

WOMEN'S ISSUES AND

THE POLITICAL AGENDA

BY

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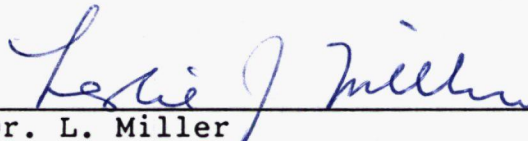
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ABSTRACT

The 1980's have witnessed the placement of women's issues onto the national political agenda. Since the late 1960's and early 1970's, a large number of women in Canada have become politicized around these issues. In the early 1980's, feminists played an important role in the politics of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and thereby in the entrenchment of the gender provisions in the Canadian constitution. The 1984 and 1988 federal elections saw women's issues receive special attention as the three major political party leaders debated women's issues. The dramatic climb of women's issues onto the political agenda is puzzling and invites explanation. This thesis looks to the theory of agenda setting for an answer.

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INTRODUCTION

WOMEN'S ISSUES AND THE POLITICAL AGENDA

The 1980's have seen the placement of feminist issues onto the national political agenda. Since the late 1960's and early 1970's, a large number of women in Canada have become politicized around issues that are referred to as "women's issues". These women, who are identified as feminists, have organized into groups that lobby for public policies that address the problems of women. The term "women's issues" refers to a wide range of issues and policies such as child-care, affirmative action, pornography, equal pay for work of equal value, divorce and family law, and abused women and children. Feminists have been able to push these issues onto the national political agenda. In the early 1980's, feminists played an important role in the politics of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and thereby in the entrenchment of the gender equality provisions in the Canadian constitution. The 1984 and 1988 federal elections saw women's issues receive special attention as the three major political party leaders debated women's issues on national television.

The dramatic climb of women's issues to the top of the political agenda is puzzling and invites explanation. It suggests that the "women's vote" had come into its own, that politicians were finally becoming sensitive to the much heralded "gender gap" in voting participation, and were paying as much attention to the female vote as they had traditionally paid to the male vote. In fact, however, studies have shown that although women have become politically more active in recent decades, this activity has not taken the form of women making their electoral choices based on women's issues. In this sense, there has been no appreciable gender gap. How, then, to explain the significance of women's issues?

This thesis looks to the political science literature of "agenda setting", particularly as it is expounded by Roger Cobb and Charles Elder, for help in answering this important and interesting question. Chapter One sets out "agenda setting" theory. Chapters Two and Three describes the emergence of women's issues as matters of public concern and policy initiatives in recent Canadian politics. More particularly, Chapter Two describes the socio-economic changes that "triggered" the politicization of women in Canada, while Chapter Three focusses on how women's issues have moved from the wider public agenda to the more specific formal agenda. The latter has not been through

the traditional brokerage parties of Canadian politics but through feminist lobby groups. There does not seem to be a "gender gap" in voting but rather feminists have pursued their agenda setting outside the channels of party politics. Once the description of the case study is complete, this thesis will then return to the models of agenda setting.

This thesis is important to the study of political science in Canada because it assists in the understanding of why governments formulate and implement certain policies. By focusing on the politicization of women, it adds to the growing literature on the subject as more research is needed to understand the effect women are having on Canadian politics.

CHAPTER ONE

AGENDA SETTING: THE FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

This decade has witnessed feminist or "women's issues" being catapulted onto the national political agenda. Feminists were the big winners of the 1981-82 constitutional reform and during the 1984 and 1988 federal elections, women's issues were given special attention by the three national political parties. The main purpose of this thesis is to determine how feminists succeeded in getting their issues onto the national agenda. This thesis is also about agenda setting and issue creation, using women's issues as an example. More generally, it seeks to understand why governments address certain issues while ignoring others. A secondary purpose of this thesis is to assess the agenda setting model as expounded by Roger Cobb and Charles Elder, and to determine both if it is applicable to women's issues and if the examination of women's issues sheds useful light on the model. The present chapter will begin by establishing the agenda setting theory or framework that will be used in subsequent chapters to answer the above questions.

PUBLIC POLICY: WHERE DOES AGENDA SETTING FIT?

Where does the theory of agenda setting fit into the public policy literature? Agenda setting flows from the study of public policy as a process which reacts to and attempts to solve problems. Public policy is generally defined as "a course of action or inaction chosen by public authorities to address a given problem or interrelated set of problems".(1) There are many different ways of studying public policy, and several major conceptual models have been developed: the incremental, rational and systems models are but a few of the models available to the student of public policy.(2) For this discussion, however, one of the major models that can be used in public policy analysis is the process model, which is a framework for analysis that views "the policy process as a series of political activities" and focuses on the activities involved in policy making.(3)

The public policy process can be organized into a sequential pattern of activity.(4) Pal categorizes the policy process into five stages: "i) problem definition or issue identification, ii) agenda-setting, iii) policy formulation, iv) policy adoption, and v) policy evaluation".(5) However, it is important to remember that although the policy process can be categorized into

separate stages, it would be folly to assume that the process in real-life proceeds "through a relatively orderly, rationalistic process...with each part tied logically to each succeeding part".(6) As Lindblom points out, one group's solution becomes another group's problem.(7) It is also important to remember that in real-life each stage blends into each other. The public policy process does not have a distinct beginning, middle and end. But for the purpose of this thesis, each stage will be viewed as separate. This will allow for an investigation of agenda setting as a separate phase.

THE THEORY OF AGENDA SETTING

In the past, policy analysts have tended to begin their analysis at the point at which an issue appears on the government's agenda.(8) Agenda setting theory moves the focus point of analysis to where the problem or "issue" appears. Anderson explains why an understanding of the agenda setting stage is important:

... if we examine why some conditions or situations in society give rise to policy problems and, in turn, why some of these problems reach the agenda and others do not, we can gain substantial insight into the operation of the political system. We will also acquire some understanding of how the unequal distribution of governmental benefits and costs in a society comes about.(9)

This point is important because the study of public policy, as a facet of political science, is about understanding what governments do, why they do it, how they do it, and how what they do affects society.(10) Agenda setting theory gives the political scientist/policy analyst an explanatory tool to understand why governments pursue certain problems and policies while ignoring others. While the theory of agenda setting is relatively new to the study of public policy, a body of literature is being developed in which three approaches have emerged. They are: 1) economic growth; 2) organizational behaviour; and 3) issue careers or issue cycles.(11)

The economic growth approach is based on the analysis of the rise in public expenditures.(12) This approach argues that the combination of pressure from interest groups, the low level of efficiency in the state sector and sophisticated methods of taxation "account for the growth in more discretionary public expenditures".(13) The economic growth approach has been criticized because it "only hints at the broad categories where increased expenditures are expected (i.e., the service sector) without specifying in more detail what issues or types of issues will experience increased expenditures".(14)

The organizational approach is based on the study of professional career patterns, professional associations and

how public servants behave in their policy-making roles. A government's "agenda setting occurs when high-level public servants act in their policy-making roles, roles which are, with rare exceptions, organizational".(15) Proponents of this model believe that agenda setting can only be determined by conceptualizing how organizations set their agendas.(16) The issue career or issue cycle approach, on the other hand, has its roots in interest group theory and conflict theory. Agenda setting is portrayed as the political process in which actors inside and outside the government compete for a place on the agenda. It is within this approach that Cobb and Elder's theory fits.

Which approach seems the most applicable for this thesis? The economic growth approach, by concentrating on government expenditures, is too narrow because it only looks at what issues are getting attention. While at the very least it could be argued that economic growth is important, it is by no means a way of determining how a policy was initiated. It does not explain why certain issues are put on or kept off the government agenda. Both the economic and organizational approaches ignore the importance of the public in issue creation and agenda setting. Issues do not always spring from "organizations" but can begin at a grass-roots level which in turn can become a social movement or group that gets recognition

from decision-makers. This attention can result in the government responding in a particular way. Governments do not operate in an organizational vacuum. Instead they operate in a climate of electoral democracy and are expected to be responsive to the wishes of the electorate.

The issues approach to agenda setting theory is concerned with how certain interests and issues become dominant while others remain latent or are ignored. This approach is applicable to this thesis because it offers a way of examining how and why issues arrive on the political agenda. In general terms, this thesis is interested in understanding how public policy has been affected by socio-economic and political change. In the next chapter, the changing socio-economic and political roles of women in Canadian society will be discussed. The theory of agenda setting will provide a framework for analyzing how major social changes can affect the political agenda of a society.

Marx offers another way of answering this question as he presents a general theory "of the ranking, or relations of dominance and subordination, in the potentially infinite array of interests that industrial society generates".(17) Marxism, however, is limiting because it is based on the concept of class. Marx looked at how economic and social conditions could affect political behaviour by creating

class interests and consciousness. He wrote in the 18th Brumaire in 1852:

The small-holding peasants form a vast mass, the members of which live in similar conditions but without entering into manifold relations with one another. Their mode of production isolates them from one another instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse.... In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class. In so far as there is merely a local interconnection among these small-holding peasants, and the identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond and no political organization among them, they do not form a class.(18)

In essence, Marx is saying that even though individuals may share similar social and economic conditions as well as the same interests, they do not form a class unless they have a class consciousness that transforms the class from a class-in-itself to a class-for-itself.(19) For this thesis to use a Marxian analysis in explaining how women's issues achieved political agenda status, it would first have to be established that women form a class, have a class interest and more importantly, that women possess a "class consciousness".

Do women form a class? Are they distinct from other groups in society? Do women have experiences that separate them from society? It is safe to state that there are

differences between men and women but "biological" differences do not constitute a class interest. What about the collective experiences of being female? While there is no doubt that women's lives have been radically altered since the turn of the century, these changes have not had the same effect on all women. There are cleavages present that go beyond gender and different interests among women. One group of women can have very different interests from other groups of women; middle class, professional women have different interests from lower class women based on income and lifestyles. Some feminists, however, argue that women do form a class and that there is a "feminist consciousness".

Ethel Klein boldly asserts that the radical change in women's lives - the integration of women into the labour force, increased education, contraception, increased life expectancy and the rejection of women's traditional role models - has created a feminist consciousness which in turn has created a mass movement.(20) Feminists, such as Klein, believe that women do form a class in and of itself and that feminism does represent the interests of all women. However, this could not be farther from reality. Witness the fact that the defeat of the American Equal Rights Amendment was engineered by a woman who skillfully argued that feminism did not represent her interests as a woman.

Or to use a Canadian example, if women do constitute a class, why the recent formation of anti-feminist groups such as Kids First and REAL Women? Marxist scholars would probably argue this point by stating that not all members of a class need to agree for a class consciousness to exist and, therefore, the existence of opposition groups does not negate the existence of class consciousness.

However, the concept of class in and of itself is based on shared experience and interest by all class members. While there are biological experiences that only women can experience (i.e. childbirth), once you move beyond biology, there is no one common interest that binds all women. Instead, some women have formed groups with other women who have similar interests to their own. One of these groups of women are the feminists. It is for this reason that a Marxian framework can not be used to explain why one group of women have had an effect on the political agenda.

While Marxism offers a theory of how issues are ranked according to class domination and subordination, group theory based on the foundation of pluralism argues that no one group or interest can dominate all the time. Group theory argues that it is natural for humans to associate with other humans who share the same interests and thus, the group is the most important unit in the social process.

Group theorists such as David Truman maintain that politics should be analyzed in terms of groups and how groups affect society.(21)

Groups act as a "filtering device" for information and transform grievances into issues. Group theory maintains that "politics is the sum total of the struggle between organized groups in an environment in which no one group or set of groups always determines the outcomes over time".(22)

...the total group struggle provides a basic source of public issues and prescribes the systemic agenda of controversy. As groups come into conflict with one another, issues are generated that may demand authoritative decisions. A primary function of government...is to manage group conflict. This is done through the use of legitimacy symbols coupled with authoritative actions of the government. Of course, the question still remains of why some issues come to be on the agendas of government while others are excluded. The main answer provided by the group literature is that those groups that are the strongest in some sense will determine what issues are going to be discussed. However, contemporary evidence indicates that that answer is still insufficient to explain the dynamics of agenda-building.(23)

Roger Cobb and Charles Elder use group theory and conflict theory as their basis for agenda setting. Cobb and Elder found group theory "suggestive" because it attempts to understand how groups interact and come into conflict, thereby creating issues that ultimately require

an official response from decision-makers. As well, they also observed that "control over or influence upon the process by which an issue comes to be placed on the governmental agenda is an important source of political power".(24) Cobb and Elder are not specifically concerned with the process involved in how groups get access to decision-makers or what techniques of lobbying are successful.(25) Instead, their attention is turned towards how issues, not groups, get access to the political agenda. While this may seem a little like trying to answer which comes first, the chicken or the egg, their position is understandable. As we will see in the subsequent section of this chapter, Cobb and Elder maintain that even though groups may create an issue, it is the issue that gets on the political agenda and thus warrants the attention of decision-makers. As Cobb and Elder note, the more important question is "how do group conflicts become transformed into public issues and come to be placed on the docket for authoritative decision-making"?(26)

Cobb and Elder seek to offer an explanation of how issues are created and why some issues gain the attention of decision-makers while others fall by the wayside. These are important questions because, as stated above, the ability to influence the political agenda is an important source of political power. In relation to this thesis,

this point is significant because one of the purposes of this thesis is to examine the success of feminists in translating their grievances into public policy issues and gaining the attention of politicians. Cobb and Elder offer a framework for answering these questions and the broader question of how social change can be translated into legitimate political action. The remainder of Chapter One will lay out the agenda setting framework that will be used by this thesis.

ISSUE CREATION AND POLITICAL AGENDAS

What exactly is an "issue"? Cobb and Elder define an issue as a "conflict between two or more identifiable groups over procedural or substantive matters relating to the distribution of positions or resources".(27) Cobb and Elder state that there are four ways in which an issue can be created.(28) An issue can be created by a group or individual who create an issue for their own gain, such as a person running for office who is looking for an issue with which to be identified. These people are categorized as "exploiters". Secondly, an issue can be initiated by unanticipated events such as the Ocean Ranger disaster, which sparked a re-evaluation of Canadian offshore safety policies. Thirdly, an issue can be created by people or groups who have nothing to gain for themselves. These

"do-gooders" initiate an issue for the "psychological sense of well-being for doing what they believe is in the public interest".(29) An example of this is famine relief. And finally, an issue can be manufactured by a group who believes that positions or resources are not fairly distributed. Cobb and Elder refer to these issue initiators as "readjustors". Feminists are "readjustors". Women's issues are based on the assumption that women are treated unfairly and do not have the same opportunities or resources available to them as men. Cobb and Elder maintain that a group behind an issue might include all four types of issue initiators. An example of this is civil rights legislation where some people support it for humanitarian reasons while others support it because they seek personal or collective gains.(30)

Agenda setting theory argues that certain events or "triggering devices" help shape issues.(31) Triggering devices can either be events internal or external to a political entity. The internal triggering devices can be categorized into five types: 1) natural catastrophe; 2) an unanticipated human event, like a riot or assassination; 3) a technological change in the environment that raises a new problem, like acid rain; 4) an actual imbalance or bias in the distribution of resources and positions; and 5) an ecological change like population explosion. External

triggering devices can be categorized into four types: 1) an act of war or military violence; 2) innovations in weapons; 3) an international conflict; and 4) a changing world alignment.

How does a trigger device create an issue? The creation of an issue is dependent on "the dynamic interplay between the initiator and the trigger device".(32)

... a mine disaster itself does not create an issue. Many times in the past such an event has occurred with no ameliorative action. A link must be made between a grievance (or triggering event) and an initiator who converts the problem into an issue for a private or a public reason. In a system perspective, the inputs consist of the initiator and the event, or triggering mechanism, that transform the problem into an issue.(33)

Thus, the triggering device or grievance is dependent on an initiator to transform it into an issue.

THE PUBLIC AND FORMAL AGENDAS

Cobb and Elder identify two types of agendas: the public (or systemic) agenda and the formal agenda.(34) The public agenda consists of issues that have a high degree of public visibility and interest. The formal agenda is the list of issues that the government has accepted for formal attention.

As we will see in the next section, an issue does not have to first appear on the public agenda before it can

appear on the formal agenda. Instead, an issue can first appear on the formal agenda and then be expanded to the public agenda. An issue appears on the formal agenda when government decision-makers pay serious attention to an issue and deal with it in specific terms such as identifying possible solutions.

Cobb and Elder identify three prerequisites for an issue to have access to the public agenda. First, there must be an awareness of or widespread attention to the issue. Secondly, a considerable number of society members must believe that some action is required. And thirdly, there must be a "shared perception" that this issue is a matter for governmental concern and falls within the government's jurisdiction. The public agenda is more general and the number of issues on the public agenda are not as limited as the formal agenda. The public agenda includes all issues that are perceived as meriting serious attention by the political community, a community which is much larger than the governmental community. The public agenda includes those items that are general and abstract in nature, that do little but identify a problem area. Solutions to the identified problem are not always discussed at the public agenda stage.(35)

THREE MODELS OF AGENDA SETTING

Roger Cobb, in collaboration with Jennie-Keith Ross and Marc Howard Ross, expanded the theory of agenda setting into three models. They are: 1) the outside initiative model; 2) the mobilization model; and 3) the inside access model. In the outside initiative model, an issue is first raised by a non-governmental group, which manages to get it onto the public agenda and then onto the formal agenda. The mobilization model occurs when an issue is initiated from inside the government and automatically receives formal agenda status. However, success is dependent on the issue being expanded from the formal to the public agenda because the government needs public expansion for its issue to be successful. In the mobilization model, the government tries to implement a policy by expanding the issue to the public. This ensures compliance of the policy. An example of this is the recent government policy initiative against drug abuse. In the third model, the inside access model, the issue is also initiated from within the government. But it is different from the mobilization model, as the decision-makers do not want the issue expanded to the public agenda. Rather they want the issue resolved privately.(36)

As will be demonstrated in later chapters of this thesis, these models are not mutually exclusive. However, as this point in the analysis it is necessary to analytically distinguish each of the three models so that each model can be understood. Each of the models will be analyzed in terms of four stages as identified by Cobb et al.: 1) initiation is the phase where a group translates a grievance into general terms; 2) specification is the phase at which the general grievance becomes a specific demand; 3) expansion is where the group with the grievance attracts the attention of decision-makers; and 4) entrance is when the issue moves from the public agenda to the formal agenda.

The Outside Initiative Model

In this model, the issue is initiated by a group from outside the government. The issue is expanded first to the public agenda and then to the formal agenda. The initiation phase involves the "articulation of a grievance in very general terms".(37) The organization at this phase is "highly variable" and individuals who share the same issue may or may not agree on other concerns surrounding the issue. The degree of visibility is also variable.

The next phase is specification. In this phase, general grievances are translated into specific demands.

Demands may or may not be made by individuals who have assumed the role or have been appointed to represent the group.

Members of groups which share grievances may or may not be united in their articulation of them. Diverse demands can be derived from a common grievance and may be expressed by various members of a group. Precedence for specific demands by a group may have more than one source. The group itself may or may not have experience with the articulation of demands; and the wider society to which demands are expressed may or may not have heard similiar issues expressed from other groups.(38)

Expansion is the next phase, in which the group with the grievance must attract the attention of decision-makers. This attention is vital to placement on the formal agenda. Cobb et al. maintain that this is achieved by expanding the issue to other groups and by linking the issue to pre-existing issues. They also point out that by reaching out to other groups, the initiators could lose control of the issue to more powerful groups.(39) In the next chapter we will see that during the first wave of feminism in the early 1900's, the suffragettes lost control of the issue to the social reformers. The social reformers redefined the issue of female suffrage from equality between the sexes to cleaning up the wickedness of Canadian society. Thus the first wave of Canadian

feminism never achieved what the initiators originally set out to do.

Issue expansion is a very crucial stage in the agenda setting process. Social conflict, which is the root of issue creation, does not occur in a vacuum. As Schattschneider writes:

Every fight consists of two parts: (1) the few individuals who are actively engaged at the center and (2) the audience that is irresistibly attracted to the scene. The spectators are as much a part of the over-all situation as are the overt combatants. The spectators are an integral part of the situation, for, as likely as not, the audience determines the outcome of the fight. The crowd is loaded with portentousness because it is apt to be a hundred times as large as the fighting minority, and the relations of the audience and the combatants are highly unstable. Like all other chain reactions, a fight is difficult to contain. To understand any conflict it is necessary, therefore, to keep constantly in mind the relations between the combatants and the audience because the audience is likely to do the kind of things that determine the outcome of the fight. This is true because the audience is overwhelming; it is never really neutral; the excitement of the conflict communicates itself to the crowd. This is the basic pattern of all politics.(40)

Who makes up the audience? Cobb and Elder identify four different groups who become involved in the conflict as the issue is expanded. The four groups are: the identification groups; the attention groups; the attentive public; and the general public.(41) To get each group involved,

different strategies are required as each group has a different level of interest and involvement in public affairs in general.(42)

The "identification groups" are the first to be mobilized by the initiators. Usually they support the initiator's position. People in the identification groups feel strong ties to the initiators and believe that their own interests will be served in the conflict surrounding the issue being raised. For feminists, the identification groups could include traditional women's organizations such as the Young Womens' Christian Association (YWCA).

However, because the identification groups are not likely to be large, the issue must be expanded to a wider public. The "attention groups" are the "groups in the population which are likely to be aware of a conflict early on, and which can be mobilized relatively rapidly whenever an issue enters the attention group's sphere of concern".(43) Other minority groups and civil liberties groups are examples of attention groups for feminist issues. Attention groups, like identification groups, are aware of a conflict long before it is visible to the general public but there is a difference between attention groups and identification groups.(44) Attention groups are focused around the issue while identification groups identify with the initiators.(45) The civil liberties groups

acted as an attention group when they joined feminists in the fight for an equality provision in the Charter of Rights. In the case of affirmative action, groups representing the other designated groups -- natives, disabled persons and visible minorities -- were both identification groups and attention groups. These groups identified with feminists because of their similar goals of representation in the labour force while at the same time supporting the specific issue of affirmative action because they had something to gain. Cobb et al. point out that because attention groups are "highly" interested in issues, they often become involved in a conflict regardless of the wishes of the identification groups and the initiators.(46) While the involvement of the attention groups may be a mixed blessing, they are still important for attracting attention to an issue and increasing public awareness. Sometimes expansion to the attention groups is all that is needed for an issue to get on the formal agenda.

In some cases, an issue must be expanded to the mass public before it can find a place on the formal agenda. The mass public is divided into two groups: the attentive public and the general public. The attentive public is the small part of the general population that is most informed and interested in public issues. But the attentive public is not a unified group and members can favour either side

of a conflict. Importantly, because they are likely to have strong opinions regardless of which side they are on, they are not likely to be persuaded by the other side once their minds have been made up. The general public is the last group to get involved in a conflict. Their interest can be short lived; "effective and sustained involvement of the general public in an issue is extremely rare".(47) But this does not downplay their importance to issue expansion. If an issue is defined broadly enough, the general public's involvement is critical to an issue being placed on the formal agenda.

Cobb and Elder warn that the general public will not always include the entire population:

In discussing the general public, we are dealing with a statistical artifact, since the entire public is not likely to be activated by any specific issue. It is unusual for a large segment of the populace to become involved. The general public will not necessarily be responsible to, or even aware of, an issue that received sustained media attention.(48)

Cobb and Elder consider an issue expanded to a "public" when the members of or substantial members of a public are aware of an issue and are either positively or negatively attracted to the conflict.(49)

Timing has an affect on issue expansion. Cobb and Elder assert that "issues that gain the attention of the mass public must be developed rapidly".(50) Issues that

develop slowly may achieve the visibility of the attention groups or the attentive public but they will probably fail in achieving the attention of the general public. However, an issue may take a long time to develop. This occurs when an issue is narrowly defined in the beginning. Often the merits of the issue thus defined are debated, only to find that emotions trigger broader definitions and thus issue expansion. Sometimes the issue appears to have burst on to the scene. Cobb and Elder maintain that "the quicker an issue can be converted into an emotional issue, the greater the likelihood that it will gain public visibility".(51) Cobb and Elder appear to fudge the timing issue as there are no specific timelines established within the models. They give no clues as to how long an issue has to be around for it to move onto the next stage. The issue of timing is one of the major weaknesses of the agenda setting model and it will be considered in more detail in subsequent chapters.

Cobb and Elder discuss how an issue can be prevented from expanding.(52) They identify two "strategies of containment": group-oriented strategies or issue-oriented strategies. A group-oriented strategy is one in which the focus is on the group or initiators. An issue-oriented strategy is when the focus is on the merits of the issue. An issue or group can also be attacked directly or

indirectly. A direct attack focuses on the merit or legitimacy of the issue or group while an indirect attack is when there is no direct confrontation of the group or issue.

A direct attack using a group-oriented strategy is to limit the appeal of the group. This can be done by discrediting the group or by discrediting the leaders of the group. This involves using language and symbols that categorize the group in a negative way. The women's movement and its leaders have been called lesbians and man-haters in an attempt to discredit them. Leaders of other groups are often accused of being involved in a cause for personal gain rather than a collective gain in an attempt to discredit the leadership of the group.

Indirect attacks on groups can be achieved either by an appeal to members of the group over the "heads of the leaders" or by co-opting leaders. Cobb and Elder cite as an example the U.S. Medicare advocates appealing to individual doctors in their conflict with the American Medical Association.(53) Co-opting leaders is a favourite tactic of governments. Group leaders are offered positions within the government structure. It is hoped that this will pacify any other group grievances or dilute the leadership strength of the group.

Issue-oriented strategies of containment are interesting because opponents recognize the issue as legitimate but deny that it requires urgent action. Indirect attacks on issues can involve decision-makers giving a group "symbolic rewards or reassurance". Cobb and Elder state that this can be done by allowing groups to demonstrate publicly on government property or by accepting a petition from a group. Another means is "showcasing" or "tokenism" which is similar to cooption. This is when a member of a group is put in a position to show to the other members of the group that the government or even a private business is "sensitive" to the group. An example of this is when during the early 1980's, oil companies in Canada hired native employment advisors to demonstrate to native groups that they took natives seriously. It was hoped that the natives would then not create a conflict when the companies wanted to drill on their land or use their land as a thoroughfare to the rigs.

Cobb and Elder also note that an issue can be contained directly through the governmental creation of a new organizational unit to deal with an issue. Another direct method is through anticipation. This is when a group's move is anticipated by the decision-makers who offer something before the demand is made in an attempt to

create a favourable climate of public opinion in the hopes that the group will accept less.

Indirect issue-oriented strategies include symbol co-optation, feigned constraint and postponement. Symbol co-optation is when opponents use the other side's symbols in their fight against an issue. Cobb and Elder cite the widespread use of the term "we shall overcome" by groups far removed from the civil rights movement. Feigned constraint is when a decision-maker use phrases like "I would like to help, but...." Postponement involves decision-makers taking a grievance "under advisement in an effort to seek out additional information".(54) This is a favourite strategy of Canadian governments. Numerous task forces and royal commissions have been established to acquire more information and/or to give the government advice on a sensitive issue.

The preceding discussion of issue expansion is crucial to understanding how some issues make it to the formal agenda while others do not. To expand, success is a function not only of what groups do, but also of how other groups and/or governments react. We now turn to the final phase in the outside initiative model of agenda setting - entrance.

If a group is successful in expanding their issue to the public agenda, the issue then becomes an item that a

large number of people believe deserves formal attention. Entrance is when an issue moves "from the public agenda to the formal agenda, where serious consideration of the issue by decision makers can take place".(55) Cobb et al. point out that the movement from public to formal agenda can take a long time especially if a formal decision will arouse substantial opposition from the general public. If a certain decision is sure to be controversial, a government will often refuse to give an issue formal attention.

There are four strategies that groups can use to expand an issue from the public to the formal agenda. First, a group may use violence or threats of violence. Second, institutional sanctions like withholding votes, money or work may be used. A third strategy is to use brokers such as interest groups and political parties. And fourth, a group might take advantage of direct access to decision-makers.

The method(s) a group chooses will depend on its position(s) in the society, the importance of the issue to the group, the length of time that an issue has remained on the public agenda without moving to the formal agenda; and the group's estimate of the probability of attaining a position on the formal agenda as a result of each strategy.(56)

When evaluating the outside initiative model, certain points must be taken into consideration. Is the type of issue threatening to the status quo? To what extent is the

group making the grievance isolated (and running out of options)? How long has it taken to expand the issue from the public to formal agenda?

Who uses the outside initiative model? Cobb et al. suggest that groups with minimum financial resources but with a large following tend to use this model and that it will be more prevalent in more egalitarian societies. However, they warn that formal agenda status does not guarantee that the final policy decision will accurately meet the original demands of the initiators. In fact, sometimes the policy is a modified version, or even an outright rejection of the initiator's position.(57)

The Mobilization Model

The mobilization model is used when a formal agenda item originates within the government. The formal agenda item has either been initiated by the decision-makers themselves or by individuals who have direct access to them. In order for the agenda item to be implemented, the issue must be expanded from the formal agenda to the public agenda.

Decision makers may lack the resources, institutional or financial, or both, to implement their policy without mobilization. Mobilization may be needed because in a given cultural context, coercion is [sic] inappropriate, impractical, or simply too expensive.(58)

As in the outside initiative model, the mobilization model is structured in terms of initiation, specification, expansion and entrance.

Initiation in the mobilization model begins with a statement of official government policy. Cobb et al. point out that within the government there is a great deal of debate before the policy is announced. However, the public is not usually aware of the debate. In this model, the political leader is the initiator. Cobb et al. maintain that this model is prevalent in political systems where there is a socio-economic gap between leaders and citizens or when the leaders are attributed with supernatural powers.(59) This is not to say, however, that this type of model does not occur in industrial democracies. One only has to look at the recent "war on drugs" of President Reagan, Prime Minister Mulroney and Alberta Premier Don Getty to find examples of this model in Western societies. Another Canadian example is the Trudeau government's 1980 National Energy Program. After introducing the policy, the Trudeau government tried to sell it to the provinces, the oil industry and the public.

Specification begins after the announcement when political leaders specify the terms of the policy:

Following the initial announcement political leaders and their associates begin spelling out what is expected of the public in terms of cooperation or support, materi-

al resources, work, or changes in behaviour patterns. Through specification the leaders hope to make the program clearer to the public, at the same time both building support and letting citizens know what is required of them.(60)

Expansion to the public agenda is important because public acceptance is needed for implementation and compliance. In the outside initiative model, the groups involved try to expand their issue to the public. In the mobilization model, political leaders need to expand their issue to groups within the public to gain support for their policy. "It is an attempt to draw additional participants into the effort to implement the program, as particular groups are shown how the program is relevant to them".(61)

The initiators (the political leaders) take the policy to the attention groups in the hopes of receiving support for the new policy. As well, private meetings are held and the policy is explained in terms of what the attention groups' role is in the implementation. At this stage, attention group leaders may or may not be coopted. The support of critical attention groups is crucial to the expansion of the policy to the public. Should these groups oppose the proposed policy, the mobilization effort could be seriously damaged. The attentive public is another important group during mobilization. Because the attentive public is well-informed, expansion to this group is easy

but it is difficult to predetermine what their reaction will be.

The presentation of a policy to the attentive public as well as to the attention groups is very important because these groups serve as the links between the government and the mass public. Their opinions could influence the opinions of the general public either for or against the government's policy. These two groups have to be actively involved in the acceptance of the policy for the expansion to be successful. Also critical to the expansion phase is the association of the new program with known emotional symbols, while presenting the symbols in a new way.

Entrance to the public agenda from the formal agenda occurs when a significant number of the general public recognizes the government's policy initiative as dealing with an important issue even though the public might not agree with the structure of the policy.

The Inside Access Model

The third model of agenda setting is the inside access model. This model is similar to the mobilization model in that the issue is initiated by the decision-makers themselves or by people with direct access to the decision-makers. In this model, the issue is usually given

immediate formal agenda status. It is different from the mobilization model in that the initiators do not want the issue expanded to the public and prefer that it is dealt with in a private way:

... expansion is aimed at particular influential groups which can be important in the passage and implementation of the policy, while at the same time, the initiators try to limit issue expansion to the public because they do not want the issue on the public agenda. Instead they seek a more "private" decision within the government, and generally stand to be defeated when the issue is sufficiently expanded to include public groups that might be opposed to it. Bureaucrats are also often afraid that the public will misunderstand a technical problem if it becomes a matter for public debate.(62)

In this model, the initiation and specification phases are dealt with at the same time. The "inside" group articulates a policy problem or a new policy proposal. This statement is aimed directly at government leaders and is followed by specific policy proposals.

However, despite their close ties to decision-makers, the initiators are not assured success because a number of inside groups present policy proposals at the same time to the government. Thus, it is often necessary for a "limited issue expansion" to occur. Cobb et al. argue that groups using the inside access model are more homogeneous than groups using the other two models and because of their privileged position in relation to the government, these

inside groups are close in background and status. The initiators turn to identification groups and "selected" attention groups for support. This limited issue expansion takes place in a private setting where positions are negotiated and administrative language is used. The attentive public will only be "dimly" aware of the issue and the general public will be totally unaware of the issue. It is believed that this process is preferable to a public debate where it is likely that the initiators will lose control of the issue.

An issue in the inside access model reaches the entrance phase when it receives formal agenda status. It does not have to be on the public agenda for entrance to be achieved. Cobb et al. point out that strategies for entrance do not include any violence or threats of violence. Instead direct access or brokers are used. Institutional sanctions may be used against those who do not support the policy but often the promise of special favours and "the payment of money to those who cooperate" are involved.(63)

CONCLUSION

The purpose of Chapter One has been to provide a conceptual framework for the theory of issue creation and agenda setting that will be used in subsequent chapters of

this thesis to determine how feminists succeeded in getting their issues onto the formal agenda and how they were able to translate their grievances into public policy issues. Three models of agenda setting have been laid out and this thesis will now discuss the emergence of women's issues. Chapter Two will describe women's changing socio-economic and political environment. The first part of Chapter Three will discuss the feminist lobby in Canada. Once the description of the case study is complete, the remainder of this thesis will return to the three models of agenda setting.

CHAPTER TWO

WOMEN AND THE PUBLIC AGENDA

INTRODUCTION

During the twentieth century, women have played an important role in the Canadian labour force. As more and more women began to work outside the home, they realized that they were capable of a variety of roles. However, women also realized that they were not being treated fairly in comparison to their male counterparts. This desire to be treated fairly, coupled with women's altered role image, acted as a catalyst in turning women to politics to achieve their demands for equality of opportunity in the labour market.(64)

Chapter Two provides an historical narrative of the changing role of women in Canadian society beginning with the suffragist movement and ending with the contemporary feminist movement. This chapter will argue that the changes in women's socio-economic status have had an effect on women's political participation.

SUFFRAGISTS OR SOCIAL REFORM: THE FIRST WAVE

Feminism is a political ideology based on the belief "that men and women should have equal roles in society and that women have been denied support within the home and access to the marketplace because of discrimination and inadequate social institutions".(65) The evolution of feminism can be divided into two waves. The emergence of the women's movement during the late 1960's and the early 1970's is considered to be a second wave of feminism in the twentieth century. The first wave came with the fight for female suffrage.(66) The Canadian suffrage movement, however, was part of a larger Christian reform movement, and not a movement unto itself. The reformers argued that female suffrage would clean up society because women would vote for politicians who would support laws in the areas of health, education, and child protection, thus protecting family and homelife. It was also hoped that women would be morally influential. This was especially evident in the alliance between the prohibition groups and the suffragists.(67) The major champion of female suffrage was the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) which campaigned for prohibition and the vote for women because they believed women would vote for prohibition.

The majority of Canadian suffragists fought for the vote, not because they believed men and women to be equal, but because they believed that the female vote would reform society. Carol Lee Bacchi, in her analysis of English-Canadian suffragists, concluded that the majority of these women (and a small number of men) were from a larger reform movement. Canada's first feminists, who initiated the suffragist movement and who believed in the equality of the sexes, received no public support and were soon pushed aside within the movement by the reformers who altered the suffragist movement to serve their own purpose.(68) The social reformers wanted pressure to be put on the government to protect women's special status as wife and mother.(69) Bacchi concluded that English-Canadian suffragists were:

predominantly members of an Anglo-Saxon, Protestant social elite, dominated by professionals and the wives of professionals, who endorsed woman suffrage as part of a larger reform programme designed to reinstate Puritan morality, Christianity, the family, and the rule of the professional. The identification with women as a separate collectivity was secondary.(70)

After intense lobbying by the reformers, the federal franchise was granted to Canadian women in stages as part of the Borden Union government's conscription plans. Women with close family members in the Canadian and British armed forces were given the vote in 1917. The Union government

hoped that these women would support conscription and thus vote for the Union Government in the 1917 general election. In 1918, a full suffrage bill was passed, giving all women of majority age the right to vote. The 1920 Dominion Elections Act both reaffirmed women's right to vote and gave them the legal right to hold public office.

During the federal election campaign of 1921, four women ran for Parliament. Agnes MacPhail, who ran as an independent, was the only successful one. Miss MacPhail's parliamentary career as a social reformer lasted nineteen years and she was re-elected four times. However, from 1920 to 1949, only five women were MP's and none of them were appointed to the Cabinet. During the 1949 federal election, only fifteen women ran for office and all were defeated.(71) One bright spot during the 1920's was the 1929 Person's Case in which the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council decided that women were indeed "persons" in the eyes of the law and hence could be appointed to the Canadian Senate. In 1930, long-time Liberal Cairine Wilson became the first woman appointed to the Senate.(72)

After suffrage was granted, it was hoped that women voters would have an impact politically by restoring traditional moral values both in the home and in the larger society.(73) But the suffragists were not able to remain a cohesive unit as divisions within movement surfaced after

the vote had been won. The social reformers and the small group of feminists no longer had a common cause. Women began to split along the same political lines as men; class, ethnic, occupational, regional, rural/urban differences began to influence female political perceptions.(74) These divisions prevented a unified women's view from being voiced and transferred to practical political action on a wide scale.

Sylvia Bashevkin points out that while the American feminists were able to maintain a strong national organization that continued to lobby at the federal and state levels, the Canadians were unable to do the same.(75) The failure to maintain a national organization was rooted in the divisions within Canadian society as well as the weak organizational structures of the national groups. The national organizations expected the momentum of winning the vote to carry the movement. However, the suffragist movement was grounded in social reform and not in a radical restructuring of sex roles; coupled with the movement's loose organization, this resulted in women being politically unsuccessful as a group.

After World War I, women were encouraged to go back to the home but the "traditional" home began to change. Women began to work outside the home and to be educated at higher levels. Technology began to alter women's lives forever.

As women's environment changed, especially after World War II, so did their perceptions and expectations about their place in Canadian society.

WOMEN'S CHANGING ENVIRONMENT: THE IMPACT OF WORK

Women's role in Canadian society has been drastically altered since the early 1900's. Industrialization, urbanization and technology have affected the Canadian female's external environment. At the turn of the century, the female participation rate in the Canadian labour force was 13.4 per cent.(76) At that time, single women filled the lower, less prestigious professions such as nursing and teaching. These professions were considered appropriate for young women because they were seen as an extension of woman's natural role as nurturer and comforter. Mandatory education for children created a shortage of teachers, so young single women were encouraged to enter the teaching profession to meet this new demand. These women provided a cheap source of labour because they could "justifiably" be paid less as they only had to support themselves.(77)

The invention of the typewriter and the telephone also opened up employment in offices for single women. The "new industrialism" created jobs especially in the emerging labour-intensive service industries. New retail and clerical positions became available and women were thus no

longer restricted to domestic service or factory labour jobs.(78) Industrialism opened up a wide range of jobs that required little formal education or training. The needed skills could be acquired on the job. However, the "male" professions such as medicine, law and university teaching, were almost inaccessible to women.(79)

Married women were not encouraged to work. According to traditional values, a woman's place was in the home as child-bearer and homemaker. But technology also affected the "traditional" life of the homemaker by reducing her workload. Housewives no longer had to bake bread, can vegetables and fruits, or sew their families' clothing. These goods and services could now be purchased at bakeries, grocery and department stores.(80) Technology "reduced the complexity and hence the importance of the women's domestic function".(81) As upper and middle-class housewives began to realize that their "calling" as homemakers had no status, they turned to activities such as politics and social reform that would win greater respect, especially now that their increased leisure time allowed for activities outside the home while they were not encouraged to enter the work force.(82)

Women provided a reliable and inexpensive source of labour for the two war efforts and the emerging service industries. Married women were encouraged to work outside

the home during the two war efforts. Huge pools of female labour were required to fill the vacancies left by the men who had joined the armed forces and to fill newly created jobs.(83) During World War II, the federal government, with the help of twenty-one national women's organizations, created a National Selective Service program to recruit women for the industrial labour force.(84) At first, only single women were recruited, but severe labour shortages forced the recruitment of childless, married women, and then married women with children.(85) To enable mothers to enter the work force, the federal and provincial governments established child-care measures. Twenty-eight nurseries were created in Ontario and five in Quebec.(86) The female labour force participation rate in 1945 grew to 33.2 per cent, an increase from 24.4 per cent in 1939.(87)

After the war, men came home to reclaim their jobs and married women were expected to return to their traditional roles as wives and mothers. Day nurseries were closed(88) and the federal government excluded married women from its civil service.(89) Furthermore, measures were introduced by the federal government to encourage women already in the workforce to leave. The introduction of family allowance cheques made payable directly to the mother was thought to be one way of encouraging women to stay at home.(90) By 1946, the female participation had dropped to 25.3 per

cent.(91) But, the precedent of working mothers had been established and during the next two decades women's participation in the labour force again increased:(92)

...between 1951 and 1961, the net number of women entering the labour force was for the first time larger than the net number of men. For the 1961-71 intercensal period, women were responsible for a hefty 55 per cent of the labour force growth.(93)

The restructuring of family arrangements during the 1970's and into the 1980's - the increasing divorce rates and the increasing number of female-headed, single parent families - has meant that more and more women have been forced to enter the labour market to support themselves and their children. Marriage and/or motherhood are no longer viewed as a reason for interrupting labour force participation. In 1985, 54.7 per cent of married women were in the labour force(94) and in March of 1988, Statistics Canada reported that almost 60 per cent of mothers with children under the age of 16 were employed full-time.(95) The traditional family -- one parent (the father) working full-time outside the home and one parent (the mother) at home full-time looking after the children -- only constituted 16 per cent of all the families in Canada in 1986.(96) Since the 1960's, the number of one-parent families has risen over 130 per cent while two-parent families have increased by only 42 per cent.(97) In 1986,

families headed by single parents constituted 13 per cent of all families in Canada.(98) Eighty-two per cent of single parent families were headed by women.(99) High male unemployment rates and the high cost of living have meant that more and more women have returned to work. The National Council of Welfare argued that if in 1979 the women in two-parent families had not been working, the proportion of those families with incomes below the poverty line would have grown from 7 to 12 per cent, raising the poverty index by 55 per cent.(100)

Since the 1960s and the 1970s, there has been a proliferation in female labour force participation. The female participation rate grew from 47.8 per cent in 1978 to 51.6 per cent in 1982.(101) In 1985, women's participation rate was 54.3 per cent.(102) Between 1975 and 1985, the female labour force grew by 46.3 per cent as compared to the male labour force that only grew by 15.3 per cent for the same ur period.(%foot%)

The increase in women's participation in the labour force has been linked to their greater access to higher education, which has also resulted in increased expectations. Ethel Klein, in her study of American feminism, concluded that the higher a woman's education the more likely she is to reject traditional constraints on her life choices.(103)

For the 1982-1983 academic year, Statistics Canada reported that 46.8 per cent of the total undergraduate enrollment was female as compared to 11.6 per cent in 1891 and 26.2 per cent in 1961.(104) In 1981, 50 per cent of full-time Bachelor of Art degrees were awarded to women. Thirty-nine per cent of the Master of Arts degrees and 24 per cent of Ph D degrees were awarded to women in the same year. In 1971, the percentage of degrees that went to women respectively were 38 per cent (BA's), 22 per cent (MA's), and 9 per cent (Ph.d's).(105) As Canadian women continue to become better educated they will expect equality and a wider range of life choices.

Regardless of their gains in sheer numbers, working women continue to be clustered in low-paying positions that are traditionally considered "female" jobs:

To summarize, in 1981 women were still largely concentrated in the clerical, sales and service occupations. Although their representation in the administrative and professional occupations had increased, they were concentrated in supportive occupations, such as those of technicians, and still constituted a small portion of the professional occupations in the health, legal, and scientific occupations. They were equally under-represented in the natural sciences, such as engineering, and in blue-collar occupations. In the managerial occupations, their representation was strongest in those associated with large-scale, female, white-collar employment, such as personnel.(106)

But women have begun to diversify their career choices and are entering professions that are well-paying and male-dominated.(107) In a study prepared for the Economic Council of Canada, Boulet and Lavallee found that the "number of women in the 20 highest-paid occupations quadrupled between 1971 and 1981; the number of men only doubled over the same time period".(108) However, Boulet and Lavallee point out that this progress has been offset by the growth in the number of women who entered the workforce at the low end of the occupational ladder.(109) It is clear that have increased their participation at both ends of the occupational ladder.

THE SECOND WAVE OF FEMINISM

The changing socio-economic environment of women, especially their involvement in the labour force, acted as a catalyst for the second wave of feminism that began in the late 1960's. Women's participation in the labour market influenced their lives in such a way that women realized that they were not being treated equally in the work place. Women began to participate in politics to attain changes in policy that they believed would help them be treated equally. Jerome Black and Nancy McGlen, in their analysis of 1965 and 1974 Canadian federal election results, found that labour force participation by women has

had the most "consistent impact on women's political participation".(110) As Black and McGlen demonstrated, there is a link between increased labour force participation and increased political participation. This finding has also been demonstrated in other countries. In their twenty country study, Lovenduski and Hills found a relationship between women's sub-elite political participation and their economic activity.(111)

Kristi Anderson, in her study of working women and political participation, found that working women's participation in politics was closer to men's than it was to housewives'. Thus, she concluded that employment stimulated the political participation of women, especially those who were young and well-educated, because they were the most affected by the women's movement.(112) Anderson argues that employment and the feminist movement have led to the increase in women's political participation and the decrease in the difference between male and female political involvement.(113) The women's movement has raised the consciousness of women while employment has provided them with a focus outside the home.

As their roles changed, women increasingly believed in equality. They also began to recognize and identify the barriers to the attainment of equal status.

...the traditionally constraining female roles may have lost some of their relevance

in the wake of the declining birth rate, the shortened child rearing and increasing female work force participation. Moreover, the issues connected with the more recent women's movement---equal pay, equal rights, day care centre, and so forth---may have mobilized the previously apathetic.(114)

While the evidence cited supports the argument that labour force participation and education have had a major effect on women's increased political participation, the changing role of the state has also been a factor. The second wave of feminism coincided with the emergence and expanding role of the welfare state in Canada.

Prior to World War II, the state's role in private matters was restricted to intervening only when it was necessary "to protect those unable to protect themselves against the economic vicissitudes of the capitalist system".(115) After World War II, the role of the state and the attitude towards government intervention into the "private" realm changed dramatically. The popularity of Keynesian post-war reconstruction economics and policies in the Western democracies such as Canada promoted social and economic policies that required increased state intervention into the Canadian market and affected the daily lives of Canadian citizens.(116) The state became extensively involved in education, health care and the regulation of the workplace, matters previously thought of as part of the private realm. The private realm was the world of women.

The concerns of women were limited to family life and the care of home and children. The public realm of men was the world of politics and paid labour.(117)

The division between public and private had an effect on women's orientation to politics. Because the pre-Keynesian state did not involve itself in matters of concern to them, women had little need to be interested in politics. However, as the Keynesian state reached into the private world of women, women began to pay attention to the state and politics. Sylvia Bashevkin suggests that

...increased public expenditures and a broadened scope of social problems have brought the state closer to women, making politics more salient and resulting in increased levels of turnout, political interaction in the marriage relationship, and other forms of participation.(118)

Empirical studies bear out this conclusion. Women had low rates of political participation and exhibited little interest in politics because issues that were of importance to women -- issues concerned with social problems -- were treated within the private world and not within the reach of the state. Thus, the concerns of women were kept off the public agenda.(119) By becoming involved in social matters the state put issues of concern to women on the public agenda. Women began to take interest in politics because politics began to affect their daily lives. But this did not mean an immediate place on the formal agenda

for "women's issues". It only meant that women had another reason to become interested in politics. Here it should be noted that the state's involvement in the private realm coincided with the dramatic increase in women's labour force participation. This provided the fertile soil for the seeds of women's issues to germinate on the political agenda.

Women began to take an interest in politics and became involved within the Canadian political system, participating in the different levels of political activity from voting to working on electoral campaigns to running for and holding public office. Three hundred women ran for federal office between 1920 and 1970. Two hundred and six ran in the 1984 federal election alone with over half representing the three national parties.(120)

Until recently, women in Canada have been absent from the higher echelons of political power. Now women are routinely appointed to the Cabinet and the Senate, and there are two women on the Supreme Court of Canada. Women have continued to make gains in electoral politics. Of the one hundred and thirty-one women who stood as candidates for the national parties in the 1984 election, twenty-seven (or twenty-one per cent) were elected and an unprecedented six women were appointed to Prime Minister Mulroney's first Cabinet.(121)

In recent years, much has been written on the "gender gap". "Gender gap" is the term used to describe a "significant difference between men and women in various forms of political behaviour including voting, competition for office, and political orientation".(122) Students of the gender gap believe that there "can be a women's vote even when men and women vote for the same candidate so long as women vote for that candidate for reasons that are different from men's reasons".(123) The gender gap emerges when voters take the different parties' or individual candidates' positions on women's issues into consideration when deciding how to vote.

The gender gap has played an important role in the analysis of political support. Some feminists, especially in the United States, have been bold enough to state that the women's vote could make or break electoral candidates.(124) In the period leading up to the 1984 Canadian election, the gender gap was given a great deal of attention by the three national political parties, the media and the feminist lobby. The feminists were ready to use the perceived threat of a "gender gap" occurring during the election. The feminists used this to their advantage and staged the first ever national Leaders' Debate on Women's Issues, where they were able to extract promises from all three leaders.

However, a Carleton University poll demonstrated that the gender gap in support for the three major political parties was virtually non-existent. The researchers concluded that as the campaign progressed the gender gap disappeared as women made their choice based on issues other than women's issues. In a poll taken before the election, the pollsters found that 58 per cent of men favoured the Progressive Conservatives while 54 per cent of women polled supported the Conservatives.(125) However, Janine Brodie argues that there was no "gender gap" because both of the traditional parties held similiar positions on women's issues.(126) She suggests that while the gender gap may not appear in electoral results, it may be that women voted the same as men but for different reasons.

Women's increased political participation has resulted in women voting at the same rate as men. However, the gender gap in political support has never really materialized in Canada. While this fact is interesting it is not as important to this thesis as is the perceived threat of a gender gap. It was this perception that has caused decision-makers to pay attention to the feminist lobby. Chapter Three will discuss the feminist lobby in Canada and the movement of women's issues from the public agenda to the formal agenda.

CONCLUSIONS

Chapter Two has discussed the changing socio-economic status of women and how this has led to the politicization of women. Evidence has been provided that demonstrates that women's changing socio-economic environment - increased labour force participation, higher levels of education and altered family patterns - has increased women's political participation. The historical narrative provided by this chapter has described the "ammunition" that loaded the gun, so to speak, and set the stage for the feminist lobby to act as a trigger. It has also been argued that the changing role of the state had an effect on the politicization of women because as the state's influence grew and reached into the private realm of the home, women became interested in politics as it influenced their daily lives. This, coupled with women's changing socio-economic environment, provided the right environment for feminist activity to grow.

Chapter Two has looked at women in general terms, collectively lumping all Canadian women into one group. Chapter Two has presented evidence that has traced the evolution of women's issues to where they were on the public agenda. Chapter Three begins by exploring the role of women in political parties and the reasons behind

feminists turning to groups as a means of getting women's issues on the national agenda. Chapter Three then narrows the focus to a look at feminists only. Feminists are of particular interest because it is the feminists who until recently played the role of representing women in the public policy process.(127) Chapter Three will therefore focus on the feminist lobby, its involvement in the public policy process, and its role as the trigger of women's issues in the agenda setting process.

CHAPTER THREE

WOMEN'S ISSUES AND THE FORMAL AGENDA

INTRODUCTION

The constitutional debates of 1981-82 marked the entry of women's issues onto the formal agenda. The feminists waged a successful lobbying campaign for Sections 15, the equality provision, and Section 28, which guarantees equal rights to males and females to be included in the entrenched Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. When the notwithstanding clause (Section 33) threatened Section 28, they effectively lobbied to ensure that Section 28 would not be impeded by it. The constitutional battle demonstrated the feminists political savvy and earned them political respect from politicians and the media. When the 1984 election was called, the feminists were ready. Fresh from their constitutional success, the feminists played an important role in the election campaign. This, coupled with the perceived threat of a gender gap, caused women's issues to be given a prominent place on the three major parties' campaign platforms.

Women and issues of special interest to women came to the forefront of Canadian

politics in 1984, as parties, pollsters, and pundits uncovered evidence that women tended to vote differently from men, and thus might be worth monitoring separately from "the public".(128)

The 1984 national election campaign even witnessed a televised Leaders' Debate on Women's Issues, although, after the election, political analysts concluded that for various reasons the gender gap had little effect on the election results.

What is significant, however, is that women's issues were now on the formal agenda. The Mulroney government, since its election in 1984, has passed the Employment Equity Act, which introduced affirmative action to the federal private sector, and eliminated the clause in the Indian Act which stripped treaty Indian women who married non-treaty Indians of their official status. As well, legislation was introduced (but not passed) on child-care and pornography. Women's issues were also on the agendas of two First Ministers' Conferences.

The 1988 federal election saw women's issues debated again by the national leaders. The feminist lobby has also been active in the debate surrounding the Meech Lake Accord and has proved to be a formidable critic. All of the above would not have been possible had not the feminists scored such a major victory in 1981-82. Richard Simeon observes

that the most significant outcome of the constitution debates was

the politicization of gender. Women's groups have become the most articulate and most thoroughgoing of all the Meech Lake critics. The Charter enacted in 1982, with its guarantee of equality rights, has become the primary instrument - symbolically and legally - for the advance of women's interests. Moreover, the constitution has a special significance for women because in November, 1981, constitutional agreement of First Ministers rolled back the rights which women had gained in the draft Charter of Rights. Women's groups mounted an extraordinary, successful, national campaign to restore the provision. The episode is a formative event in the mobilization of women in Canada; it sensitized women both to the importance of the constitution; and to the possibility that their interests would be sacrificed if they were not present.(129)

The Charter represents the point in time at which women's issues gained formal agenda status. Chapter Three discusses how women's issues made it to this point. Before a discussion of the events surrounding the constitutional reform process is possible, however, it is necessary to review the origins of the women's movement as well as its structure. The first half of Chapter Three will be descriptive and will discuss why feminists have used non-partisan interest groups rather than political parties. Next, the national feminist movement will be described in terms of its roots, organization and major achievements. The remainder of Chapter Three will then focus on the

1981-82 constitutional debate, the feminists and agenda setting.

WOMEN AND POLITICAL PARTIES

The 1984 and 1988 election campaigns witnessed the three major political parties paying close attention to women's issues. However, this has not always been the case. In the past, political parties have been unable or unwilling to deal effectively with women's issues. Recent empirical evidence has concluded that even though women are significant in terms of party memberships, they still have had little input into party policies and are not represented in party elites.(130)

Janine Brodie, in her recent study on Canadian women and electoral politics, analyzes women and their lack of representation and influence in Canada's major political parties. She believes that the answer lies in Canada's brokerage political parties.(131) Political parties in Canada act as "brokers" between the various interests represented in the electorate. The parties have to establish a new "coalition" each election and thus try to appeal to the groups that will give them the most electoral support:

The absence of hard and fast party loyalties in the electorate encourages our parties to be conservative and expedient. They compete for the same voters, so they

will not take innovative positions that might alienate significant numbers of voters. But they are also expedient: they become overnight champions of specific groups whose support promises tangible electoral gains.(132)

The parties were not prepared to pay attention to women's issues until votes seemed to be at stake. Chaviva Hosek suggests that the feminist's constitutional victory caused political parties to become more interested in women as a voting group.(133) Brodie concludes that the two major political parties perceived that significant electoral gains could be achieved by appealing to women. For the first time since the suffragists, women seemed ready to choose between the two political parties on the basis of what they would do for women.(134) However, while the gender gap did not affect the 1984 results it still might have had an effect on why women voted the way they did. Brodie argues that the gender gap might not have been evident in 1984 because the two major parties adopted very similar positions on women's issues. Brodie remains optimistic because women appear to be mobilizing and getting more involved in electoral politics. As Hosek concludes:

Greater responsiveness to women's concerns in the area of representational politics may yet turn out to be the most important legacy of the process of constitutional change.(135)

The past unwillingness of political parties to pay attention to women's issues caused feminists to band together in groups. Hosek maintains that people turn to public interest groups when they believe that their interests are not being met by their governments. She writes:

The fact that women had to function as an "interest group" testifies eloquently to the failure of our national institutions to represent the specific concerns of women as women adequately. (136)

THE FEMINIST LOBBY IN CANADA

The feminist movement in Canada has benefited from the political parties' ignorance of women's issues. Sandra Burt argues that it was the inability of women to influence party policy that led to the growth of the feminist movement in Canada as women turned to interest groups to influence public policy. (137)

Chaviva Hosek divides the organized women's movement into five categories. (138) First are the voluntary feminist groups that are concerned with the improvement of the status of women and lobby on a wide range of issues. The National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) falls into this category. Second are the traditional women's groups who support feminist causes at certain times, even though they are not considered feminist in their orientation. Hosek's examples include the Canadian

Federation of University Women and the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire. The third category consists of groups that provide a specialized service to women, such as rape crisis centres, birth-control information centres and women's collectives. The fourth category includes government advisory councils. Most provinces and the federal government have established these councils to advise them on women's issues as well as to act as a liaison with women's groups. The largest one is the federal Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. The final category is made up of specialized national voluntary associations that lobby in specialized areas such as the National Association of Women and the Law.(139)

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

The contemporary feminist movement in Canada found its roots in the report of the 1970 Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW):

A crucial moment for Canadian feminism came in 1967, when pressure by traditional women's groups on the government of the day brought about the establishment of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. In preparing for the hearings of that Royal Commission, and in responding to the recommendations made in its report, the contemporary Canadian feminist movement discovered its coherent goals.... the Royal Commission report remains a founding document of contemporary Canadian feminism.(140)

The Royal Commission on the Status of Women was established on February 16, 1967 by the Pearson government under the chairmanship of Mrs. Florence Bird. Popular myth within the women's movement has it that Pearson and his Cabinet agreed to the Commission only after considerable pressure was exerted by prominent Canadian women. Apparently a threat was made that one million women would march on Parliament Hill if the government did not act.(141) However, there was considerable opposition to such a commission being established and it wasn't until sufficient pressure could be mounted from various women that Pearson agreed to appoint the commission.

The RCSW gave feminists a focal point. It also resulted in the two major national feminist groups being formed. These groups became politically active and began pressuring the government to change the status of women in Canada for the better. The Commission's recommendations also gave the federal government a blueprint or formal agenda to work from.

The RCSW's terms of reference and recommendations are important because they set the tone for the relationship between feminism and public policy in Canada. The RCSW's terms of reference specified that it make recommendations that would "ensure for women equal opportunities with men in all aspects of Canadian society." Examining the status

of women in Canadian society, the RCSW studied the position of women in the economy, their educational status and opportunities, their role in the family, women's participation in politics, and the Canadian justice system and its effect on women. The Commission conducted cross-Canada public hearings, accepted briefs from all interested groups and individuals, and commissioned thirty-four research projects.(142)

The Commission adopted four principles that served as a basis for making their recommendations.(143) They were that "women should be free to choose whether or not to take employment outside their homes"; that "the care of children is a responsibility to be shared by the mother, the father and society"; that "society has a responsibility for women because of pregnancy and child-birth, and special treatment related to maternity will always be necessary"; and that, "in certain areas women will for an interim period require special treatment to overcome the adverse effects of discriminatory practices".(144)

In December of 1970, the RCSW submitted its report to the Trudeau government. The report contained 167 recommendations, 122 of which were within the federal jurisdiction. The RCSW's recommendations covered all aspects of Canadian women's life. Recommendations were made in areas concerning health care, education, employment, justice, child

care, and many others. By 1974, forty-two of the one hundred twenty-two federal recommendations had been implemented and thirty-seven recommendations had been partially implemented.(145) In late 1979, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW) reviewed all federal recommendations and published a status report. It altered its 1974 review to compensate for their earlier optimism. Recommendations that were considered implemented in 1974 were later changed to partially implemented or not implemented. implemented.(146) What is significant, however, is that the federal government did act in some areas. Judy LaMarsh had worried that the Commission's recommendations would not be implemented and she wrote in 1968 that it was up to women to keep up the pressure, otherwise nothing would become of the recommendations. She wrote:

There seems no one now within the government circles who is interested in seeing its recommendations take legislative form. It is up to the women of the country to put the pressure on and keep it on.(147)

The significance of the RCSW is twofold. First, it legitimized the concept of equal rights for men and women.(148) And secondly, the RCSW's report became the founding document for the women's movement because through its work "the contemporary Canadian feminist movement discovered its own coherent goals".(149)

The challenge for the women's movement has been turning these goals into public policy. Feminists realized early on that the majority of their goals could best be achieved by using public policy. Ellen Boneparth, an American feminist, realized this when she wrote:

While governmental programs do not provide the solutions to all problems, they do carry with them authority and resources to change behaviour, if not attitudes. Appreciating the power of government to effect social change, the women's movement in the past decade has focused on the policy-making process.(150)

Canadian feminists have since lobbied on a wide range of issues such as mandatory affirmative action, equal pay for work of equal value, rape-crisis centres, birth-control and reproductive freedom, quality day-care, better educational and training opportunities for women, pensions for homemakers, divorce reform and other family law reforms.

THE NATIONAL LOBBY GROUPS

There are two major national women's lobby groups concerned with influencing public policy in Canada: the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW) and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC). CACSW was created from the Commission's Recommendation 166, which called for the establishment of a watchdog body to keep an eye on the progress of women in Canada. The

National Action Committee on the Status of Women was created in 1972 to keep an independent eye on the federal government and make sure that the RCSW's recommendations were implemented and maintained.

The CACSW is composed of a maximum of 27 volunteer, part-time members and three full-time paid members. All thirty positions are appointed by the federal government for a fixed term. The president and two vice-presidents (one from Eastern Canada, the other from Western Canada) are the CACSW's full-time paid staff. These appointees do not include the paid research, clerical and support staff.(151)

The CACSW's mandate is twofold: (1) to bring to the attention of the government and the general public matters of interest and concern to women, and (2) to advise the government on matters referred to the Council by the government or as the Council sees as appropriate. The Council is able to publish its findings and recommendations.(152) The CACSW is funded totally by the federal government. It reports directly to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, a cabinet position created in 1972 in response to a RCSW recommendation. The CACSW's mandate is to act as a source of information on women's issues for the government and the general public as well as to advise the government on issues relating to

women. In its 1979 status report, the CACSW was critical of the fact that it had to report to Parliament through a Minister and that its mandate had not been extended to include the establishment of attitudinal programs as recommended by the RCSW.(153)

The Council has been criticized at different times for being made up of patronage appointments and for working on issues not on the feminist agenda.(154) The first criticism is too harsh, as the Council does not always act as a representative of the government's current policy. The Council has continued to lobby and to report directly to Parliament, not through a minister. On numerous occasions it has been in open disagreement with its minister. The most notable example of this is the public conflict between then Council President Doris Anderson and then Liberal Minister for the Status of Women Lloyd Axworthy during the constitutional debate in 1980.(155) As well, in 1987 and 1988, the Council lobbied against the federal government's Meech Lake constitutional amendments.

The Council plays an important role as an educational and research resource for women's groups in Canada. Its budget gives it the resources to conduct research studies that are then used by other groups in their lobbying efforts. This educational and research function is important in raising the public's awareness of women's issues.

The Council sponsors conferences, holds workshops and publishes and distributes material on women's issues. Another important function of the Council is that it actively lobbies the government. The CACSW prepares and presents briefs on employment equity, unemployment, pension reform, and family law. These documents are then presented to parliamentary caucuses and committees, Royal Commissions and task forces, senior government officials, politicians and the media. All publications are available to the general public.

Rina Rosenberg, in her study of American Status of Women Commissions, argues that such commissions are important for at least three reasons. First, women's commissions and councils are governmental bodies and thus speak with a greater authority to politicians and the public than private interest groups.(156) Second, Rosenberg believes women's commissions are an important link between women's interest groups and the politicians.(157) Third, women's commissions are a means of institutionalizing women's issues in the policy-making process.(158) In the terms of this thesis, the CACSW plays an important role in agenda setting. By making public information on public policies and their effect on women, the Council plays a role in issue expansion. The Council is active in making sure that women's issues are kept alive by presenting information to

the public. Also, as a government agency, the Council has direct access to decision-makers.

The other major national feminist group that was created in response to the RCSW report is the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC). NAC is a non-governmental umbrella group for over 479 voluntary women's groups from across Canada. NAC was created to pressure the government to implement the RCSW's recommendations. NAC is a non-partisan organization and women affiliated with all three national parties are actively involved in NAC. NAC has four main purposes and objectives. First, it initiates and works towards actions that "are designed to change legislation, attitudes, customs and practices".(159) Secondly, it evaluates and advocates changes that benefit women including the changes recommended by the RCSW.(160) Thirdly, NAC encourages women's groups across Canada and fourthly, it facilitates the exchange of information between member groups and provides information to the general public.(161) NAC's organization is run by an Executive Committee which consists of a president, three vice-presidents, a secretary, a treasurer, five members-at-large and ten regional representatives.(162) NAC believes itself to be the single most powerful voice of Canadian women. Its policy priorities include full and equal employment, equal pay for

work of equal value, pensions for homemakers, comprehensive maternity/ paternity leave, abortion as a matter of private conscience, freedom of sexual orientation, and survival of the planet through peaceful solutions to the nuclear threat.(163) NAC's executive tries to achieve its goals by preparing briefs to the government and by lobbying politicians for change.

NAC is funded mainly through the federal government's Women's Program, which is administered by the Secretary of State Department. The Women's Program found its roots in the report of the RCSW, which advocated financial support for women's groups because these groups provide services and support which is not otherwise available and because they give women a unified voice. The RCSW stated that:

Women are looking to associations to provide a particular kind of participation beyond their reach elsewhere. Although women are conspicuously absent in positions of power both in the economic and political worlds, through associations they have been able to exercise power and influence for social change in many areas, particularly in matters affecting the rights and freedoms of women...Not only have (associations) been instrumental in bringing about reform but they have served the role of keeping governments informed of women's views on current affairs.(164)

The mandate of the Women's Program is to "support the full participation of women in all aspects of Canadian society and to increase the capability and effectiveness of women's

organizations and groups working to improve the status of women".(165) The Women's Program has two long-term goals: the achievement of economic independence for women and the elimination of all forms of violence against women. Other priorities are identified yearly.(166)

Funds are provided to the voluntary groups and non-governmental institutions as grants and/or contributions for the distribution of information and advocacy, for organizational development, and for institutional change.(167) In otherwords, the government funds the lobbying of itself. The total budget for the Women's Program in the fiscal year 1985-1986 was \$14,516,000.(168) NAC received \$300,000.00 for that fiscal year. The Nielsen Task Force concluded that the Women's Program should continue the funding of the large umbrella groups like NAC, because the views and needs of the widest cross-section of Canadian women are reflected by these groups.(169) The Task Force estimated that this type of funding indirectly affected 12.5 million women in Canada.(170)

In a recent brief to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Secretary of State, NAC presented its list of accomplishments as a means of demonstrating the need for continued funding through the Women's Program. During the past fifteen years, NAC has demonstrated its political savvy and won the respect of politicians for its lobbying

proress. It is useful here to review some of NAC's successes, partial successes, and failures to demonstrate its involvement in the policy process. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss all of NAC's involvement in public policies so only a few have been selected.

NAC has been involved in family law reform. After the 1974 Supreme Court of Canada's Murdoch decision, in which the Court ruled that a ranch wife was not entitled to any of the assets accumulated under the husband's name during the marriage because she had behaved like any other ranch wife, NAC began a national campaign to change provincial property laws. They wanted the work of homemakers and women who work on family farms and in family businesses to be recognized: "the result has been the reform of all family law provisions in the country to give wives a more-or-less equal share of family assets when a marriage breaks down".(171) NAC is still working towards the sharing of family assets during a marriage, not just when a divorce occurs.(172) NAC is also working towards improving the criteria for the establishment and collection of maintenance payments. In NAC's opinion, the new federal divorce laws fall short of treating divorced women fairly but they do claim a success in that the federal government and many provincial governments did introduce policies that assist in the collection of support payments.(173)

NAC has been active in lobbying for changes to the federal Income Tax Act and the Canada Pension Plan. In 1980, the Income Tax Act was amended to allow for the salaries paid to spouses in unincorporated family farms and businesses to be deducted.(174) NAC has also been involved in the lobbying effort to improve women's pensions.

In particular, NAC was very instrumental in obtaining amendments to the Canada Pension Plan to cover women who drop out of the labour market to care for their young children. We were also the main sponsor of recent amendments which increase the chances of these pension credits being shared between the spouses upon marriage breakdown, and which improve the pensions of widows and maintain them after they remarry. Last but not least, NAC was largely responsible for obtaining commitments from both the federal government and the official Opposition party to the direct inclusion of homemakers in the Canada Pension Plan.(175)

NAC has also been a strong supporter of family allowances and has continued to lobby to keep the family allowance program intact as well as lobbying for benefits to low-income families.(176) One of NAC's current priorities is equal rights for part-time workers. Part-time work is advocated by NAC because it promotes a woman's choice to work outside or inside the home.(177) So far their campaign to have the Labour Code amended to give part-time workers pro-rated pay and benefits has been unsuccessful, but they are hopeful and have received a

commitment from the current government to implement such amendments.

One of NAC's major priorities for the 1980's is a national government-funded child-care program. The federal government has made many public statements that it is committed to improving the current child-care system in Canada. However, child-care is within provincial jurisdiction and thus requires intense federal-provincial negotiations as well as huge amounts of money. It is unlikely that any agreement will encompass all of NAC's goals for child-care. The Mulroney government recently announced a child care package that falls short of what NAC lobbied for. This is an example of NAC's failure to convince the decision-makers to take a radical, expensive step into child care. Child care is one of the most complicated social issues facing Canada today. It is complicated because of the cost to the taxpayer and especially because it falls into an area where the federal government has no real jurisdiction. The federal child care policy does not address the questions of national standards or the number of spaces available. These fall into provincial jurisdiction. If we look at child care as a separate issue and in terms of issue expansion, the debate is still raging as to whether or not the government has the right to become involved directly in parents' personal choices regarding

the care of their children. This is vital to issue expansion because, as discussed in Chapter One of this thesis, issues only make it to the public agenda if the public agrees that it is a problem that falls within the legitimate bounds of government responsibility. As evidenced by the current debate surrounding the child care policy, it is still not resolved whether or not the government has a large role to play in child care and whether or not child care is a public or private issue. The question is being raised that child care facilities should be run by private business, not the government. As well, the federal government's involvement in a provincial matter is being questioned. Because of these lingering questions, it remains doubtful that NAC will be successful at placing a national child care policy on the formal agenda.

NAC was also instrumental in the 1971 establishment of maternity benefits in the Unemployment Insurance program. (178)

...NAC and other groups obtained further changes to the Canada Labour Code to provide for shorter notice of maternity leave, extra sick days for family responsibilities, and 6 weeks of additional unpaid leave for either parent on the birth or adoption of a child. NAC was also one of the main sponsors of the 1978 Labour Code changes preventing the dismissal of an employee because she is pregnant, as well as of the 1983 change to the Canadian Human Rights

Act that includes pregnancy and child-birth in the grounds for discrimination.(179)

The changes to the Canadian Human Rights Act were the result of the lobbying process that took place after the 1978 Supreme Court of Canada's Bliss ruling that the denial of maternity benefits under the Unemployment Insurance Act did not discriminate on the basis of sex or deny women equality before the law under the Canadian Bill of Rights. The Bliss case had wider implications than just maternity benefits in that the feminists began to work for an entrenched equality provision in the constitution.

In the aftermath of Bliss and other losing battles under the Bill of Rights, feminist and civil liberties groups began to argue that the existing Bill of Rights had proven ineffective in protecting civil liberties, and needed to be replaced by a constitutionally entrenched charter of rights with a more explicit and stronger guarantee of equality rights. These objectives coincided fortuitously with the nation-building agenda of then Prime Minister Trudeau and the Liberal Party.(180)

FEMINISTS AND THE CONSTITUTION: WOMEN'S ISSUES ARRIVE

The Bliss case heightened the awareness of feminists to the importance of legal rights for women, but legal rights did not become the sole focus of the feminist movement. Canadian feminism differed from its American counterpart, in that the whole American feminist movement was focussed on the struggle for the Equal Rights Amendment

(ERA) while Canadian feminists focussed their attention on a wide range of economic and social goals. This is not say that legal rights were not important or ignored by Canadian feminists, they were just not given top priority. However, cases such as Bliss made feminists pay very close attention when the Trudeau government announced in 1980 its major constitutional initiative that included an entrenched Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The feminists mobilized to respond to the proposed equality provisions so that the interpretation handed down in Bliss would not be repeated.

In May of 1980, right after the defeat of the Quebec referendum on sovereignty-association, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau announced his government's plans for a "renewed federalism". The feminists immediately began to develop a response. Feminists were concerned that they would be left out of any constitutional reform. NAC began to plan a series of provincial meetings for women's groups across Canada. After the provincial meetings were held, a national meeting would meet to develop a national policy. The CACSW planned a national convention on the constitution for early September, one week before the scheduled First Ministers Conference. The purpose of this conference was to pool information from all women's groups across Canada and then formulate a national policy that could be "fed into the federal-provincial process".(181) In addition, the

CACSW commissioned a series of briefing papers on women and the constitution. Hosek points out that the CACSW was critical to the development of a cohesive women's position because of its stable budget which allowed for research to be funded as well as providing a travel budget for women to get together.(182) However, a translators' strike forced the CACSW conference to be cancelled. But NAC did organize a one day public meeting on the constitution that October.

Constitutional reform up until this time had been the sole prerogative of governments and an "elite process". As Banting and Simeon point out:

With the exception of Newfoundland's referendum on entry into Confederation and Quebec's referendum on withdrawal from it, constitutional deliberations have been the preserve of political leaders, operating often behind close doors.(183)

In fact, until early 1981 it looked like the process of "renewed federalism" would exclude the public. The summer of 1980 saw private federal-provincial negotiations which culminated in an unsuccessful First Ministers Conference on September 20, 1980. On October 2, 1980, the Trudeau government announced that it would proceed unilaterally. A Constitution Act that included an entrenched Charter of Rights and Freedoms applicable to both levels of government was introduced in the House of Commons. The proposed Charter included a narrow equality clause which was

designed to minimize provincial opposition to the Charter.(184) Instead, this wording antagonized interest groups representing groups such as women and civil libertarians. These groups wanted a broadly worded Charter that would rectify the problems inherent in the Canadian Bill of Rights.(185) Under pressure from the opposition parties, the federal government created the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons which held public hearings on the proposed constitution. The majority of testimony heard was critical of the Charter's narrow wording and called for the Charter to be broadened and strengthened.(186) A variety of women's groups presented briefs to the Joint Committee but ultimately the most influential would be the briefs submitted by the CACSW and NAC. The Joint Committee Hearings provided the feminists with valuable experience and gave them a public forum for their concerns.

By December of 1980, well into the hearings of the Special Committee, it was apparent that the federal government strategy had failed. They had alienated special interest groups and civil libertarians. In addition, the federal Conservative Party and eight provincial governments were adamantly against the federal initiative.(187) Pal and Morton state that the federal government decided to change their tack and gain the support of the interest groups:

Casting about for a way to rescue their constitutional initiative, the Liberal government reversed its original strategy and sought to bring on side their erstwhile feminists and civil libertarian critics. By accommodating their demands to strengthen the wording of key Charter sections, the government hoped to gain a new and highly visible constituency for its total reform package.(188)

In January of 1981, then Federal Justice Minister Jean Chretien announced comprehensive changes to the Charter. As Knopff and Morton point out most of the changes made had been recommended by the interest groups.(189) Section 15 had been rewritten "almost exactly according to the recommendations contained in the CACSW brief".(190) In essence, the changes to Section 15 reversed the limited interpretation of equality given in the Bliss case.(191)

While the feminists were pleased with these changes, they were not completely satisfied and believed that the Charter left other matters in a "perilous state". At the same time, the CACSW president, Doris Anderson, attempted to reorganize the conference on the constitution that had been cancelled due to the translators' strike. Internal conflicts within the CACSW along with a political disagreement between Anderson and Lloyd Axworthy, then Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, caused the conference to be cancelled again. An ad hoc committee was formed to organize a conference for February 14, 1981 on women and the constitution which 1300 women attended. attended.(192)

The conference passed a number of resolutions and after the conference a major lobbying effort of Parliament was made. The ad hoc committee, which was a non-partisan group, was believed to be the best way to deal with the constitutional issue as women were beginning to split along party and regional lines. It was felt that an ad hoc committee which would include representatives from all points of view would avoid internal dissension among the women's movement at a time when they needed to be a united front. The ad hoc committee would also be able to focus lobbying activities. Both NAC and the CACSW were represented on the committee. Both groups were critical to the ad hoc committee because of their available resources and established networks of politically active women. Simply, both national women's groups provided leadership to the women's lobby. The federal Department of Justice and the ad-hoc committee members drafted Section 28 for inclusion into the Charter. The NDP moved to amend the Constitution Act to include Section 28 which reads: "Notwithstanding anything in this Charter, the rights and freedoms referred to in it are guaranteed equally to male and female persons." Section 28 passed unanimously in the House on April 23, 1981.(193)

During the summer of 1981, people awaited the Supreme Court decision on the provinces' challenge of the federal

government's unilateral action. In the meantime, the federal government continued to lobby. Hosek writes:

All along, the federal government had been wooing people interested in civil liberties and rights by claiming that it was the only level of government interested in giving Canadians rights, and that the provinces were backward, recalcitrant and otherwise unwilling to abide by liberal principles.(194)

In September, the Supreme Court decided that while unilateralism was constitutionally legal, it violated constitutional convention. This decision sent the federal and provincial governments back to the negotiating table in November. To win the acceptance of the provinces, the federal government agreed to Section 33, the "notwithstanding clause" or legislative override provision being included in the Charter. Section 33 would apply to Section 15 and Section 28. Feminists were outraged and quickly mobilized to regain lost territory. Because Section 28 was the only clause that dealt exclusively with sex, the feminists focussed their attention on it.(195)

The ad hoc committee mobilized their constituents again and turned their lobbying attention to the provincial premiers. The federal government pointed to the provinces as the culprits behind Section 33 and encouraged the lobbying of the provinces. This strategy proved fruitful for the feminists. Hosek observed:

Nevertheless, the lobbying of the provinces served to reveal the political vulnerability of provincial governments on human rights issues, especially when they are not protected by the intergovernmental process. When first ministers negotiate as a group, no single one of them can be held responsible for the decision reached. The lobbying of women's groups shone a spotlight on each premier individually, and in that context no premier dared to refuse, as a matter of principle, to entrench equality for women in the constitution of Canada.(196)

The feminists were able to successfully lobby the premiers to agree to exempt Section 28 from the override and thus demonstrate that they were a political force to be reckoned with. The feminists proved to be an important ally for the Trudeau government in its battle with the provinces. Knopff and Morton argue that without the feminists, as well as the other human rights groups, the federal constitutional reform package would have failed due to provincial opposition. Trudeau needed these groups' support to be able to out maneuver the provinces.(197)

THE CONSTITUTION AND AGENDA SETTING

In Chapter One, three models of agenda setting were outlined. Which of these models best explains the emergence of women's issues to the forefront of the Canadian political agenda. Immediately, the inside access model can be eliminated from consideration because it involves an issue being initiated from within the government or by

individuals/groups with close ties to the government, but the issue is never expanded to the public. In fact, the initiators prefer that the issue is not expanded to the public and want to limit public discussion or keep it completely out of the public eye.(198) Women's issues do not fall into this model because until 1981, women had limited access to government decision-makers and feminists have always maintained that women are shut out of the economic and political elites. However, this thesis will argue that women's issues fall into both the outside initiative model and the mobilization model.

In the beginning of Chapter Three, it was stated that the feminists' victory in the constitutional process marks the appearance of women's issues onto the formal agenda. At first glance, it would appear that women's issues fit the outside initiative model of agenda setting because the feminists, as a group, successfully lobbied decision-makers to have their issues placed on the formal agenda. In the outside initiative model, the issues come from outside the decision-making process. The group who initiates the issue must first get the issue onto the public agenda and then expand it to the formal agenda. Chapter Two of this thesis discussed how women's issues came to be on the public agenda.

The public agenda consists of general issues that identify problem areas and have a high degree of public visibility and interest. Cobb and Elder maintain that there are three prerequisites for an issue to have access to the public agenda. Firstly, there must be widespread awareness of the issue. Women's issues have enjoyed a medium to high profile since the late 1960's and early 1970', as the feminist movement began to grow and develop. As well, the battle in the United States over the Equal Rights Amendment made Canadians aware of women's issues. Since then the general public has been more than aware of "women's libbers". Secondly, a number of people must believe that something must be done to solve the problem. This is evident by the increase in the number of women who have become involved in the political process because they believe something has to be done to better the status of women in Canada. And thirdly, for an issue to achieve public agenda status, the issue must fall into government jurisdiction. There must be a belief that the government can solve the problem and that it has a role to play. It was argued in Chapter Two that one of the contributing factors that affected women's political participation was the rise of the welfare state. Before the welfare state, the issues that interested women revolved around what was termed the private realm or the world of home and family.

When the state began to get involved in the private realm, women began to become interested in the actions of the state. Previously, governments and politics - the public realm of men - had little impact on women's lives. As the welfare state crept into the daily lives of women, women's interest in the public world became aroused. As well, the welfare state began to take responsibility for ensuring that its citizens were educated, healthy and treated equally and fairly. Thus we have reached the point where it is commonly accepted that government has a leadership role to play in improving the status of women in Canada.

In the outside initiative model, the initiation phase involves the articulation of grievances in general terms. Women began to articulate their grievances during the late 1960s and early 1970s as their roles changed. Female labour force participation increased and more and more women were becoming better educated. As argued in Chapter Two, these factors contributed to women becoming more interested and involved in politics. Certain women, the feminists, began to join together to organize groups that could present their grievances.

The specification phase involves general grievances becoming transformed into specific demands. Cobb and Elder maintain that these specific demands can be made by individuals who have assumed a leadership or spokesperson

role or been appointed by the group. Feminists assumed the role of speaking for all women and began to voice specific demands. Expansion of the issue to the public agenda involves the issue gaining the attention of decision makers and other groups within the public. Chapter Two and the first section of Three describes how the feminists were able to get women's issues onto the public agenda. However, at this stage, various methods of issue containment came into play.

Feminists in the late 1960s pressured the Pearson Government for a royal commission, which they finally got. It could be argued, however, that the commission was created to keep the feminists quiet as well as giving the appearance of doing something. Yet, the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW), while originally formed as a containment strategy, proved to be significant to the contemporary Canadian feminist movement because it provided the movement with a basis to work from. In addition, both national women's lobby groups arose out the RCSW's recommendations. The federal department on the Status of Women was also created and the federal government began to fund women's groups. This has proved to be a double-edged sword for the feminists. On one hand, a stable budget for feminist groups like CACSW and NAC has proved crucial to lobbying efforts and public awareness campaigns, and has

allowed the groups to play a leadership role in the feminist movement. On the other hand, government funding of these groups can be viewed as another containment strategy on the part of the federal government. Again, the government, by spending little money in comparison to its total budget and by establishing structures and procedures has relieved itself of doing anything substantial. Nevertheless, the creation of these departments, agencies and groups did heighten public awareness of women's issues and set aside a place for them on the public agenda.

Until the 1981-82 constitutional debate, women's issues remained on the public agenda but showed little movement towards placement on the formal agenda. While the feminist were able to make small inroads on some policy issues, they were not given formal agenda status by the federal decision-makers.

Chapter Three argued that the Charter represents the placement of women's issues onto the formal agenda. Close examination of the political process surrounding the Charter reveals that the outside initiative model does not fit this particular situation. Instead the mobilization model is appropriate. In the mobilization model, the issue is initiated from inside the government and immediately receives formal agenda status. However, the policy's successful implementation is dependent on it being expanded

from the formal agenda to the public agenda. To implement its policy, the government must have public support.

Up until 1981, women's issues were not taken into consideration by governments when discussing constitutional reform. Doris Anderson wrote in 1981:

Women's issues have received remarkably little attention in the current debate on constitutional reform in Canada. In fact, the absence of discussion on women's issues could be considered a noteworthy feature of the debate. There is now evidence, however, that this situation may be changing.(199)

The initiative for constitutional reform did not come from the outside group - the feminists, but instead came from the federal government. As Hosek states:

Thus the drive for equal legal rights did not spring spontaneously from within the women's movement. Rather, it developed in response to the determination of the federal government to entrench a Charter of Rights and Freedoms during the patriation process. This was at once an advantage and a disadvantage. On the one hand, American women had to struggle for years to put equal rights on the political agenda, and it was not at all clear that Canadian women would have been anymore successful on their own had the government not advanced the idea of a Charter. On the other hand, the terms of the Canadian debate and the timetable for its resolution were set by governments, and women were able to manoeuvre only within the narrow spaces afforded them by elected political leaders.(200)

Hosek's last point is echoed by Sandra Burt who argued that the federal government put constitutional reform at

the top of the formal agenda and then successfully defined and limited the scope of the debate. Women's groups were forced to respond to the government, not the other way around.(201) Banting and Simeon also support Hosek's assertion that the pressure for an entrenched Charter did not come from outside pressure but by the federal government alone.(202)

To support its unilateral action, the federal government turned to feminists and other human rights groups for support in its intergovernmental battle with the provinces. Thus, the mobilization model is affected by the politics of federalism. The feminists were a part of the federal government's attention group. An attention group is a group that is focussed around the issue. Attention groups can attract attention to an issue and increase public awareness. In the mobilization model, the attention group is critical to whether or not an issue will be expanded to the public agenda. Attention groups are crucial in the mobilization model because they serve as a link between government and the mass public. However, the federal government did not need the support of the feminists to gain mass public support. Instead, the federal government needed the support of the feminists to win a federal-provincial war.

The whole constitutional issue was fought on the federal-provincial stage. In this situation, the politics of federalism played an important role in agenda setting. Federalism is not a variable taken into agenda setting theory and because agenda setting does not take federalism into consideration, it can not be completely applied to this case. In Canada, the structure of federalism has an effect on interest group politics. Some scholars suggest that interest groups align themselves with the level of government that best represents their interests.(203) This may be so, but interest groups also serve the goals of governments as demonstrated by the constitutional bargaining process. As Richard Schultz points out; "demands may flow from government to group as well as group to government".(204) Interest groups, such as the feminists, and whether they like it or not, played an important role in an intergovernmental conflict. As Alan Cairns argues:

the deliberate creation and fostering by governments of interest groups to whose induced demands they wish to respond is a primary weapon for government survival in circumstances of aggressive intergovernmental competition.(205)

Some feminists argue that federal-provincial politics only served the goals of women's groups.(206) This may be true but they were only able to achieve this under the confines

of federalism and under the terms and conditions established by the federal government, which set the formal agenda.

CONCLUSION

Chapter Three has described the process by which women's issues achieved formal agenda status. It was argued that the Charter represents the entrance of women's issues onto the formal agenda status. It was suggested that while on the surface, it looked like the outside initiative model was utilized by the feminists, closer examination of the process revealed that, in fact, the mobilization model applied because the issue was initiated by the Trudeau government. The feminists had to maneuver within the limits set by the federal government and react to its proposals.

The feminists were successful in getting Section 15 worded exactly as they wanted and having Section 28 excluded from the override, but only because their goals fit the federal government's strategy to outmaneuver the provinces. It was also suggested that agenda setting as a theory is limited in Canada because it does not accommodate the role of federalism. Chapter Four will further discuss the weaknesses and strengths of agenda setting.

CHAPTER FOUR

WOMEN'S ISSUES AND AGENDA SETTING

The purpose of this thesis has been to determine how feminists succeeded in placing women's issues onto the public and formal agendas. This thesis has also been about agenda setting and why governments address certain issues while ignoring others. A secondary purpose has been to assess the theory of agenda setting as expounded by Cobb and Elder, and to determine both if agenda setting theory was applicable to women's issues and if the examination of women's issues shed useful light on the theory.

Cobb and Elder developed agenda setting theory to explain how issues are created and why some issues gain the attention of decision-makers while others are ignored. Agenda setting is an important part of the public policy process because "control over or influence upon the process by which an issue comes to be placed on the governmental agenda is an important source of political power".(207) Indeed, after the constitutional victory in 1981-82, the feminists were taken seriously by politicians and the media, as witnessed by the 1984 and 1988 elections. As

well, policies dealing with employment equity, pornography and child care have had formal agenda status since 1984.

Agenda setting theory was chosen for this thesis because it offered a way of understanding how socio-economic and political change can affect public policy. Chapter Two argued that the changing socio-economic roles increased the political awareness and participation of Canadian women. It was argued that the dramatic increase in female labour force participation acted as a catalyst for the politicization of women. Some of these women - the feminists - formed into groups and began to pressure for changes in public policy that would rectify inequalities that they saw in the Canadian social, economic and political system.

Cobb and Elder argue that issues are created by trigger mechanisms or devices such as a natural catastrophe, an unanticipated human event, a technological change, an inequality in the distribution of resources, an ecological change, a war, new weapons technologies, an international conflict, or a changing world alignment. The trigger mechanism is dependent on the issue initiators. Issue initiators can be categorized into four categories: exploiters; circumstantial reactors; do-gooders; or readjusters. In terms of Cobb and Elder's theory, feminist

groups acted as readjusters and the changing socio-economic status of women acted as the trigger.

However, this thesis would suggest that the feminist groups are really the trigger. The changing socio-economic and political environment of women provided the ammunition for the agenda setting gun. The profound changes described in Chapter Two would not have resulted in public and formal agenda status had not the feminists acted as the trigger for the gun, so to speak.

The concept of the trigger is a weakness in the theory of agenda setting as Cobb and Elder treat it too quickly and neatly earlier on in the development of their theory. The three models of agenda setting do not even consider the trigger in their framework. While at first glance, it would appear that the feminists acted as well as the issue initiators, the constitutional process revealed that in fact the federal government was the issue initiator.

Another weakness in agenda setting theory is the concept of timing. Agenda setting theory is very non-committal regarding the amount of time each stage should take. It covers itself by arguing issues can be created either very quickly or brew for a period of time. However, Cobb and Elder do not define how much time is a long time.

Agenda setting is also flawed in that it does not take into consideration federalism. This is not surprising as agenda setting is an American model. While both Canada and the United States have federal systems, each has evolved differently. This has created a distinct version of federalism in each country.(208) Federalism in Canada is different from American federalism, in that it accentuates territorial cleavages. The Canadian federal system encourages federal-provincial battles and differences while the American system eliminates them.(209) This limits the usefulness of agenda setting in the unique Canadian context of federal-provincial relations. The politics of federalism was front and centre in the constitutional battle surrounding the Charter as the Trudeau government needed the support of the feminists to outmaneuver the provinces.

The battle over the Charter also demonstrates that there is a blurring between the outside initiative model and the mobilization model. They are not as neatly contained as agenda setting theory would suggest. The outside initiative model can be used to explain the politicization of women and the entrance of women's issues onto the public agenda. Entrance of women's issues onto the formal agenda can only be explained using the mobilization model. Perhaps this means that women's issues are too broad to be accepted onto the formal agenda, which is issue

specific, and thus, women's issues only entered the formal agenda when specific issues, such as the constitution, were separated from the broader category of women's issues.

The strength of agenda setting lies in the fact that it offers a way of explaining how issues are created and why some issues are dealt with by governments and others ignored. This fills a gap in the literature available on the policy process. Until Cobb and Elder developed their theory, the agenda setting stage was virtually ignored by students of public policy. In closing, agenda setting theory has provided this thesis with a means of answering the original questions posed: How did feminists succeed in placing women's issues on the formal agenda?

FOOTNOTES

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27. Ibid., p. 82.
28. Cobb and Elder, Participation in American Politics, pp. 82-84.
29. Ibid., pp. 83-84.
30. Ibid., p. 84.
31. Ibid., p. 84.
32. Ibid., p. 85.
33. Ibid., p. 85.

34. Roger Cobb, Jennie-Keith Ross and Marc Howard Ross, "Agenda Building as a Comparative Political Process," The American Political Science Review, Vol. 70., 1976, p. 126.
35. Cobb and Elder, Participation in American Politics, p. 87.
36. Cobb et al., "Agenda Building as a Comparative Political Process", pp. 127-128.
37. Ibid., p. 128.
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42. Cobb et al., "Agenda Building as a Comparative Political Process", p. 128.
43. Ibid., p. 129.

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51. Ibid., pp. 125-129.
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190. Pal and Morton, "Bliss vs. The Attorney-General", p. 31.
191. Ibid., p. 32.
192. For a description of the politics behind the conference see Hosek, "Women and the Constitutional Process", pp. 288-291.
193. Hosek, "Women and the Constitutional Process", p. 291.
194. Ibid., p. 291.

195. Ibid., p. 293.
196. Ibid., p. 293.
197. Knopff and Morton, "Nationa-Building and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms", p. 155.
198. A possible example of this could be the recent Meech Lake Accord and the process surrounding its development.
199. Audrey Doerr and Michele Carrier, Women and the Constitution, (Ottawa: The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1981), p. vii.
200. Ibid., p. 283.
201. Burt, "Women's Issues and the Women's Movement", p. 158.
202. Banting and Simeon, An No On Cheered, p. 21.
203. D. Kwavnick, "Interest Group Demands and the Federal Political System: Two Canadian Case Studies", Paul A. Pross, ed., Pressure Group Behaviour in Canadian Politics, (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1975), p. 77.

204. Richard Schultz, "Interest Groups and Intergovernmental Negotiations: Caught in the Vise of Federalism", J. Peter Meekison, ed., Canadian Federalism: Myth or Reality, 3rd edition, (Toronto: Methuen, 1977), p. 394.
205. Alan Cairns, "The Governments and Societies of Canadian Federalism", Canadian Journal of Political Science, X:4 (December, 1977), pp. 716-717.
206. Burt, "Women's Issues and the Women's Movement", p. 158.
207. Cobb and Elder, Participation in American Politics, p. 34.
208. For a comparative analysis of both federal systems see Roger Gibbins, Regionalism: Territorial Politics in Canada and the United States, (Toronto: Butterworths, 1982).
209. Ibid.

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