing about a structural change in the welfare state by loosening the ties between marriage and social benefits, and ultimately between it and the wage system. It would affect the labour market and wages, bringing women more fully into the labour market and undermining the present wage and opportunity system which favours male workers. Such policy reforms are "crucial leverage points in breaking the cycle of women's dependence and exploitation" (Burton, 1985: 111).

While this analysis emerged in the early 1970s, it seems it is still relevant as a description of the operation of social welfare systems of the 1980s and even today in a number of national states, including Canada.

Hilary Land has demonstrated that a woman's entitlement to
social security benefits in Britain is determined by her marital status to an extent that a man's is not (1976:108). Land has traced the underlying assumptions of the existing provision back to the Beveridge Report (1942), which regarded the family as the economic unit and the wife's role to service the existing work force and produce the next generation of workers. She has argued that despite the rhetoric in recent years about treating women as individuals rather than as dependents, social policies are still framed, allocated, and delivered as if women are primarily responsible for caring for their family members. Moreover, although married women have achieved the rights to benefits which are not affected by their marital status as directly as in the past (eg. women now contribute to National Insurance on the same basis as men), more women are being pushed beyond the reaches of the schemes altogether - for example, as more and more women work part-time, sporadically and/or for low pay, they are not entitled to unemployment benefits). As Land puts it, "the boundaries of the formal labour market are being more tightly drawn. . . and it is largely women, with responsibilities for caring, who are being pushed out" (1985: 61).

Sheila Shaver has found that the structures of the social security and taxation system of the Australian welfare state systematically maintain women primarily as wives and mothers, and as workers secondarily. The mechanism involved is concealed by a "structural asymmetry" between the tax system and the distribution system. For tax purposes the unit employed is the
single individual, but for pensions and benefits, the unit employed to assess entitlement is the nuclear family. In her words, "... when it comes to paying for the welfare state the system treats women as individuals, but in respect of virtually every benefit conferred back on them, social policy measures treat them as somebody's wife or somebody's mother (1983:148). Shaver argues that even though the rules used to define entitlements are now formally equal in their treatment of men and women, the inequalities that exist in society are left untouched, so women effectively have less access to benefits. According to Shaver, "formal equality of treatment is superimposed upon and avoids contradicting a surrounding logic of patriarchal inequality" (152). The central assumption of social policy is that of two cohabiting individuals, one will normally be employed in wage work and the other in domestic labour. Shaver agrees with McIntosh that the choices which couples make about the division of labour are heavily loaded in favour of this pattern.

Carol Pateman has characterized the U.S. social security system as a two-tier system (1988). Benefits in the first tier are available by virtue of a person's participation in waged work or an accident of fortune. Benefits in this tier are usually claimed by men. The second tier of benefits are available to the dependents of those in the first category or to those defined as outside the public realm. The majority of these claimants are women, usually making claims on the basis of their status as wives or mothers.
The "women and the welfare state" theory is relevant as a description of the workings of the Canadian welfare state. Two feminist sociologists, Margrit Eichler and Brigitte Kitchen, have produced analyses of the social security and tax policy in Canada in the 1970s and early 80s which show that Canadian welfare state policy upholds the principle of women's dependency. In 1983 Eichler evaluated all of Canada's major social and tax programmes on the basis of whether eligibility was defined in terms of individuals or families, and whether families were conceived of as one-earner or two-earner (1988). She found that while a few social programs were oriented towards individuals as beneficiaries (i.e. unemployment insurance, old age security, and family allowances), most were based on some aspect of family status (including the refundable child tax credit, amounts for dependent children, childcare expenses deduction, the married amount, the equivalent-to-married amount, the guaranteed income supplement, social assistance, childcare subsidies and housing for the elderly). The Canada/Quebec Pension Plan is viewed as a borderline case since one portion is geared towards individuals (i.e. people can build up credits in their own right) and another portion is geared towards family members (i.e. survivors' benefits and the spouse's allowance).

Social assistance was identified as being the most explicit in its support of the traditional one-earner (male breadwinner and female dependent spouse) family. Until recently, under Ontario legislation the husband was defined as the family head
and was allocated the payment on behalf of the family. The regulations now allow the highest earning spouse to be the breadwinner, but in practice the male spouse is usually still chosen. Up until April 1987 if an individual was suspected of living with a person of the other gender they were assumed to be financially dependent on them, and so were cut off benefits. (This was known as the "man in the house" rule since the large majority of recipients are women, especially single mothers). Under the new regulations a woman and man are considered spouses if they have had a child together. Otherwise, a couple's relationship is not taken into account until they have lived together for three years, at which time a number of social, economic and familial factors are considered to assist the authorities in deciding whether they are indeed spouses, such as whether they are known socially as a couple, have a joint bank account, vacation together, and so on (Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1988: 1-13).

Brigitte Kitchen has reviewed several aspects of Canadian social policy and taxation in the early to mid 1980s (1980, 1984, 1986). In her view, the Canadian welfare state "...provides the legal/administrative basis for the patriarchal nuclear family form in which women are economically and psychologically dependent on men" (1984: 11). She has pointed to survivors' benefits and the spouse's allowance (under the C/QPP) as prime examples of programs which have this effect. The spouse's allowance is available to couples in which one spouse is
receiving old age security benefits but the other one is too young to qualify. It is mostly women who receive this benefit since it is they who are more often younger than their spouse. But, as Kitchen has pointed out, a woman can only benefit through her husband, so until recently, the benefit was discontinued if her spouse died. Similarly, survivors' benefits which are available to widows between the ages of 45 and 65, as a percentage of their husband's retirement pension, were also, until recently, discontinued upon remarriage. Moreover, widowers could only qualify for survivors' benefits if they were disabled or had been substantially dependent on their wives' income.

Kitchen has also called attention to the inherent bias in the income tax system in favour of a breadwinner and dependent spouse living arrangement. Transferable deductions (or non-refundable credits) between spouses (e.g., the age, eligible pension income, disability, and tuition fees and education amounts) allow a couple to pay less taxes than they would as two separate individuals, and are most beneficial to traditional one-earner families. They also act to some extent as an employment disincentive for the non-earning, or lower-earning spouse (usually the woman) in the case of one-earner couples. The "married amount" is explicit in its support of the dependent spouse role, but only within the confines of legal marriage: it is not available to cohabiting or homosexual couples. Moreover, it is reduced by every dollar of earned income (above $500) by the dependent spouse and therefore acts as a disincentive for
individuals with low earning potential (and high-earning spouses) to take paid employment.

Other programs, which are not generally thought of as part of the social security system also employ the family, rather than the individual, as their basic unit of analysis and application. Canada's federal and provincial student loan programs, for example, are based on an assessment of total family income (i.e. a student's plus his or her parents' or spouse's) for establishing eligibility and the amount of the loan, as well as for granting "interest relief" for unemployed ex-students and loan forgiveness for disabled students, and for determining liability for loans in default. This practice tends to deny benefits or access to relief measures designed for the unemployed or disabled to women with employed spouses, and therefore, often pushes them into a situation of financial dependency on their spouse. Bankruptcy laws and regulations also rely on testing family income.

A more recent assessment of the direction of Canadian income security proposals also supports the view that the Canadian state is, if anything, moving closer to reinforcing the dependency of women on their spouse (McKeen, 1989). The proposals of both the Macdonald Commission (Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada) in 1985, and the Forget Commission (Commission of Inquiry on Unemployment Insurance) in 1988, relied fundamentally on the ideology of the family and a gendered division of labour. The Macdonald Commission's proposal
for "rationalizing" the UI program, and instituting an income supplementation program assumed that workers with "unstable" work patterns, could, when unemployed, fall back into full or partial dependence on a "stable", "primary" worker. This assumption is only feasible within the context of the ideology of the family. While it does not explicitly uphold the traditional family of male breadwinner and dependent spouse as the ideal, it reinforces a practice of living units composed of husbands who are relatively well-paid, "primary" workers or "breadwinners", and wives who act only as "secondary" workers, moving in and out of paid labour, supplementing their spouse's income as dictated by the fluctuating needs of their family and the labour market. In so doing, it encourages the view of women workers as relatively less "deserving" with respect to wages, working conditions, and benefit coverage, and that their unemployment (i.e. as "secondary" workers) should not be treated as seriously as mens'. Under the Macdonald and Forget schemes, a disproportionate number of women (as the "unstable" workforce) would become disentitled to UI and shifted onto an income "supplementation" program. The effect would have been to create a situation whereby women would be increasingly pressured to accept and remain in low-paid, unskilled (and unprotected) jobs (along with other workers who make up the "secondary" workforce, such as minority groups). The use of "family" income as the basis of eligibility for income supplementation would have exacerbated this situation for women, since it would make their access to even income "supplementation"
benefits tenuous. The Forget Commission went so far as to argue that the UI program should be based on a test of "family" income rather than "individual" income as it is now.

While the proposals of the Macdonald and Forget Commissions were not adopted by the federal government, there is some indication that they reflect the general orientation of the government in the area of social policy for the late 1980s and early 1990s. Major cuts to the UI program in 1989, consisting of a large shift of funds from the UI program into training programs, and the withdrawal of public funding from the UI program, leaving the entire cost to employers and employees, were consistent with the general approach taken by the Macdonald and Forget Commissions.

III The Research Question

Clearly, the McIntosh critique of the welfare state, which focuses on its support for the family, applies to the Canadian case. Why then has the women's movement in Canada made so little progress in placing the issue of the family basis of social programs on the political agenda? While there has been an awareness among women's groups concerning this issue, in practice they have largely accepted the status quo. "Social policy" groups have been fairly silent on the issue (but not completely,
as I will show in the concluding chapter), and "women's" groups have only occasionally raised the issue. The issue has been raised by women's groups in recent years in relation to the Macdonald Commission's proposed "family"-based GAI program. As feminist economist Monica Townson put it "... [t]he major problem with all of the proposals for a guaranteed annual income is that all of them are based on family income. That ... could have major consequences for women because what it does is put them back into a situation of dependency within the family" (Dundas, 1987: 7). According to feminist economist (and one time vice-president of NAC), Marjorie Cohen,

[w]hen family income is the gauge by which social benefits are distributed (and it always is in GAI schemes) the particular needs of women are lost. ... We talk about poor families, poor kids, poor old people, but the particular poverty of women is invisible when they are in families (1987: 21).

A similar widespread response was given by women's groups to the Forget Commission's suggestion that UI benefits be based on total family earnings. The National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) categorically rejected this idea, calling it "a thinly-veiled attack upon women's income and independence" (1986: 32). NAC took the view that in any case, such a move would be unconstitutional under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In its brief to the Forget Commission the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW) argued that basing UI on family need discriminated against married women since their benefits would in effect subsidize the benefits of married men, and that it is not in keeping with the social
insurance model which forms the basis of the UI program. It too warned that such a policy would probably be contrary to the Charter (1986).

Given that the practice of defining the eligibility and distribution of social benefits on the basis of the family unit has been identified by feminists as a key mechanism for maintaining women as secondary workers, one might expect the women's movement generally to be more vocal on this issue. In contrast to the Canadian situation, the women's movement in Britain mounted a campaign in the late 1970s to demand disaggregation under state social security policy (London Women's Liberation Campaign, 1979). It appears that the situation may be a reflection of a fundamental dilemma that exists within the feminist community concerning the best approach in general for addressing women's problems.

Women's groups in Canada have demonstrated a rather inconsistent approach with respect to their demands in the social welfare field, wavering between two logics which Mary McIntosh has characterized as being a philosophy of "equality with men", which paves the way for women to compete on the same basis as men, versus one of "different, but equal", which seeks greater recognition for the contribution women make as housewives and mothers (1981: 37). The position women's groups have taken on "survivors' benefits" in recent years is a case in point. The rationale underlying survivors' benefits is that the state should provide support for wives on the death of their husbands. Groups
such as NAC, NAWL (National Association of Women and the Law), and the CACSW have acknowledged that this benefit entrenches the principle of female dependency (NAC, 1983: 13; NAC, 1981:15; CACSW, 1979: 4; NAC, April 1984: 7). They have taken stands, however, against potential cutbacks to this program, on the grounds that it provides much needed benefits to elderly women (NAC,1986; NAWL,1987; CACSW,1987). They suggest that the principle of wives' dependency be abandoned and a new rationale based on the "mutual" dependency of spouses be adopted as the basis for the program (CACSW,1987: 4; NAWL,1987: 10).

The reaction of women's groups to the de-indexation of the family allowance also reflected this tension. They defended the family allowance against cuts on the grounds that it is "often women's sole independent source of income, even in high-income families" (CACSW,1985: 26). For example, NAC based its proposals for the reform of children's benefits on the principle that ". . . [t]he independent financial security of women must not be eroded, but should on the contrary be reinforced" (1985:7). In their arguments, however, they also represented the family allowance as payment to women as mothers:

The family allowance has been paid from the beginning to help children and the families who care for them, and it is distributed to mothers in support of the child rearing work they do on behalf of their families and society. The CACSW fully agrees that the contribution of mothers be recognized by society, and for this reason as well, strongly supports the maintenance of the universal family allowance program (CACSW,1984: 8).

Family allowances have come to be seen as some kind of recognition of the value of raising children. That particular benefit has been quite important to women. . .
It's a recognition of their role as mothers (Dundas, 1987: 7).

At times the women's movement has been openly split over issues along these two competing strategies. At least two key debates within the women's movement over social security issues in the last twenty years reflected this dilemma. In the 1970s, the women's movement was divided over the question of "wages for housework". Proponents of this reform, including the Toronto-based, "Wages for Housework Campaign", which put out its own newspaper between 1976 and 1979, believed that women's independence could be best achieved by getting paid for the work they perform as housewives and mothers (Wages for Housework Campaign: 1977). Feminists who were opposed, notably the NAC leadership of the time, argued that such a strategy reinforces the sexual division of labour and encourages women to remain in the home. [3] The "pensions for homemakers" issue of the 1980s engendered a similar division within the women's movement. Some powerful women's organizations, (namely, NAC, CACSW, and NAWL) believed that the best method of alleviating women's poverty in old age was to recognize the contribution of homemakers under the C/QPP. Among their reasons were that ". . . no new definitive family model has emerged to replace the old one", and that "it is to women's advantage that the value of this work be officially acknowledged" (Dulude, 1987: 63.64). Other women's groups and feminist spokespersons (as well as labour and social reform groups) argued against the proposal partially because it was seen to provide the most benefit to one-earner, two-spouse
("traditional") families. [4]

Given the sway that these competing philosophies have in

guiding feminist reforms, one can assume a degree of uncertainty

or ambivalence on the part of women's groups towards the issue of

disaggregation. The strategy of individual treatment aims at

establishing women as individuals independent of their family

relationships. It demands that women be self-supporting. It

represents the "equality with men" philosophy and not the

"different but equal" one. While the "internal conflicts" within

the women's movement are an interesting aspect of the situation,

however, I think it provides only a partial explanation as to why

women's groups have not pushed more forcefully the demand for

disaggregation. In my view, these tensions "require"

explanation, more than they "provide" explanation. I treat them

in this thesis as adding an element of puzzle and not

explanation. This thesis will focus, rather, on external reasons

- namely the force of the "universe of political discourse"

within the "policy community" of social welfare - to explain why

disaggregation has not been put forward very energetically by

feminists in Canada.
NOTES

1. "Familial ideology" refers to "ideologies modelled on what are thought to be family values and the rendering of other social phenomena like families" (Barrett and McIntosh, 1982, chpt. 1, fn. 17).

2. Adamson et al. has argued that the contemporary women's movement has two distinct origins. The "institutionalized" part of the movement, now made up of organizations like the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, was founded by professional women who operated within traditional institutions and wanted more opportunities within them. We now generally classify these groups as "liberal feminist". The "grass roots" movement, more community-based, was formed by women from the left, universities, and homes and workplaces. They put more emphasis on collective organizing, consciousness-raising and reaching out to the average woman. Only certain women's groups, however, have been recognized as actors in the social policy community, as I shall argue in chapter three.

3. For the argument against wages for housework see, for example, Carole Lopate, 1974.

4. See, for example, Monica Townson, 1987: 3-4.
CHAPTER TWO

Analytic Tools

In order to address the question of why the women's movement in Canada has not put forward the demand for disaggregation in relation to social programs we need theoretical tools which allow us to explore the nature of the struggle by the women's movement with "the state". In the previous chapter I presented the argument that social welfare policy constructs the relative dependency of women through its support for the traditional breadwinner family. This view derives from feminist theories concerning the relation of women to the welfare state. Elizabeth Wilson first broke ground in arguing that through welfare state policy the state defines femininity ("Women is above all Mother, and with this vocation go . . . submission, nurturance, passivity" (1977:7)) and this definition is central to the purpose of the welfare state. Welfare provision operates to keep adult women to their primary task of reproducing the work force. In Wilson's view, "social welfare policies amount to no less than the State organization of domestic life" (9). Mary McIntosh built upon this idea, and added her own twists. Together, their work constitutes the core of the feminist thesis on women and the welfare state. McIntosh argues that the state plays an active role in establishing and sustaining a specific family-household system, featuring a male breadwinner upon which all other family members are dependent. Within this system women are defined as
housewives and mothers and are primarily responsible for the care and nurturing of children and for performing other domestic work in service of the workers. This system helps keep the cost of reproducing the working class down by serving to distribute the wage for the support of unwaged people (children, disabled, the sick, and retired people, homemakers) and by providing the setting for the unpaid domestic work and caring of women. McIntosh argues that the state bolsters the breadwinner-dependency family form precisely because the family is inadequate to the task of supporting and maintaining the working class. She suggests that this explains why the state intervenes to force the family into a particular mold and undertakes some of the tasks itself. She gives the example of the state's response to the one-parent family, which has been to help the single parent play the role of two, but has done so in a way that does not encourage this as an alternative to the two-parent family form. The welfare state must provide a substitute to the wage where it is missing (i.e. through social security provisions) but in so doing, bolsters a specific household system. Even when the state carries out some caring functions itself (e.g. care of elderly or children) it does so through an ideology that defines these needs as "normally" being met by the family. Thus cutbacks in social spending invariably mean the responsibility "reverts" back to the "family", usually meaning women.

This theory provides a valuable description of the operation of the welfare state in constructing gender roles and identities
in a number of national formations. It reveals for us the ideological assumptions of welfare state policy - that women are economic dependents of their male spouses - and its pervasive implications - i.e. the designation of women as secondary workers. The strategy of disaggregation as a way of breaking down the link between gender and marital status and social rights, is in turn a worthwhile and thoughtful approach to reform for those working in the social security policy area. As a theory about how the state oppresses women, however, the Wilson/McIntosh thesis has serious weaknesses. Their thesis has an inherent tendency to downplay the contradictory nature of the welfare state. Some critics have argued that there should be more emphasis placed on how the social welfare system works for women - by releasing them from dependence on men. [1] According to this view, the welfare state is an arena of class struggle, but also of struggles between women and men within the working class. As Brenner and Ramas put it,

[i]nsofar as state policies aim to shore up rather than substitute for the family/household system, this is, in part, because men have been better organized with the working-class movement. Men's point of view, men's needs, and men's assessment of priority demands have dominated the struggle. . . (1984:67).

In a similar vein, Anne Showstack Sassoon has criticized the McIntosh/Wilson thesis for assuming that women are objects or victims, and not "agents". In her words. . . "Women's creativity and ingenuity were obscured and their wishes and desires reduced to the product of a dominant ideology" (Sassoon, 1987: 19). On a more fundamental level, critics like Sheila Shaver have argued
that the dominant feminist theories on women and the welfare state suffer from "functionalism": "The analysis subsumed gender politics in a self-maintaining system of functionally necessary interventions in production and reproduction" (1989: 91). Wilson and McIntosh seem to assume that the income security system is characterized by the same structures and functions as the whole of the patriarchal capitalist state. This obscures the "historical specificity of diverse and changing welfare arrangements" and makes it impossible to compare welfare provisions as more or less oppressive.

Jane Jenson has argued that McIntosh errs by generalizing from the concrete to the abstract: she derives a broad theoretical statement concerning the state's role in women's oppression by generalizing from the specifics of the British case at a particular stage of capitalism. According to Jenson... "[t]hey slip from discussing the capitalist state in the abstract to a discussion of a specific capitalist state, and then generalize from that to the capitalist state tout court" (1986: 1). Jenson argues that an understanding of "how" the state contributes to women's oppression follows only from an analysis of political struggle in concrete social formations. The "how" varies over time and across national formations.

The underlying functionalism of the dominant theories (welfare provisions always have the effect of maintaining the status quo) has meant a tendency to downplay struggle and resistance and to ignore the contested nature of the welfare
state, and therefore, the way change can come about. Functionalist approaches also tend toward a simplistic view of the state such that the feminist struggle is perceived as being wholly with "the state" i.e., politicians, policy-makers, and program implementors, and so on. It does not therefore lend itself to considering the interaction of the women's movement with other political actors whose activities may be critical to the outcomes of feminist struggle. Overall, "women and the welfare state" theories tend not, therefore, to be useful as analytic tools for probing the dynamics of political struggle over welfare state policy.

These inadequacies have led me to turn to other conceptual tools which are more revealing of the complexity of the state and focus on political struggle as critical to the outcome. As a first step, Paul Pross's concept of the "policy community" provides insight into the complexity of the state, and allows us to examine the specifics of our case. His concept helps to distinguish the political terrain within which women's groups concerned with social security issues operate, i.e. the social policy community, and draws our attention to the constraints and possibilities that might exist for women's groups flowing from their "place" in this community. It leads us to consider, for instance, the relative power women's groups have in relation to other social policy groups, and the consequences this has with respect to the shaping of political demands.

Jane Jenson's concept of the "universe of political
discourse" is located within a theoretical framework in which people are actors, who struggle and resist, and therefore can affect the outcome. Agency (the relative strength of forces for progressive change) varies across space and time - some of these being more favourable than others - for bringing about change. The outcome can only be determined by examining concrete social formations. It draws our attention to the interaction of structures and agents and therefore adds a broad context and texture that is missing from Pross's concept. Pross, moreover, is a pluralist while Jenson aims for a "structure and agency" balance. The "policy community" concept allows us to see the "women's movement" as a strategic player in the political discourse of social welfare. The "universe of political discourse" concept draws our attention to the transformative effects that becoming a player can have not only on the policy discourse but also on the actor (collective actor) seeking to initiate change. The latter concept invites us to consider the constraints operating at the ideological level which bear on the women's movement operating in the realm of social welfare, and ultimately influence the shape of feminist demands in this area.

In the remainder of this chapter I will briefly outline Pross' and Jenson's concepts.

Policy Community:

In keeping with a "pluralist" perspective, Pross is interested in understanding the role and place of pressure groups in modern democratic political life. He sees pressure groups as
not engaging individualistically with government, but, rather, as combining with one another to influence government policy, and often working "with" state agencies to exert their influence on government and on the public. He suggests that the entire political community is rarely involved in a policy debate; the policy system relies on specialization. "Specialized publics" or "policy communities" are allowed to dominate decision-making in policy fields where they have competence. While the policy community funnels issues from the general public to the decision-making apparatus of the state, it also can be seen as replacing the general public, which means large numbers of issues never go beyond it or only do so superficially. According to Pross, the policy community is

that part of a political system that - by virtue of its functional responsibilities, its vested interest, and its specialized knowledge - acquires a dominant voice in determining government decisions in a specific field of public activity, and is generally permitted by society at large and the public authorities in particular to determine public policy in that field (1986:98).

While there are gradations between them, members of the policy community have shared, or commonly understood, belief systems, codes of conduct and established patterns of behaviour. Pross divides the policy community into two distinct segments - the sub-government and the attentive public. The sub-government is the policy-making body, consisting primarily of government agencies and certain institutionalized interest groups which have substantial resources and the capability of interacting on a day-to-day level with government. The attentive public lacks the
power of the sub-government. It includes any government agencies, private institutions, pressure groups, and individuals (eg. academics, journalists, consultants) who are interested in influencing certain policies but do not participate in policy-making.

What, for this thesis, is illuminating in Pross is his analysis of the role of the attentive public within the policy community and his characterization of pressure group behaviour within it, particularly in relation to each other. According to Pross, the attentive public "contribute[s] to the gradual process through which policies and programmes are amended, extended, and generally adapted to the changing needs of the community" (99). It occupies a strategic position between the sub-government and the public at large. "Its capacity to generate informed support or opposition to policy makes it an ally worth courting and an opponent to be feared" (150). Groups that share the attitudes and policy goals as the sub-government, but lack the policy capacity and power base to be members of that inner circle, are often found in the attentive public. They can be counted upon to give support in return for information and consultation. Groups who oppose the conventional wisdom of the centre are also present and attempt to attract the attention of the policy establishment and other members of the policy community. Pross suggests that relations within the attentive public are generally not as congenial as within the sub-government:

the interest group living in this policy climate must work hard to secure the support and understanding of
other members. It must monitor their activities, attempt to build alliances with affinity groups, and strive constantly to maintain a position in the community that enables it to hear what is being said and to contribute to debate (150).

Alliances and co-operation are extremely valued by members of the attentive public - "Co-operation enhances each group's ability to project an impression of legitimacy" (153). The realm which Pross describes is one in which members, with varying degrees of power, are constantly striving to manoeuvre into more influential positions. Mobility is a particularly prominent feature - "They are in constant motion, coalescing around or breaking away from more powerful actors, advancing towards and withdrawing from the core as their resources, their interests, and the public agenda change" (104).

"Universe of Political Discourse":

As I have suggested, a sharper and richer understanding of the constraints on feminist politics in social welfare can be achieved by combining the policy community concept with Jane Jenson's concept of the "universe of political discourse". Jenson developed the concept of "universe of political discourse" as a means for understanding the behaviour of social movements and their chances of achieving reform. She is interested in examining their relationship to the political process, political parties, and the state. Particularly intriguing for Jenson, is the behaviour of the "new social movements", such as the women's movement, that have resisted absorption and integration into
"normal" partisan politics. She argues that the opportunities and constraints on a social movement are contingent upon the ideological terrain - the universe of political discourse. The universe of political discourse is the universe of meanings produced in the course of political struggle. Jenson sees political life as composed of actors all struggling to impose their understanding and priorities on others, each competing to establish their own set of assumptions as the prevailing ones. The assumptions define the actors considered legitimate participants in the political process, the issues to be included as legitimate in political debate, the policy alternatives considered feasible for implementation, and the alliance possibilities that will make change feasible (Jenson, 1988: 157). These sets of assumptions together form the universe of political discourse. The effect of the universe of political discourse is to establish parameters with respect to the issues which can be placed on the political agenda, and the form which they will take (1982b, 5). At any juncture not all possible positions will be represented in political debate. "Systems of closure", which exist because of the unequal balance of economic and political power, may block the expression of some discourses, at least for a time (1988: 156). The overall implications, for Jenson, are that:

[any social movement... must formulate its goals within a pre-existing universe of political discourse. This means that a crucial constraint on the activity and success of a social movement is the character of the universe of discourse within which it must act... The existing ideologies, and especially the range of
policy options considered to be available based on the consequences drawn out of those ideologies, severely limit the ways in which any social movement can have its concerns placed on the agenda (1982b: 4).

The universe of political discourse is not static. A particular discourse may be challenged by a force seeking to alter its restrictive boundaries, which if successful, would alter the discourse, or might be successfully resisted by the prevailing discourse.

A number of Jenson’s articles begin by asking how the emergence of a social movement was constrained by the ideological terrain. This research strategy emerges from the notion that the universe of political discourse acts as a gatekeeper to include some actors and exclude others, who may not be able to construct a collective identity at all. My study has a different starting point. It assumes the existence of a collective identity (i.e. the women’s movement, or more particularly, women’s groups engaged in social welfare policy debate), and asks why a particular issue has not been placed on the public agenda by this group (or any group), as we might have expected. My use of Jenson’s concept also differs from her own use in that I will focus on only a small part of the universe of political discourse, i.e. the one relevant to the social policy community. Jenson’s work is generally concerned with the interplay between the discourses of all the relevant actors in a historical conjuncture (see especially, the Limits of the 'and the' Discourse). My interest is in asking what are the ideological constraints on women’s groups in the social welfare field.
The question then which I shall address in this thesis is why the women's movement in Canada has not been successful in placing the issue of disaggregation on the political agenda of the social policy community. I have argued here that the functionalist approach embedded in theories of women and the welfare state render them inadequate as theoretical tools for exploring the relation of the women's movement and the state at the level of political struggle. Pross's concept of the policy community and Jenson's concept of the universe of political discourse, however, can help us understand both the possibilities and the limitations that the women's movement in Canada faces as it engages with social policy questions.

In the remainder of this chapter I will use insights derived from Pross' and Jenson's concepts to explore the ideological limitations which the social welfare realm places on feminist politics. Pross's concept of policy community alerts us to the fact that the demands of women's groups are not shaped in a vacuum. They are shaped for the most part in relation to the discourse of the social policy community, particularly, as I shall suggest, in relation to its natural ally, and the dominant left voice in the attentive public, the progressive social welfare movement. Therefore while I recognize that there are competing discourses operating with various strengths which impinge upon social welfare and women's groups, I suggest that it is the discourse of the progressive social welfare groups that is critical in establishing the parameters of legitimate political
debate in the social welfare field in Canada. It is this discourse which establishes the limitations upon women's movement politics in the social welfare realm.

In chapter three I will present a sketch of the "social policy community in Canada with particular attention to the role of feminist organizations in this community. In chapter four I will describe the "universe of political discourse" of the social policy community. My analysis will focus on the ways this discourse establishes the parameters for feminist politics in the field of social welfare.

Research for the next two chapters was conducted primarily through the examination of the discoursive texts produced by social welfare and women's groups in Canada from the 1940s to 1991. An examination of the briefs, reports, studies, and journal articles of the Canadian Council on Social Development — formerly the Canadian Welfare Council, the longest-standing and most well-accepted national social policy organization — was useful for documenting the transformation in the discourse over time. Particular attention was paid to the references in this material on women, the family, and poverty. Materials published by the National Welfare Council, the Vanier Institute of the Family, and social planning councils, especially the Social Planning Council of Metro Toronto were used to supplement material produced by CCSD. Secondary sources on poverty and social welfare states were used to support my argument concerning poverty in chapter four. [2] Interviews conducted with key
individuals working in the field provided a perspective on the composition of the social policy community in the last twenty years, and the relative power of various organizations. [3] Insight into the politics of the field also came from my own experience as a researcher of social policy issues with the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, between 1984 and 1987.
NOTES

1. See, for example, Brenner and Ramas, 1984.


3. Interviews were conducted in November 1990 with Ken Battle, Director of the National Council of Welfare, Havi Echenberg, former Director of the National Anti-poverty Association, and Louise Dulude, former President of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.
CHAPTER THREE
The Current Social Policy Community in Canada

Women's groups which address social welfare concerns operate in relation to a community of political actors all attempting to have an influence on social welfare policy. Understanding this particular relation places us in a better position for analyzing the ideological constraints operating on feminism within the social welfare field. This chapter provides a sketch of the "social policy community" in Canada, focusing mainly on the current period.

The federal Department of Health and Welfare has historically been a central policy-maker in the "sub-government" of the social policy community at the national level, having its peak role perhaps in the early to middle 1970s with the social security review of 1973 to 1976 (Guest, 1980: 186-201). Other policy-making centres were located in the Department of Finance (controlling the budget), the Department of Employment and Immigration (for labour market related policy) and the Department of the Secretary of State (because of its funding of special interest groups and education policy). In the 1980s the leading role in social policy-making shifted from the Health and Welfare department to the Department of Finance. Under the present conservative government social welfare policy has been subsumed within the fiscal concern. Major reforms which have been proposed or enacted under this government have been the work of
the Department of Finance, announced in federal budgets (Gray, 1990).

Within the "attentive public" component of the social policy community there are two major competing factions. On one side are those in favour of reductions in social spending. They are mainly representative of business, such as the Business Council on National Issues, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Organization of Small Business, and the Canadian Manufacturers Association. [1] On the other side are those in favour of increased social spending. This faction represents the interests of the disadvantaged in society and social service organizations and professionals working in the field. It is this part of the policy community that is of most interest since it forms the terrain on which women's groups involved in social welfare issues operate. The ideological opposition which this sector presents for the current Tory regime has meant that it has become increasingly marginalized with respect to its influence on social policy making (despite the apparent zest this government has for consultation). Over the long term, however, this community has made a significant contribution to the shape of social welfare policy in Canada. The contribution of the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD), formerly the Canadian Welfare Council, in the research of social conditions and the development and evaluation of policy proposals, has been widely acknowledged by social welfare historians. [2] This organization, originally established in 1920 as the Canadian
Council on Child and Family Welfare, was meant to serve "as a national clearing house for child welfare, to issue professional guidance materials, to inform public opinion, and to formulate briefs for legislation" (Guest: 56, n25). By 1930 it had developed into "Canada's most influential voice on social welfare matters" (Guest: 56). Over the years the Council has been called upon frequently by government for its advice on social welfare matters. Equally well documented has been the considerable involvement of government officials on CCSD committees, and the common cross-over of staff between it (and other social welfare organizations), and the Department of Health and Welfare. [3] A relative newcomer in the social policy community, but one that has achieved significant credibility as a scrutinizer of social policy, is the National Council of Welfare. This body was established in 1970 by the Department of Health and Welfare as an advisory body, and is made up of low-income individuals and interested professionals (Wharf and Halladay, 1974).

Together these two groups, along with a handful of other organizations, form the "core" of the "progressive" (i.e. "left-liberal") social policy community as it now exists. Their capacity to produce valuable research and responsible policy proposals is generally acknowledged by government and the public. They are seen to be concerned with the overall state of social welfare in Canada and as reliable for "constructive" responses to policy proposals. They have been willing to engage collegially with government officials, and to respond positively to
invitations for participation in the policy-making process. Other players in the core which have emerged over the past two decades are the Vanier Institute on the Family, which was established in 1965 and is funded by the family of ex-Governor General Vanier and the National Anti-poverty Organization (NAPO), established in 1971 and funded by the Department of Health and Welfare, which represents low-income people. The Canadian Council on Children and Youth, established in 1958 and funded by Health and Welfare, may also be considered a member of this core.

A large number of other organizations exist on the periphery of the social policy community, and periodically enjoy close contact with this core group. They are generally smaller organizations, with less capacity for research and policy development. Their interests are narrower in general, as in attempting to reform (or prevent reform of) a policy that impacts disproportionately on the group they represent. Their unusual lobbying methods tend to place them at a greater distance from government networks. They include groups representing elderly people (e.g. the Senior Citizens and Pensioners Federation), disabled people (e.g. the Coalition of Provincial Organizations of the Handicapped), and women (e.g. the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) and the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW)), as well as other family and child oriented groups (e.g. the Child-Poverty Action Group), and church-based groups (e.g. the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Coalition for Ecumenical Justice). Occasionally locally-
based groups, notably, municipal social planning councils (eg. of Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Ottawa) become active on national issues. While these groups lack the legitimacy of the core organizations, under certain conditions and on certain issues they can become key players in a policy debate. For example, the Senior Citizens and Pensioners Federation became the key actor forcing the Mulroney government to abandon its plans to de-index old age security in 1985. [4] It should be noted, however, that their campaign depended on the research material produced by core social policy organizations.

The participation of feminist organizations in social welfare issues coincided roughly with their appearance as the "second wave" of the women's movement in the late 1960s. Throughout the sixties, more married women moved into the workforce, and increasingly were able to acquire post-secondary education, thus setting the material and ideological conditions for the rise of the second wave of the women's movement. [5] By the late 1960s women began organizing on a national scale. A 1966 meeting of prominent professional women and federal Cabinet Ministers in 1966 resulted in the establishment of a Royal Commission on the Status of Women in February 1967. The process of the Commission and its Report drew a large number of women into the movement and was a catalyst for the establishment of many women's organizations (Findlay, 1987). The Report, published in September 1970, is said to have established a political agenda that lasted well into the 1970s (Findlay,
1987:5). One chapter of the report was dedicated to poverty and women. The degree and extent of concern around the issue of poverty shown by the number of women presenting briefs on this question had evidently been unanticipated by the Commission (O'Connell, 1983: 46). The briefs presented to the Royal Commission attest to the fact that there existed among "grass roots" women a real concern about poverty and a feminist analysis of the issue. Only certain of these groups, however, came to be recognized by the existing social policy community as legitimate actors in the field.

The women's organizations that have come to have status as actors in the social policy community emerged as part of the momentum around the Royal Commission. The most prominent one is the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, formed in 1972 to continue the work of the Royal Commission's proposals and "evaluate and advocate changes to benefit women (Burt, 1986: 141). It is an umbrella organization representing over 450 (i.e. 450 in 1987) women's groups from across the country, and funded by the Secretary of State. It has been the most consistently active women's group in social welfare issues. The other prominent "women's group" involved (albeit less so than NAC) in social welfare policy in the last ten years, has been the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. The Council was established by the federal government in 1973 upon the recommendation of the Royal Commission, as an advisory body on women's issues. Since its establishment it has made a large
number of recommendations concerning social welfare issues. It was very involved, for instance, in the late 1970s in the issue of taxation, taking a strong stand against a proposed system of "joint" taxation in January 1977 (CACSW, 1978). It was also very active in the debate over pensions in the 1980s. NAC and CACSW were two of the original members of the "social policy reform group" (SPRG), a small alliance of social policy organizations (including CCSD, NCW, and NAPO) formed in January 1985 to attempt to gain greater influence on the social policy process under the Tory administration. [6] The CACSW has since dropped out of SPRG. In the last few years the Council has adopted the attitude that it is not a "lobby" group, but an "advisory" group, and with this, has gradually distanced itself from the progressive social policy community. [7]

There has also been considerable intermingling between the women's groups and social policy groups on social welfare matters. For example, Louise Dulude, the former President of NAC, and current chair of the economic committee of NAC, prepared the NCW's report on women and poverty in both 1979 and 1990. The CACSW's recent book, *Women and Labour Market Poverty*, was prepared by individuals associated with the social welfare movement (i.e. Leon Muszynski).

Looked at from Pross's perspective, it is evident that women's groups involved in social welfare issues are "structurally" located further from the policy-making centre than are the core groups. First of all, they are fairly late entrants
to the policy community while organizations like CCSD and NCW have had a long and distinguished history in the field. [8] Secondly, women's groups are committed to bringing about broad changes which touch every aspect of society; the social policy community is just one among several policy communities across which their interests cut. They naturally make use of research, data, and policy proposals developed by the core of the progressive social policy community in substantiating and formulating their positions. They are not viewed by government as having the same expertise in the area of social welfare as members of the core groups. Their expertise is recognized rather as being in "women's issues". The constituency they are seen to represent is considered by government to be a "special" interest group as opposed to the "general public", or the "poor". The current attitude of social policy people towards NAC reflects these differences. Despite the association - both formal (through SPRG) and informal, through consultations, of core social policy organizations with NAC - there is a recognition that NAC is not on a par with members of the core group. It is generally viewed by the core groups as ideologically more radical and its lobbying tactics (which have entailed visible hostility towards Conservative politicians, including the Minister of Finance) are considered too extreme. [9] NAC's leadership has expressed the view that a "friendly" approach to government does not necessarily produce the desired results. [10]

Whatever attitudes currently prevail concerning the
contribution of feminist groups to social policy development, we must not lose sight of the position that women's groups in general occupy in the social policy community, and its implications. While acknowledging the give and take in the relationship between women's groups and social policy groups, the greater legitimacy assigned traditionally to the core of the progressive social policy community leaves women's groups in a relatively dependent position within the social policy community.

It might be that women's groups are somewhat dependent upon social policy groups to facilitate the emergence of their perspectives in public discourse. While such a dependency would be difficult to establish, there certainly is a sense among some in the social welfare field that this is true. For instance, the director of one core anti-poverty organization has expressed the view that the gender analysis of poverty which has reached standard acceptance today would not have been so if it were not for social policy organizations pushing this perspective. [11] It is possible that the core social policy community provides a necessary medium through which the feminist perspective on social welfare matters reaches public perception. By the same token it may act as a gatekeeper so that only certain views reach expression in the social policy discourse. My argument will be that it is not so much that social policy groups have actually suppressed the feminist issue around the benefit unit, but rather that there are constraints inherent to the ideological context
which the dependent relations within the social policy community thrusts upon feminist groups. Women's groups entered a discursive space - that of the social policy community - that had already been shaped in large part by progressive social policy organizations. Pross's concept of the policy community helps us to see that feminist demands in the area of social welfare are not only limited by the ideological parameters established by "the state". They are, first and foremost, subjected to an ideology engendered in the more specific discourse of the social policy community. Jenson's concept of the universe of political discourse has alerted us to the fact that it is within the terms of this more specific discourse that the women's movement formulates its demands on social welfare issues. The question to which I now turn is: what kind of ideological restrictions does this discursive space impose upon feminist politics in social welfare that could account for the absence on the social policy agenda of a serious challenge to the "family"-basis of social programs?
NOTES

1. Based on personal communication with Havi Eichenberg, November 1990. Also see, Gratton Grey, 1990.

2. See, for example, Guest, 1980, and Moscovitch, 1983.

3. See, for example, Splane, 1978.

4. Based on personal communication with Ken Battle, November 1990.

5. For an overview of the emergence of second-wave feminism in Canada, see Adamson, et al., 1988.

6. The original members of the social policy reform group were: CCSD, NCW, NAPO, NAC, CACSW, and the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW).

7. Based on my own assessment as a researcher on social policy issues with the CACSW and confirmed by Ken Battle, Havi Eichenberg, and Louise Dulude in personal communications, November 1990.

8. I am referring to the "contemporary" women's movement and social policy community. Earlier feminists had an important impact on the earlier period of social reform. There is ample documentation of the important role that women's organizing and women's organizations played in the early stages of the development of the welfare state, in the late 1800's and early 1900's. See, for example, Caroline Andrew, 1984: 667-683 and Wendy Mitchinson, 1987: 77-92. Also, for an interesting account of the important role of feminists in the struggle for the Mothers' Allowance in Ontario in the 1920s, see Jane Haddad, 1986.
9. Based on personal communication with Ken Battle and Havi Echenberg, November 1990.

10. Based on personal communication with Louise Dulude, November 1990.

11. Source withheld on request.
CHAPTER FOUR

The Universe of Political Discourse in the Social Policy Community

What is the ideological terrain or discourse in which the social policy community operates and to which it contributes, and how might it constrain feminist approaches to social welfare issues? The argument I will present here is that feminist approaches to social welfare have been contained by a discourse which is familialist and therefore not conducive to an anti-familialist challenge such as the individualization of social programs. To make this argument requires an understanding of the specific way feminism integrated with the social welfare world. I shall start, however, with a discussion of poverty, for this is what constitutes the core of the social welfare discourse in Canada.

The social welfare discourse in Canada is wholly and fundamentally an "anti-poverty" discourse. Esping-Anderson has argued that Canada, like several other Anglo-Saxon countries, is an archetype of the "liberal" welfare state, as opposed to the "corporatist" one, typical of European countries, or a "social democratic" one, as in the Scandinavian countries (Esping-Anderson, 1989). The liberal welfare state is built upon a residualist philosophy - of upholding the work ethic and therefore providing only minimal entitlement to benefits. The most extreme contrast is the social-democratic regime type which
guarantees both income protection at a high level and employment. The clientele of the liberal welfare state is "poor people" as opposed to the entire population as is the case in social democratic welfare regimes. Hence, the social welfare discourse in Canada is confined to a concern about poverty.

But even within this essentially residualist framework the driving force of the discourse has been conflict between residualist notions of social welfare versus institutionalist notions. Dennis Guest has argued that this tension is a recurring theme in the history of Canadian social security and both viewpoints have been influential in shaping social policy in Canada (1980: 1-3). On the residual side are those who believe social security should be limited to a role residual to the private market and the family. They stress individualism and free-enterprise. Within this framework social security stigmatizes and degrades the recipient in order to motivate them into becoming self-reliant. On the institutional side are those who hold that social security should be a first line of defense for those in need. They feel there is a social responsibility to meet the risks which are endemic to modern industrial society, and focus less on the personal inadequacies of individuals who are in need. Under this philosophy, social security programs provide benefits as a right rather than as charity.

This ideological tension is still evident as the animator of the discourse. Recent governments, especially the Mulroney government, have attempted to shift opinion back towards residual
conceptions of social welfare. This shift is reflected in policies that have been adopted which diminish universal social programs, supposedly in order to target more benefits to the "truly needy".

While competing philosophies concerning the poor divide the social welfare world, poverty is also something that binds the social policy community together. Despite their ideological differences, all actors in the social policy community share a common sense view of what poverty is. The shared language of poverty creates a cohesiveness for the community. This language reflects a particular understanding of poverty.

The meaning given to poverty today has its roots in the approach to poverty that emerged in the early 1960s. Social reformers at this time were taken up with the effort of shifting the paradigm surrounding poverty from social pathology to sociology, from one which holds individuals accountable to one which holds society and its structures accountable. This shift was explicit in the social welfare document at the time.

How widespread is the attitude... that poverty-stricken families are improvident, shiftless, dishonest and irresponsible? Does this attitude take sufficient account of the possibility of some community responsibility for their condition (CWC, 1963: 9)?

Although a moralistic approach to the poor dies hard, the concept that poverty is in most cases the consequence of forces beyond the individual's control is now becoming more widely accepted in Canada...(CWC,1969a: 12).

Constructing, legitimizing and refining a sociological/institutional view of poverty has continued throughout the last two decades to be the driving force behind
the progressive social welfare movement. The social welfare
discourse of the 1970s and 1980s did this by way of efforts to
define, explain, and measure "poverty". Early on, there was
debate over whether poverty should be seen as a relative concept
or an absolute concept. The Canadian Welfare Council advanced
the notion of poverty as a relative condition (CWC, 1969b: 11).
The idea was advanced that "certain" groups in society were more
vulnerable to poverty, such as single-parent families and the
elderly (CWC, 1969b). There was seen to be a "transitory" group
of poor and a "hard-core" group (Jenness, 1965: 22). It became
accepted to recognize types of poverty according to different
causal factors - eg. life-cycle poverty, depressed area poverty,
crisis poverty, poverty due to long-term dependency, inner city
poverty, and sometimes, a culture of poverty (CWC, 1969b: 23;
Donnison, 1968). All this helped construct a macro-level view of
the problem, and an image of the poor as victims of social
circumstances, rather than owing to individual failings. In
keeping with this analysis, the solutions shifted away from
casework to greater "social security" benefits (eg. a guaranteed
income). Emphasis began to be placed on the need to make poverty
a measurable concept. Attempts were made to find agreement on
tools for defining and counting the poor:

What constitutes poverty? . . . Where do we draw the
line on who are low-income and who are not? . . . What.
. . should be our yardstick of social need today? . . .
in so urgent a field as that of social welfare
imprecision represents a difficulty to be noted. . .
(Jenness, 1965: 3 and 5).

The struggle by anti-poverty activists in the 1960s to
replace the residual notion of poverty and the poor with an institutional/sociological approach throws some light on why feminism was so readily adopted (beginning in the early 1960s) by the social welfare world (as I shall argue in this chapter). Feminism's lesson, that social-structural factors, rather than personal ones, create inequality, was nicely compatible with the move to take the blame off the victims of poverty and place it on societal structures. Feminism could only enhance and legitimize the new approach to poverty.

We can also see that the particular meaning poverty has come to have today and the strong consensus around this meaning within the social policy community stands as a barrier to the acceptance of the idea of an individually-based system. Emphasis is still placed on analyzing causes and solutions to poverty in relation to particular categories of individuals, such as single-parent families, unattached individuals, and children. [1] Poverty has almost come to be equated with established criterion for "measuring" the poor. Integral to the concept of poverty is the income criterion below which households are said to be poor (Statistics Canada refers to them as "LICO's" or low-income cutoffs). Opinions vary concerning where to draw the poverty line or cut-off (Osberg, 1981). Statistics Canada established a poverty line in 1961 based on the percentage of income consumers spent on food, clothing and shelter. This poverty line is at the level of income at which the average family of a given size spent 70% or more of its income on basic necessities. The Special
Senate Committee on Poverty in 1971 based their poverty line on an estimation of the basic living needs for a family of four. The Canadian Council on Social Development explicitly uses a relative concept of poverty. It defines the poverty line as 50% of the average income of Canadian families. But despite these variations all measures of poverty have at least one thing in common. They rest on the notion of the "consumption unit" - a unit that has historically (even almost, logically) been the family-household. This derives from a fundamental tenet of neoclassical economic theory - that the family is the basic unit of economic decision-making (Muszynski, 1989: 9). Standard to poverty definitions is the assumption that income is pooled and consumption is equally shared within family units (Osberg, 1981:9).

This definition presents several problems for those interested in achieving an individually-based social welfare system. First, this definition reinforces and is reinforced by the familialist mentality that pervades the discourse. [2] It rules out the possibility of "poverty" on an "intra-household" basis. Second, the focus on particular groupings of individuals, such as single-parents, detracts from the view that all individuals, or even all women, married or not, should be the subject of social welfare policy. Finally, its economistic definition of well-being (i.e the bottom line is income) leaves little room for consideration of other social values, such as encouraging individual autonomy and respect. It is with these
thoughts in mind that I now turn to my main argument, that the
social welfare discourse in Canada is familialist and it is
within this ideology that feminist demands have been shaped.

In order to understand the possible containment of feminism
by this discourse, we have to understand where feminism has come
into play in the social welfare field. While the social welfare
discourse is fundamentally a discourse about poverty, it entails
other important sub-themes or discourses. It is in respect of
the more narrow discourses on the family and women that we can
see clearly the specific way feminism integrated with social
welfare ideology. I will argue that feminism has had a dramatic
impact on the social welfare discourse, especially within the
context of the themes of the family, women's roles, and women and
poverty. I will also argue, however, that while the changes in
these discourses are positive they are ultimately contained
within, rather than question, the familialist parameters of the
discourse.

To make this argument I will examine the discourse of the
period of the 1940s to the present. For the purposes of my
argument, I have broken this into three distinct periods: the
"pre-second-wave feminism" period of the 1940s to the early
1960s, the early period of transition towards a feminist
perspective (roughly the mid-1960s to the early 1970s), and the
period of consolidation of a feminist doctrine within the social
policy community of the mid-1970s to the present. I am
particularly interested in exposing the contrast between the
earlier and the later periods, although knowledge of the intervening period provides more of an understanding of where the changes took place in the discourse.

The 1940s to Mid-1960s: patriarchal familialism

The war and post-war period in Canada was a period in which fundamental questions concerning the kind of social security system Canada should have were debated. The Beveridge Report, Britain's plan for post-war reconstruction, was issued in 1942, and the Marsh Report on Social Security for Canada in 1943. There were also major reports issued in Canada on health and housing. The 1950s and early 1960s, however, were a time of piecemeal legislative reform, with each new piece aimed only at "filling the gaps" in the system (Guest, 1980). The Canadian Welfare Council (CWC) was the key player, along with federal and provincial governments, in the social welfare field. The CWC was mainly composed of professional, middle-class social workers and church people, who saw their clients in social-pathological terms, as "the problem family". There was no organized feminist movement at this time, although women's organizations like the YWCA (1883), the National Council of Women (1893), Federated Women's Institutes (1919), and the Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs (1930) had existed for some decades (Adamson et al., 1988; Burt, 1986). By the late 1950s and early sixties married women were increasingly entering the workforce and places of higher education, laying the material and
ideological basis for the rise in the mid-1960s of "second-wave" feminism (Adamson, et al., 1988).

The social welfare discourse of this period could be characterized in general as conservative and family-centric. It was steeped in the ideology of the traditional family. The family was viewed as crucial to individual fulfillment and for social stability. It was considered the most basic and essential unit of society.

It is one of our fundamental principles that the family is the basic unit of our society, and that anything which leads to an undermining of family life must be our concern individually and as a nation (CWC, 1956: 6).

This was the view held by the social work profession and the church, both major contributors on social welfare matters. The major goal of social work was bolstering the family "... to enhance its ability to perform as it should..." (The Imperial Order, 1947: 69). The church considered marriage and the establishment of a Christian home to be sacred, and

... when the family comes under bombardment by change, ... steps have to be taken to shore up its ranks in order to continue to transmit positive values... (Canadian Conference on the Family: 3).

The "keystone" of all welfare services was thought to be family social work (The Imperial Order, 1947: 69).

The dominant concerns of social welfare in the 1940s and fifties pertained to the breakdown of marriage and family life. Two situations in particular - namely, "desertion and "unmarried motherhood", - were considered major social problems by the social welfare world. "Desertion" was given consistent attention
by social welfare groups from the 1940s to the sixties. The CWC published papers on this issue in 1925, 1941, 1956, and undertook intensive studies of desertion in 1961 and 1968 (CWC, 1925; CWC, 1941; CWC, 1956; CWC, 1961; CWC, 1968).

The concept of desertion rested on the notion that wives and children were dependent on the husband/father, and he had a strict moral responsibility to provide for them. A mother’s primary responsibility was to care for the children and to cooperate with her earning husband in making a home for them. In the instance of family "breakdown", it was thought that the mother should continue to devote her energies to her children, if at all financially possible (Gourlay, 1948: 5). It was generally held that a home without two parents was "abnormal". When it was because of desertion, it was seen as particularly damaging to the home, resulting in severe physical and mental suffering by the wives and children (CWC, 1941: 1). The absence of the father was thought to contribute to delinquency in children, and an overall lowering in moral standards (CWC, 1925; CWC, 1941; CWC, 1956). It was consistently believed that children deprived of one or both parents would fail to acquire a sense of responsibility, and become unstable and delinquent parents in the future (CWC, 1925, :1; CWC, 1941:1; CWC, 1956: 5,7).

The "causes" of desertion were almost always located in the inadequacies and failings of the individuals afflicted, for example, lack of preparation for married life, incompatibility of character, alcoholism, and failure to administer the family
budget satisfactorily (CWC, 1956: 16). Deserted wives were not portrayed as innocent victims. Their inadequacies as wives and homemakers were often held as contributing factors in the desertion, and there was some stigma attached to the status of "deserted mother" (CWC, 1956: 17). Desertion by the mother was viewed as an even greater tragedy since the mother was seen as the "centre of the home". According to one commentator:

When she deserts, very often the husband has to sell the home and furniture and place the children. He frequently becomes discouraged, his efficiency at work decreases and he may start drinking or get involved with other women. . . The family ties are broken forever, and such children often become pre-delinquent or delinquent (CWC, 1956: 18).

The solution specific to desertion sought by social workers and social welfare groups in the late forties to mid-fifties was the strengthening and more vigorous application of the desertion legislation (Gourlay, 1948). It was thought that more effort should be made by the police to catch delinquent husbands and apply penalties. There was a concern that the "long-suffering public" should not have to tolerate maintaining or assisting a family while the father and husband evades his responsibilities.

This view held even into the 1960s. Another solution advocated at this time was "intensive casework". "With the co-operation of both partners, intensive casework has had good results keeping a home together" (CWC, 1956: 180).

Another major category that preoccupied the social welfare world of the 1940s and fifties was the "unmarried mother" (CASW, 1937; Isserman, 1948; CWC, 1957). This status was considered a breach of morality founded on the sanctity of marriage. It was
also seen as a problem because it created a unit that had no breadwinner. An illegitimate child was generally placed in a home or institution while the mother found "suitable" employment so that she could make payments on behalf of her child. Otherwise the child was normally placed for adoption. If the mother kept the child, she was considered to be possibly jeopardizing her opportunity for marriage and a normal life later on, and denying her child the opportunity for normal growth and development in a family group (CWC, 1957: 9-10). In the earlier part of this period, lapse of morality was stressed as a "cause". Other factors, included ". . . idleness, misuse of leisure time, lack of wholesome recreation, suggestive literature and moving pictures, immoderate use of alcohol and drugs, increased opportunity due to more social freedom, and financial difficulties which tend to delay marriage . . . " (CASW, 1937: 25). Later, "psychological" causes were emphasized, such as the past home-life of the mother, that resulted in difficulties forming good relationships; and unmarried motherhood was seen as a sign of her "inability to meet the pressures and responsibilities of adulthood" (CWC:1957, 5). A charitable, and less punitive attitude was advocated as long as the value of the "true family" was made clear. "[I]n short, while avoiding a punitive attitude towards unmarried parents we must make clear the value of permanent and indissoluble marriage over any other form of illicit union" (CWC, 1957: 3). It was advocated that unmarried mothers be covered by mother's allowance legislation to
make them eligible for assistance. Also recommended were social services specifically designed to meet their needs, such as maternity homes, foster homes, daycares, and counselling services. Counselling was an important component of the overall approach of social welfare groups to the problem. It was thought that unmarried mothers needed to be helped to adjust to their situation, and to make a decision about what would be done with the baby. That is, they could keep the baby and struggle along somehow, give the baby to relatives, put it in a foster home, or up for adoption. The solution generally considered most viable was adoption. Prevention was seen in "strengthening family life", including early moral training in the home (CWC, 1957: 24).

At this time women were not viewed as a separate category from family. They were mothers and homemakers and responsible for the physical and emotional aspects of raising their children.

The late 1960s and early 1970s: the period of transition towards a feminist perspective

The late 1960s and early 1970s was the period in which there was a "rediscovery" of poverty in Canada, and the emergence of a new attitude towards the poor. [3] These new findings were articulated in several major documents on poverty published in this period: The Economic Council of Canada's Fifth Annual Review, in 1968, the Canadian Welfare Council's Social Policies
for Canada, Part 1, in 1969; the Special Senate Committee (the Croll Committee) report on Poverty in Canada, in 1971, The Real Poverty Report, by four members of the Croll Committee's staff, the report of the Quebec Commission of Inquiry on Health and Social Welfare, in 1971, and the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in 1970. The issue of the guaranteed annual income was raised and debated as a possible solution. In 1970 the federal government published a white paper on income security which attacked the notion of universality. Then another white paper, Working Paper on Social Security in Canada in 1973, attempted to counter the residualism of the earlier report, and advocated an income support and supplementation strategy. The Canadian Welfare Council, which became the Canadian Council on Social Development in 1972, was still the most prominent non-governmental player in the field, although it was joined in 1970 by the Department of Health and Welfare's advisory body, the National Council of Welfare, which became very involved in the discussions.

The first signs of changes in attitude towards women and the family are evident in the social welfare documents of the 1960s and early seventies. It was in this period that, for the first time, women "as women" were made the object of attention and the concept of the "single parent family" was recognized. These changes coincided with the beginning of the emergence of the second wave of the women's movement in the late 1960s. An institutionalized feminist movement ("second-wave" feminism)
emerged in this period, stimulated by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, and the publication of its report in 1970. Briefs presented to the Commission on poverty by individual women and women's groups constituted one of the first "feminist" interventions into the politics of poverty. Feminists thus entered the social welfare discourse in this period and brought with them a new awareness concerning women and the family.

It appears that the social policy community was particularly ripe for a feminist analysis judging by its rapid response. As early as 1961, the CWC published an issue of its journal, *Canadian Welfare*, on the theme of "Women's Lives and Welfare" (CWC, 1961b). It delivered an explicitly "pro-women" message:

> Women must get rid of just-a-housewife attitude and resist the prevailing myths about their sex. And in concord with their menfolk, if they have any, they need to make self-respecting judgements and decisions about their place in the world, and hold to them without guilt, apology, or sentimentality (50).

Specifically, the issue attempted to enhance the respectability and validity of both the homemaker and earning wife roles, and to reinforce the notion that women had a right to choose between them. It argued that the work of homemakers should be recognized as "real" work. It countered concerns about the harmful effects of "working mothers" on children. It countered the fear that working women would threaten wage levels. This document also paid some attention to the case of the "single mother" on low income. The March 1961 submission by the CWC to the Special Committee of the Senate on Manpower and Employment also highlighted the category "women with dependents", arguing that
they constitute a special group which have a right to either paid employment or an alternative income which guarantees them a reasonable living standard.

By the mid-1960s a new orientation was evident with respect to the unmarried mother, which was compatible with the new valuation of women and the growing recognition of the mother and child unit as a legitimate group of its own. The new trend was to reject the notion of illegitimacy as a moral lapse, but to rather see it as a "choice" (even if foolhardy). There was a push to see the "unmarried mother" as fully capable of exercising her parental responsibility by taking care of her own baby (CWC, 1967). Social services were advocated to help unmarried mothers keep and care for their child (CWC, 1967: 9). There was encouragement to view the "unmarried mother" as just one variant of the "one-parent family", in the company of other variants - "widowed", "deserted", and "divorced mothers" (CWC, 1967: 11).

The last major study on desertion was prepared by the CWC in 1968 for the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. It focused principally on the deserted wife and the difficulties she faced in getting aid. This document went some distance in delegitimizing the very basis of desertion. It questioned the principle that wives are dependent on husbands. It questioned the doctrine that a wife demand maintenance from her husband as a first step in seeking aid (CWC, 1968: 53). It suggested that deserted mothers are a group "worthy" of receipt of benefits under a guaranteed annual income scheme or at least one that
should be guaranteed maintenance on behalf of the children, under the framework of the existing desertion legislation. The report also attempted to tackle the traditional tainted image of the "deserted mother", who, it was argued, should be treated with positive recognition and respect:

She should be given full credit for not abrogating her responsibility as a parent, as her husband did, she should be respected for the extraordinary responsibility she has assumed. . . (CWC, 1968: 80).

It also criticized desertion legislation for the double standard it imposed on wives and husbands. The deserted wife was required to remain chaste in order to continue to receive maintenance, while no such expectation was placed upon the husband.

Such legal sanction of the old "double standard" is not in accordance with modern thinking. It is a serious handicap in seeking to help a woman toward self-respect and a sense of personal worth (CWC, 1968:59).

In taking the onus off the husband as the sole provider of the family, this document helped establish an agenda in social welfare which made space for the principle of women's economic independence from men. It also laid the basis for the positive acceptance of the single parent family. The transformation, however, was only partial at this time. There continued to be an explicit assumption that the two-parent family is the norm, that it is best for the child, and that assistance should be provided by the state as a replacement for the missing parent.

The deserted mother should be supported by every possible means as a substitution for the fifty-per-cent parental responsibility which is not forthcoming from her husband (CWC, 1968: 80).

[A] child requires two parents for his full development, but
where one parent deserts, the state by necessity assists the remaining parent and clarifies the future role of the deserter (CWC, 1968: 82).

Indepth studies on the "single parent family" produced in the late sixties and early seventies validated the "single parent family" category but at the same time saw it as an aberration. [4] The lack of one parent made such families sad and handicapped groupings, facing special problems with respect to financing, child rearing, and the creation of a satisfying social and emotional life. These studies focused on the "experiences" of single parenthood. They presented sympathetic accounts of the problems and stresses involved. One of the concerns expressed was the effects on children, especially the effects of "fatherlessness". Guyatt's study provided the findings of studies of "fatherless children" which showed "... a misorientation toward the male role, uncertainty in behavior toward men and a series of conflicting attitudes towards men" (Guyatt, 1971: 6). It connected father absence with low motivation for achievement, low self-esteem and juvenile delinquency, especially in boys (7). A report by the CCSD was also concerned about "fatherless youngsters".

[0]n the whole it is sad that more relatives, neighbours and fellow-parishoners do not give more of their time to fatherless youngsters. In many two-parent families, Saturday is father's day. This is the day on which children go out with their dads to fish, play ball, buy the groceries and so forth (CCSD, 1971: 32).

These studies were interested in breaking down the prejudice that was attached to the various types of "one-parent families", 
especially "unmarried mothers", but also "separated" and "divorced parents". "[O]ne can only re-emphasize the great variety of one-parent families and urge all Canadians to lay aside their stereotypes and to recognize the emergence of a variety of family lifestyles" (CCSD, 1971: 123). There was a strong plea for special measures (i.e. financial aid and social services) to help the one-parent family "re-enter the normal stream of life" (Schlesinger, 1969).

The legitimization of the single parent family had gone on throughout the 1960s in the context of the discussion of poverty which had emerged as a vital concern and a dominant theme. The new trend was to identify community or institutional factors rather than social-pathological ones, responsible for creating the condition for poverty. The single parent family was conceptualized as an instance of crisis poverty in which the crisis was the sudden loss of a male breadwinner. By the late sixties the category increasingly appeared in discussions of poverty.

From a number of recent studies it has become apparent that the female head of a family with dependent children is in a particularly difficult position, and constitutes a major category in the nation's poverty group (CWC, 1969b: 12).
Mid-1970s to the Present: consolidation of a feminist doctrine within the social welfare discourse

By the early 1970s a new ideology emerged concerning the welfare state. [5] Social spending began to be seen as part of the problem - contributing to economic and social decline. Governments became focused on holding down social spending and rationalizing programs. There was a move towards greater "selectivity", or means-testing of benefits. As unemployment and inflation rose, more demands were being placed on the social welfare system. The social policy community took the shape it holds today. (Recall chapter three.) It became engaged in the defence of welfare state against gradual decline. It had relatively little influence on policy development. Organizations like CCSD and NCW were key actors in the community, joined by NAPO in 1971. By the mid-1980s three "core" social policy groups (CCSD, NCW, NAPO) and two women's groups (NAC and CACSW) had joined forces as the Social Policy Reform Group, to attempt to influence the federal social policy agenda. Beginning in this period social welfare organizations began to produce reports that reflected women's issues. NCW issued Women and Poverty in 1979, One in a World of Twos, (on single-parent families), in 1976, and In the Best Interests of the Child, (on child poverty) in 1979. The CCSD published a handbook for women, Women in Need, in 1976. The issue of pensions for homemakers became central in the late

The social welfare discourse on women and the family of this period is profoundly different from the one of the "pre-feminist" period. Family breakdown no longer has the same degree of negative moral overtone – it is just something that happened. It is no longer seen as a disaster for all concerned, not even for the children. "The reality is that [single parents] have no intention of avoiding their parental responsibilities or allowing their families to disintegrate" (NCW, 1976: 12). By the 1970s the significance that had been attached to the unwed marital status of single mothers had dissolved. The problem had become the unpreparedness of some mothers for raising children (i.e. the problem with the "single adolescent mother"). The "deserted mother" was no longer a category of concern. "Divorce, widowhood, desertion, separation, unwed parenthood – these are all the circumstances that create one-parent families. Few people expect these things to happen to them. . ." (NCW, 1976: 4).

A strong element of the new family ideology of the 1970s was the rejection of the idea that there is a norm, and acceptance
that there exists a plurality of family types.

There is no longer nuclear or extended [families], but also blended, reconstituted and . . . other complex forms. . . (SPCMT, 1985: 12-13).

It is important that social policy recognize the myriad forms of family, encompassing varied styles of life and living arrangements (SPCMT, 1983: 4).

Social policy therefore should not privilege one particular form of the family.

[Public policy and programs should not be developed and implemented to define an 'ideal' family, nor to distinguish characteristics which would favour one 'type' of family from another. Rather, the validity of all family types in our society should be recognized. . . (SPCMT,1983: 29).

The concept of the single parent family played an integral role in this challenge. There was an attempt to shake the privileged position of the two-parent family. It was seen as a "cruel myth" in the face of the existence of large numbers of "one-parent families" (i.e. 10% of all families in Canada in 1976) (NCW,1976: 1).

Women are now an object of attention as "women". They are no longer defined solely on the basis of mothering. "One must remember that mothering children is but one limited stage in a woman's life cycle. . . " (SPCMT,1976: 78). Poverty had come to be seen as a "women's issue":

If all females in all family units were counted, the profile of poverty would reveal how women represent the majority of the poor (SPCMT, 1981: 38).

The problem of poverty associated with the single-parent family and elderly widows had become a problem of gender inequality and subordination. It was recognized that these categories of people
were poor because women were poor. Women's poverty had been defined as a consequence of the traditional family mind-set with its assumptions about women's dependency and their roles as mothers and homemakers.

It begins with the way we have traditionally raised girls in our society. We have not allowed, or encouraged, young women to choose from a variety of options in terms of careers and lifestyles. Young girls have been expected to take their place as the homebound mother in the average Canadian family myth. . . . This traditional upbringing has prevented young women from being financially self-sufficient and independent (NCW, 1976: 6).

The foundation of the great financial vulnerability of women is the belief that most of them will always have a father or husband on whom they can count (NCW, 1979: 51).

Women's poverty was also seen as a consequence of the discrimination they suffered in the labour market - segregated into traditional fields, hired into dead-end positions, and paid lower wages - and they were poor because they lacked and were deprived of affordable housing and daycare services. The solutions to women's poverty invoked a whole agenda for bringing about sexual equality, in education, in the labour market (through the adoption of equal pay and affirmative action policies), and in marriage, and by fighting for more daycare and affordable housing (NCW, 1979; CCSD, 1976). The discourse also reflected policy debates about women generally, such as "wages for housework" and "pensions for homemakers" (Collins, 1978: 126; NCW, 1984).

By the same token, by the late 1970s gender analysis had become integral to the discourse on poverty where the single parent family and elderly widows (both read as "women") had
become stereotypes. For example, the National Council of Welfare's 1979 report on women and poverty criticized the Special Senate Committee on Poverty for its failure to take gender into account: "It apparently did not occur to the Senate Committee to add up a few of its figures to find out the relationship between sex and poverty in this country" (NCW, 1979: 1). Reports on poverty of the mid-1970s put the "single parent family" front and centre: "[T]he most exceptional trend has been that associated with sex of head" (C-P, 1975: 14); "The dramatic levels of poverty in female-headed single-parent (mother-led) families should be of special concern" (SPCMT, 1976: 72); "$A$ program aimed at reducing the "causes" of poverty would do well to take into consideration those factors involving female-headed families" (CCSD, 1983). Elderly "widows" also received a good deal of attention: "Clearly the picture of poverty among unattached individuals is one of the elderly" (CCSD, 1975: 23); "[P]overty is becoming overwhelmingly associated with women - younger single-parent mothers and the elderly widowed" (CCSD, 1984: 63).

Gender analysis is now standard in discussions of poverty. The single-parent family continues to be a focal point. For example, in its 1986 series of documents, the Canadian Council on Social Development pointed out that "[s]ingle women with young children now make up 30 per cent of all poor families in Canada. The chance of their being poor is astonishing - 60 per cent" (CCSD, 1986: 2). Its 1989 version of the Canadian Fact Book on
Poverty also closely examined "lone-parent families" [CCSD:1989]. They are seen, along with "unattached individuals", as seriously disadvantaged as compared to two-earner households, as second earners are viewed as crucial for keeping poverty at bay (CCSD,1989: 92). This analysis is attentive to the implications for women: "The growing trend toward two-earner households places a disproportionate hardship on women, and their share of poverty has risen" (CCSD,1989: 92).

Critique:

In one sense the social welfare discourse is now a "feminist" discourse. It challenges the idea of the traditional male breadwinner family and establishes women's right to pursue economic independence. While there was a prompt and substantial response to feminism, however, there remains a significant element of continuity between the "old" discourse and the "new" one. Even though today's social welfare discourse questions the traditional model of the family, it does not question the idea of the family. "The family" still occupies a hallowed place in social welfare discourse. The discourse is still steeped in rhetoric about the importance of the family and family life and the need to support it.

We are concerned that family life is being negatively affected as a result of prevailing values in our society which stress competition, private gain as against public gain, power and dominance and material benefits. We need to
stress values which underlie healthy family life (SPCMT, 1983: 30).

Many, if not most, social policy groups view support of the family as a fundamental principle around which the entire welfare system ought to evolve.

NCWC recognizes that many changes are taking place in the family structure and that policies must be adapted to new concepts. Nevertheless these adaptations must not be allowed to overshadow the fact that the old structure is still very prominent and that it provides some much needed functions that would be difficult to replace. . . (NCW, 1985:7,8).

The Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto believes that family is the basic institution and cornerstone of our community (SPCMT, Sept. 1983: 26).

The social assistance system must support and strengthen the integrity of family life while remaining sensitive to the needs of individual family members who may be at risk (Ontario Social Assistance Review Committee, 1988: 19).

Despite the claim that there is no longer a standard ideal family that we should all aspire to, the discourse does in fact present a certain ideal for private life. The NWC's 1990 report on women and poverty, Women and Poverty, Revisited, is representative of current views on women and family within the progressive social policy community. It rejects the rigid male breadwinner norm and promotes economic equality for women. While its support for a particular vision of the family is not explicit, embedded in its discussions are certain assumptions which implicitly construct a particular view of family life. For example, heterosexuality is presented as desirable and the norm. This effect is achieved via references to "men and women" - "Unless things improve, many young women and men could remain
unattached... because they cannot afford to get married and have children" (94). It is also visible in its silences: it does not refer to homosexual couples. It reflects the view that motherhood is desirable. The argument is made, for example, that women turning their backs on motherhood constitutes a serious social threat (53). But it is a particular type of motherhood that is being extolled - motherhood in the context of a familial relationship, not "unmarried" motherhood, or "lesbian" motherhood, or "teenage" motherhood. The discussion also repeatedly ties the raising of children to "families", or in other words, it assumes that families or marriage-like living arrangements are the best "place" to raise children. There is an implicit downgrading of the raising of children outside of a parental context, placing the ties that parents have with their children above all other ties (such as those with the state or society at large). What emerges from this discourse is the construction of a new, improved model of the family. The new family is two-parent, heterosexual, and with the paramount responsibility of raising children. It is not all that different in structure from the old patriarchal model, except that there is a call for a more equal sharing of responsibilities and power.

The vision of the post-patriarchal family is repeated in the latest constructions of the poverty issue. For example, a number of social policy organizations have joined forces in order to have the issue of "child poverty" placed on the political agenda. [7] This discourse is replete with rhetoric on the family.
While it takes a flexible, liberal approach toward the meaning of family, the bottom line is that the family remains the place for raising children. Within this discourse the family can be read as adults, which can be read, in turn, as parents, who have responsibilities to raise their children, as in the following:

Families come in all shapes and sizes. Perhaps the most important thing they do is raise children. . . . Families nurture our next generation (Canadian Child Welfare Association, et al., 1988); and

Parenting is a source of personal fulfillment for many men and women. . . . (Canadian Child Welfare Association, 1988: 1).

Another recent line of argument in the discourse - that the best protection against poverty and low-income is two earners for every household - invokes this model of the family. The 1989 edition of CCSD's Canadian Fact Book on Poverty presents the view that "... the presence of a second earner has been an effective defence against poverty " and stresses the vulnerability of those households that are not able to provide more than one earner (CCSD, 1989: 92). On its own, this argument is neutral with respect to the family. Given the overwhelming preference in the discourse in favour of heterosexual couples and parenting, however, this statement can be readily interpreted as prescribing the two-parent family arrangement.

In what way is the post-patriarchal vision of the family still a "familialist" discourse? It has the good intention of overturning traditional patriarchal relations within private life. Nevertheless, it still constructs an ideal family. Any ideal necessarily creates excluded categories. In the attempt to
construct a new family there is an implicit devaluation of non-conforming arrangements such as single-parents, children without parents, same gender parents. These categories become second best, less desirable, more suspect. While on the surface the discourse has diluted the moralistic content that was part of the old discourse (i.e. in the old discourse, the deserted mother and the unmarried mother were disreputable characters) as long as there are excluded categories there is still an element of moral prescription. While today's discourse has assigned greater respect and legitimacy to the category of single-parent than in the past (owing to feminism), it is still, in accordance with the new ideal, an aberration or pseudo family.

The underlying message is that no one should "wish" to be a single-parent, it is something that "befalls" a person. Such a bias is illustrated by the recent tendency in the discourse to focus on the social-pathological or psycho-social attributes of single-parent mothers. The 1989 Canadian Fact Book on Poverty (CCSD, 1989), the 1990 NCW and CACSW reports on women and poverty all focus on the "personal characteristics" of lone-parent mothers (i.e. their lack of education and youthfulness) in search of greater understanding of why poverty exists. While this approach runs counter to the philosophy of taking the blame from individuals and placing it on social structures it is consistent with the implicit bias in the discourse against non-two-parent households.
Yet there is not even a unilateral replacement of the patriarchal family with a post-patriarchal one. Rather the two visions seem to co-exist within the discourse, contributing to the mystification of the term "family". The old style familialism is especially evident within the sub-discourse on women and poverty. Gender analysis had become integral to the discourse on poverty in the 1970s. It had been recognized that women's poverty is a consequence of the discrimination they suffer in the labour market. At the same time however, the concern over "women and poverty" became caught up in an analysis - the "feminization of poverty" - which in many ways is a continuation of the familialist conceptions of the 1940s and fifties.

The "feminization of poverty" has become a catch phrase in social welfare discourse and a dominant analysis in the women and poverty discourse (i.e. "Poverty in Canada today does indeed have the face of a woman, and feminization is poverty's outstanding feature" (CCSD, 1984: 22)). It attempts to explain the increasingly greater share of poverty being held by single-parent mothers and their children on the grounds that more and more women have entered the ranks of single-parenthood. In the latest NCW and CACSW reports on women and poverty, women's poverty is still partly "explained" in terms of the traditional "feminization of poverty" mentality, epitomized by the expression "a woman is just one man away from poverty".
The only safeguard which stands between most married women and poverty is their husbands' incomes. When this protection fails because the husband cannot earn enough, because the marriage breaks down or because the husband dies, women who spent many years of their lives raising children run a very high risk of falling into poverty (NCW, 1990: 3).

... poor women are found in all types of family situations, but ... women's risk of becoming poor greatly increases when they do not have a husband or a father to support them (NCW, 1990: 14).

Much of women's poverty is associated with marriage breakdown and single parenthood (CACSW, 1990: 210).

Such an analysis leads, in both documents, to the protectionist recommendation of strengthening spousal and child support policies (through payments advanced by governments to an ex-spouse and recovered from the estranged spouse). Consistent with this approach is imagery of women as victims - of the injustices of the labour market, and of men. For example:

What we found was that women are still extremely vulnerable to poverty for reasons almost totally beyond their control. The main causes are childcare responsibilities, labour market inequalities, marriage breakdown and widowhood (NCW, 1990: 2).

While the feminization of poverty might be accurate as a "description" of the fact that more and more women are becoming poor as a result of having to support themselves and their children, as an "analysis", it implicitly assumes the traditional breadwinner model of the family as the norm. Johanna Brenner has argued that this approach "links women's poverty primarily to men's failure to support their families" (Brenner, Dec 1981, 452). Women's right to state support is justified by their lack of a male breadwinner. It reinforces the view that women have
the "right" to be supported by men.

Overall then, feminism has had a profound impact on the social welfare discourse. The demands of the women's movement, however, have been formulated within the terms of the prevailing "universe of political discourse" characterized by the dominant familial ideology. Feminism seems to have been integrated into the discourse by revising and revamping the familial categories in the discourse where women already existed ("deserted mothers", "unmarried mothers") rather than shifting focus away from the "husbandless household" as a prime category of concern, and in so doing, challenging familial ways of thinking. It has altered the notion of family (i.e. with the "new", "post-patriarchal" family) without challenging its essentiality. The familialism of the social welfare discourse is a closed system. The definition of poverty as an income and household-based concept contributes to the familial underpinning of the discourse, and vice versa. Under these ideological conditions, an individually-based notion of poverty would not be recognized as feasible, and no "reasonable" actor would put it forward. In this sense, feminist politics within the field of social welfare policy has been transformed by the discourse as much as it has transformed it.
NOTES

1. See, for example, CCSD Fact Books on Poverty, 1983 and 1989.

2. This point is to be developed below.

3. For the social policy developments of this period I relied extensively on Guest, 1980.


5. Allen Moscovitch has written on the changes that have taken place in the Canadian welfare state between 1975 and 1986, see Moscovitch, 1986.

6. For more on the "great pension debate" in Canada, see John Myles, 1988.

7. The seven social policy organizations that have joined forces over "child poverty" include the Canadian Child Welfare Association, the Canadian Council on Children and Youth, Canadian Council on Social Development, the Canadian Institute of Child Health, the Child Poverty Action Group, Family Service Canada, and the Vanier Institute of the Family.
CHAPTER FIVE

Summary of Argument and Recent Developments

The question this thesis addressed is why the feminist movement in Canada has not forcefully demanded disaggregation as it pertains to the social welfare system, making the individual, and not the family the basic unit of application for social benefits.

Part of the explanation certainly lies in the fact that feminists remain divided over the best approach to securing a better life for women - whether to pursue a strategy of "different than, but equal to" men, or one of "fair field and no favour". Yet it is also important to recognize that it has to do with the place of organized women's groups in the relevant social policy community, and the ideological parameters that the prevailing universe of political discourse imposes on them.

Women's groups occupy a relatively peripheral position in the social policy community. This policy community is just one of several across which women's groups operate. While both women's groups and progressive social policy groups benefit from each other's existence, the balance of power is such that women's groups must use the voice of social welfare groups to give credibility to their positions in this area. Progressive social
welfare organizations are crucial allies in getting the concerns of women placed on the social welfare agenda. The women's movement in Canada has been caught up in a universe of political discourse that has been shaped in large part by organizations like the CCSD, NCW, NAPO, Vanier Institute, and the like. Throughout the 1970s and 80s, feminism had a certain transformative effect on the discourse - that is, to the degree that the discourse has largely incorporated the overall perspective and the key demands of the institutionalized feminist movement. At the same time, however, this integration occurred in a way that did not challenge the essential parameters of the prevailing discourse. Despite the insertion of new ideas pertaining to women and "the family", the social welfare discourse remains immersed in familialism. It assumes the family as a desirable arrangement for personal life and as necessary to the continuity of social and economic processes. This ideology is powerfully reinforced by the universally-held definition of poverty in Canada which defines the family household, and not individual people, as the fundamental unit of analysis. Thus, the women's movement has shifted the social welfare discourse in a feminist direction, but has not led toward a questioning of the overall familialist framework. An all out demand for disaggregation would not be recognized as appropriate or feasible within this particular universe of discourse and there could be a tendency to ignore any actor that advanced such a demand.

Institutionalized feminist organizations such as NAC and
CACSW have an oblique relationship to the issue of poverty. Poverty forms the context or backdrop to most if not all women's issues. Poverty is a basic condition of life for many women. It is usually touched on, for instance, in the context of the discussion of women and the economy. Yet these organizations produce little of their own analyses of poverty. Apart from the chapter on poverty in the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in 1970, and the recent report on women and labour market poverty, there have been very few other substantial documents on poverty issued by these organizations (Royal Commission on the Status of Women, 1970; CACSW, 1990). The new report on poverty focuses on "working poor" women. On the one hand, it represents a step forward in the approach to poverty and women in that it "... emphasize[s] the importance of the labour market as a first line of defense in fighting the poverty of both women and men" (CACSW, 1991: 224). On the other hand, it does not break with the conventional familialist analysis of poverty found in other social welfare documents described in the previous chapter (such as the NCW's reports on women and poverty). It continues to rely on the "a woman is just one man away from poverty" analysis (20). It focuses on the category of the single-parent and the "multiple barriers" (which can be read as "personal inadequacies" they face) (22); and it looks to changes in family law pertaining to the disposition of family property and spousal income maintenance as one of the solutions to women's poverty (210).
Being caught up in the prevailing discourse, however, has not meant that feminist organizations and individuals in Canada have been totally silenced on the issue of family-based assessment criteria. As I noted in chapter two, feminists were unequivocal in their condemnation of the proposals of the Macdonald and Forget Commissions for an income supplementation program using family income for assessment purposes, in 1985 and 1988 respectively. Nevertheless, it appears that this response has emerged only when there has been a threat to an individual-based program (e.g. the UI program) or when a new family-based program such as an income supplementation or GAI program is being considered.

Margrit Eichler has spoken out strongly over the last two decades in support of an individually-based social security system. [1]

. . . in order to come up with more equitable policies, we need to avoid any programs geared towards family units and have — always and under all circumstances — the individual as our administrative unit (Eichler, 1983: 126).

Even Eichler, however, couches her demand in familialist rhetoric. She reassures us that she is not trying to undermine the family as a "social" unit, and sees her recommendations as ultimately more supportive of "families" (albeit defined as any sort of living arrangement) than the present family-based system.

Gradually the social policy community has been moving closer to recognizing this issue as a legitimate one. Several social
PM-1 3\(\frac{3}{4}\)"x4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT

\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
0.25 & 0.4 & 0.6 & 0.8 & 1.0 \\
\hline
2.5 & 2.2 & 2.0 & 1.8 & 1.6 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
policy documents in recent years have raised the question of whether programs should be family-based or individual-based. The Ontario Social Assistance Review Commission (SARC) argued that we cannot assume that poverty is only an inter-family phenomenon, as CACSW did in its report on women and labour market poverty:

All family-based measures of economic deprivation assume economic equality within the family. . . . It is also assumed that the consumption of goods bought with family income is equal by all family members. These assumptions are largely unverified (CACSW, 1990: 12).

In some recent cases, policy proposals have been advocated using the individual as the basic unit. For example CCSD's "Work and Income for the Nineties" (WIN) project in 1986-87 put forward a proposal for a core income security plan (a guaranteed income) which is geared to individuals. The authors seem to reflect an awareness that this change is important as a step in achieving greater independence for women.

. . . a major consideration in the design of a reformed income system is the protection of the enhanced economic status and growing economic independence of women. It is no longer widely accepted that income support and supplementation should be based on household (family) as opposed to individual circumstances and income (CCSD, 1987: 11).

Other reports which have proposed individual-based systems include that of Newfoundland’s Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment, and Michael Wolfson’s proposal for a GAI (Newfoundland Royal Commission, 1986; Wolfson, 1986). Leon Muszynski, co-author of Women and Labour Market Poverty for CACSW, has also recommended that the individual be the basic unit of account for determining poverty, using feminist arguments that
our current family-based theory of poverty is inadequate
(Muszynski, 1989: 26):

The advances made by feminist theory and research in
understanding the politics of family life should alert
us to the fact that any theory of poverty needs to
recognize the pitfalls of assuming equality within
families (21).

Thus there are signs in recent years of a new willingness to
question the traditional concept of poverty.

While this issue is receiving more acknowledgement within
the social policy community, however, there is still considerable
ambivalence surrounding it. The SARC Report reasoned that an
individual-based system would, by ignoring family income, ignore
the "fundamental principle" of need. It also dismissed it on the
economic grounds that it would be "prohibitively expensive"
(SARC, 1988: 161). While the authors of the CACSW's report
acknowledge that the conventional family-based concept of poverty
is problematic, they continue to use it as the basis of their
analysis, arguing that there is a lack of data on intra-family
income distribution and that there is not yet "a consensus" on
the need to develop an individual-based poverty measurement
(CACSW, 1990: 12-13). CCSD supported disaggregation in its WIN
proposal but cast it in terms that do not challenge the existing
ideological framework of the discourse on poverty. Despite their
reference to the "growing economic independence of women" the
explicit purpose of the "shift to an individual accounting base"
was to prevent a "tax on marriage".

Individual accounting removes the financial incentive
to split, since each individual receives the same
amount in either case (CCSD, 1987: 11).
The reform is presented as something that "would strengthen families" and "should not be interpreted as undermining or implying a loss of confidence in the family unit" (CCSD, 1987: 11-12). There is no real recognition or appreciation on the part of these analysts of the long-term radical implications of disaggregation as feminists have analyzed them — i.e. that it would bring about a structural change that would free women from financial and personal dependency on men, and loosen the ties between marriage and the labour market thereby undermining the social designation of women as "secondary workers". Their rationale for supporting disaggregation has nothing to do with fostering positive values such as individual autonomy or independency. Thus support for this reform would appear to be tenuous. One would not be too surprised if these authors changed their position on this issue in the future.

At the same time the Canadian state seems to be taking an even greater interest in family unit based programs. As noted in chapter two, the 1985 proposals of the Macdonald Commission for transforming the income security system suggest that the current government is leaning in the direction of forcing the ties between family status and labour market status. In recent years, one of the goals of the federal government has been to integrate the tax and transfer systems. One of the issues to be studied is whether the tax system should treat the family as the filing unit rather than the individual, as is now the case (House of Commons,
The analysis presented here should not be interpreted as criticism of the women's movement. The goal of this thesis is to help explain the forces constraining feminism in the area of social welfare policy. Nor should this thesis be seen as necessarily pessimistic concerning the possibility of achieving meaningful change. As Jane Jenson has argued, there are times when the prevailing universe of political discourse can be successfully challenged by forces seeking to alter its boundaries. In the current juncture we see a relative openness towards the issue of individual-based social programs on the part of the social policy community, and a reconsideration of the issue by the federal government. Given these developments, the time may be ripe for a strong feminist intervention. For this to occur there would first need to be clarity within the women's movement concerning the value of this approach and a renewed consideration of "where we've come" and "where we want to go" with respect to the social welfare system in Canada. It is my hope that this thesis has contributed to this discussion.
NOTES

1. See, for example, Eichler, 1988 (originally published in 1983).
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Burton, Clare (1985) Subordination - Feminism and Social Theory, (Sydney: George Allen and Unwin).


Canadian Association of Social Workers, Manitoba Branch (1937) The Unmarried Mother in Manitoba, (Ottawa: CWC?).


Canadian Welfare Council (1941) Some Problems in Family Maintenance, Desertion, etc. Together with Summaries of Relevant Dominion and Provincial Legislation, (Ottawa: CWC).


Canadian Welfare Council (1957) Social Services for Unmarried Parents, (Ottawa: CWC).


Canadian Welfare Council (1967) "Changing Social Policy in Relation to the Unmarried Mother", paper delivered at Community Seminar on Services to Unmarried Parents, Nov. 4, by George Caldwell, (Ottawa: CWC).


Canadian Welfare Council (1969b) *Submission to the Special Senate Committee on Poverty*, (Ottawa: CWC).


Eichler, Margrit (1988) *Families in Canada Today - Recent Changes and Their Policy Consequences*, (Toronto: Gage Educational Publishing Co.).


The Imperial Order, Daughters of the Empire, Alberta Provincial Chapter (1947) *Welfare in Alberta*, (publisher unknown).


McIntosh, Mary (1979) "The Welfare State and the Needs of the Dependent Family" in *Fit Work for Women*, edited by Sandra Burman, (Canberra: Croom Helm Ltd.).


Newfoundland Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment (1986) Building on Our Strengths, (St. John's).


