

Do Strong Women's Movements Get Results? Measuring the Impact of the Child Care
and Anti-Violence Movements in Ontario 1970-2000

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Do Strong Women's Movements Get Results? Measuring the Impact of the Child Care and Anti-Violence Movements in Ontario 1970-2000¹

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In 1970, the Royal Commission on the Status of Women released its final report, including 167 recommendations for improving women's equality in Canadian society. One of the four main principles stated by the Commission was "that the care of children is a responsibility to be shared by the mother, father and society. Unless this shared responsibility is acknowledged and assumed, women cannot be accorded true equality" (1970:xii). Shortly thereafter, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women along with a number of provincial women's groups began pushing federal and provincial governments to recognize the need for affordable, available child care spaces across the country. Around the same time frame, grassroots anti-violence groups in BC and Ontario were establishing the first Canadian shelter support services for women victims of violence and working to put the issue of violence against women onto government agendas. Although violence against women was not included in the RCSW Report, it quickly gained status as a central goal of women's movements across the country.

In 2005, Canadian women's movements continued to fight for policy gains to improve the availability of child care and anti-violence services across the country as the RCSW child care recommendations and the goals of early anti-violence movements remained largely unfulfilled. This leads us to ask how effective women's movements have been in advancing the feminist child care and anti-violence agendas over thirty years of lobbying the state for change. Can we establish a link between feminist movement lobbying and actual policy results? Do strong women's movements make a difference in achieving policy improvements or are these efforts largely in vein?

In order to answer these questions, this paper begins by briefly outlining the discussion in the literature about the often-ambiguous links between social movement organizing and public policy results. It then establishes the methodology employed to measure movement strength and influence on policy outcomes and discusses the choices for this case study. The paper then assesses the growth and strength levels of the Ontario child care and anti-violence movements from 1970-2000 and compares these to the provincial policy results in both areas during the same time frame. Finally, it concludes by answering the questions posed above and evaluating the overall impact of women's movement strength on policy-making in Ontario over the thirty years under review.

Assessing Movement Policy Influence

Susan Phillips has argued that any attempts to assess why governments enact policy or determine what factors affect particular policy outcomes are invariably "fraught with conceptual and methodological problems" (1990:777). Chandler and Chandler (1979) go so far as to state that no accepted model exists to "fully analyze the question of policy determinants" (1979:294). Arguably, the task of assessing policy determinants

¹ This paper is one part of my larger thesis dissertation, which deals with government responses to women's movements in the areas of child care and violence against women in Ontario and BC between 1970-2000.

becomes even more difficult when attempting to measure the impact of social movement lobbying on actual policy results.

One of the reasons for this difficulty rests with the nature of social movements in and of themselves. Social movements are different from interest groups in many ways, including the fact that they are not necessarily interested in interaction with the state or in securing policy change from governmental actors. Social movement memberships are also more loosely-based and informal than interest groups, involve personal and political identity formation, often operate locally and are as interested in building their own communities as they are in political action (Rayside 1998).

Many women's movements, particularly radical movements that are often extremely critical of patriarchal state institutions, have avoided broad state action. Yet, David Rayside argues that even radical social movements will ultimately call for legislative reform in their agendas and will engage to a certain extent with state institutions (1998:3).² Evidence below shows that radical members of the anti-violence movement who had chosen to disengage from state interaction, were still shown at times to lobby or support activists who lobbied the state to secure better service funding and to gain recognition for feminist solutions to violence against women. Researchers such as Jack Goldstone (2003) have noted that a combination of engagement and disengagement tactics can actually benefit social movement success rates, although measuring this impact and level of success remains a difficult task (2003:4-7).³

The difficulty in measuring the impact of feminist movements has also been acknowledged in the comparative women and politics and social movement literatures. Linda Briskin and Mona Eliasson's 1999 study of women's movement organizing and public policy results in Canada and Sweden noted that women's organizing has been indispensable in putting women's personal issues onto both public and political agendas. Yet they also argue that:

[t]he gains that women have made can be identified --- changes wrought in policy, institutional practices, representation, public consciousness, and self-organization. The role of women's organizing in effecting such gains can be hypothesized. But there is some difficulty, as others have noted, in reliably assessing the impact of such organizing (24).⁴

Katzenstein and Mueller (1987) have also stressed that there is "no simple linear relationship" between women's movement activism and government policy responses (13). They further argue that "what a social movement will be able to extract from the state is not knowable from the character or membership of the movement itself" but instead will involve an assessment of the political opportunities available to the movements which will vary depending on the states in which they operate (1987:10). Sydney Tarrow describes the political opportunity structure as "access to state institutions, the stability of political alignments, and the relation to allies and support groups" (quoted in *Ibid*).

² Other researchers have also noted that women's movements choose to work outside of formal channels even though they are not completely detached from political organizations (Klandermans 1990:122, Adamson, Briskin and Macphail 1988, Bashevkin 1993, Vickers 1992).

³ Also see Cress and Snow (2000) and Andrews (2001).

⁴ They cite Burstein et al. (1995), McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald (1988).

However, this paper argues that women's movements can impact their ability to access the political opportunities made available to them in different states, based on their ability to project a strong, united and coherent voice for feminist change. This focus on women's movement strength as an important indicator of potential policy influence has been supported by researchers who attempt to draw some linkage between movement activism and policy results.

Parties in power generally are most likely to view women's movement claims as legitimate if they share the same ideological goals and feminists form one of their key constituencies.⁵ This fact would arguably be true whether movements were either strong or weak. However, strong movements can also wield enough influence over government parties that have not traditionally associated themselves with feminist goals to achieve policy gains. Dalton, Kuechler and Burklin argue that "established political parties have been hesitant to respond to the political demands of social movements...due, in part, to the uncertain electoral impact of [social movements]" (1990:15). Lisa Young (1996) argues that the movement-party relationship is enhanced when each sees some payoff associated with the interaction. This exchange relationship is heightened during electoral contests when parties believe an electoral payoff will accrue if they respond favourably to women's movement claims. Women's influence around elections will thus increase if government parties believe they can cash in on this potential payoff and are operating under a logic of electoral competition.⁶

In short, movement strength can potentially encourage governments to act favourably. Sylvia Bashevkin (1998) argues that both external lobbying strength and internal grassroots strength affected women's movements' influence in the US, Canada and the UK. Her study ends by urging movements to evaluate government ideas and intentions, strategize accordingly, be aware of opponents' strategies and pursue a variety of political paths including partisanship and grassroots action in order to optimize their effectiveness (1998: 241-243).

Methodology - How to Measure Movement Strength in Ontario

In order to attempt to make the link between women's movement organizing and public policy results, this paper argues that it is important to assess how strong and influential women's movements are at particular time points. However, measuring women's movement strength is not straightforward and has been the source of some debate within the literature.

Research by Young (1996 and 2003) suggests we measure movement strength by focusing on how well movements can maximize their perceived electoral payoff. Movements are seen as strong and successful if they hold some threat of electoral cost to governments that ignore them, and some promise of payoff for governments that support their claims. Obviously a payoff is perceived to be present when the movement's goals are closely associated with the delivery of a large block of votes. In this case, feminist goals in the child care and anti-violence arenas need to be tied to the withholding or

⁵ For example, see Young (2000).

⁶ Herbert Kitschelt's study of the formation of ecology parties in Western Europe argues that parties often move between a logic of electoral competition and a "logic of constituency representation" which is "inspired by the ideologies and political practices of core supporters" (1989:41).

delivery of women's votes to the party in question.⁷ Although it is difficult to establish definitively whether a perceived electoral payoff was present in the case study below, the paper notes if and when women's issues were prominent during electoral competitions and whether or not party insiders identified women voters as targets of specific electoral promises and strategies.

A number of movement factors can contribute to a movement's perceived electoral strength. How cohesive is the movement/group? How much clout does it wield among female voters? Does the group have access to stable funding? How well do movement demands resonate with the public? Admittedly these factors are closely related. For example, the more financially solvent the movement,⁸ the more it can attract a wide and representative membership base. The extent to which movement demands resonate with the larger public will no doubt be affected by the nature of the claims being made. Claims that are made in non-threatening liberal terms will likely be better received than those made in more radical terms.⁹ For example, the former would include simple law and order responses to violence against women and the latter would involve tougher systematic changes to deal with women's inequality to men in society.

In the end, the evidence in this case study of Ontario indicates strongly that movement cohesion is often a key indicator of movement strength. Large, united movements are shown to draw a more stable funding base, representational legitimacy and more unified policy demands than divided movements and are sometimes able to project a perceived electoral payoff to parties seeking to gain or to hold onto power. However, cohesive movements are not always viewed as being representative of legitimate interests, even if they are strong, well-funded and present a unified advocacy agenda. Empirical evidence also indicates times when anti-feminist parties ignored cohesive movement advocacy, which was labeled as illegitimate "special" interests. It is difficult to measure movement strength with reference to issue legitimacy, since it is closely related to party openness to feminist issues in general and thus overlaps with other possible policy determinants that fall outside of the scope of this paper. However, this study attempts to delineate when cohesive movements were weakened by legitimacy problems and were generally unable to influence the policy making process.

Although the way in which movements organize themselves is sometimes used by researchers as a measure of strength, with the assumption that bureaucratic organization is more efficient and effective than more feminist participatory internal structures, some analysts have warned against prejudging one organizational design over another.¹⁰ Sandra Burt (1990) used a continuum of interest groups first developed by Paul Pross in 1975, but found that institutionalized groups did not necessarily garner greater influence than non-institutionalized groups, as suggested by Pross. She concludes that organizational design does not help us predict movement effectiveness.

⁷ Gender gap research at the national level by Burt (1993:230) as well as Bashevkin (1993:56-61) indicates that parties may also respond more to the women's vote if there is a significant gap in support for one party vs. another based on gender.

⁸ Studies by Les Pal (1993) and Susan Phillips (1990) argue that state funding can actually improve the chances of social movement success because it helps groups remain solvent and gives them access to governments.

⁹ See Young (1996), Heitlinger (1993).

¹⁰ See Briskin and Eliasson (1999).

Rayside argues that the resources available to a movement (including money, membership, access to information and media facilities) all count in some way toward measuring strength levels but that their weight must be assessed with reference to resources held by competing interests (1998:9). He also notes that the shifting nature of political contexts will help us understand which factors explain movement success and which explain missed opportunities.

Therefore, this study attempts to qualitatively measure movement strength fluidly, noting that these factors are neither static nor necessarily perceived in a uniform way. Using interviews with government and movement insiders, archival material and a wide range of movement and government documents, the paper will take into account levels of movement cohesiveness as a key indicator of strength and factor in indicators of perceived electoral payoff, where applicable. It does this by chronicling the growth and changes in both the Ontario child care and anti-violence movements between 1970-2000. The paper will also note the lobbying agendas of both movements and how these have changed over time in this section.

Measurements of child care and anti-violence movement strength levels will then be compared to child care and anti-violence policy gains and losses between 1970 and 2000. Although measuring policy results is not the only way to indicate movement "success", it is the most substantive way to show whether lobbying efforts are producing actual, measurable results. Policy gains and losses are calculated qualitatively and quantitatively by detailing significant government child care and anti-violence policy announcements and comparing those announcements to claims made toward the state by the child care and anti-violence movements.¹¹ The announcements are then classified by the author as positive, negative, or mixed toward movement activists.¹²

Ontario was chosen for the case study as it is a large, have province in the federation with traditionally strong women's movement organizations that operate on both the national and provincial stages. The paper has chosen to focus on one province in order to cover a wide time span (1970-2000) and two important feminist policy areas in some significant detail. The choice was made to focus on the provincial level because much of the responsibility for the delivery of child care and anti-violence programs has been shared between the federal and provincial levels of government since the 1966 Canada Assistance Plan. More recently, changes in the funding of these social programs, particularly since the 1980s, has meant that much of the fiscal responsibility has gradually shifted to the provincial level.¹³ There has also been a tendency in the Canadian women and politics and social movement literatures to focus more on federal women's movement activity and federal government responses to national-level lobbying, despite the fact that much innovation has occurred at the provincial level. This paper hopes to add to the growing provincial-level studies of women's movement activity and government policy responses.

¹¹ Not all policy announcements in these two fields are included in this study, only those designated as significant by government and movement actors.

¹² The policy ratings are made by the author after considering input from movement activists, government insiders, comparison to shifting lobbying agendas and comparison made over time. It draws on elite level interviews and a variety of government and movement documents and archival sources.

¹³ Fiscal downloading from the federal to the provincial level has occurred through the 1990 cap on CAP payments to the 'have' provinces, including Ontario, and the 1997 implementation of the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST).

The caution raised by Phillips above when approaching the difficult task of measuring policy determinants is heeded here, even though the final result will likely leave some questions outstanding. However, Phillips does argue that the best way to ascertain what happened in the policy process is to interview public officials. Even though these officials may not be entirely accurate in their recollections, they will often be able to indicate which factors influenced their decision-making the most (1990:777). Thus, this paper will rely significantly on interviews (both confidential and not) with government and movement actors to help unravel part of the mystery of what explains government policy responses to women's movements by attempting to draw a more solid link between movement lobbying and actual policy results.

The Ontario Child Care Movement 1970-2000

Table 1 - Ontario Governments

Year	Party	Leader	Popular Vote (%)	Seats
1971	Progressive Conservative*	Bill Davis	45	78/117
1975	Progressive Conservative*	Bill Davis	36	51/125
1977	Progressive Conservative*	Bill Davis	40	58/125
1981	Progressive Conservative	Bill Davis	44	70/125
1985	Progressive Conservative	Frank Miller	37	44/125
1985	Liberal/NDP Accord	David Peterson	38	48/125
1987	Liberal	David Peterson	47	95/130
1990	NDP	Bob Rae	38	74/130
1995	Progressive Conservative	Mike Harris	45	82/130
1999	Progressive Conservative	Mike Harris	45	59/103

*Note - The Progressive Conservatives had been in power since 1943 under different leaders. The period 1943-1985 is often referred to as the Tory Dynasty.

Source: Dyck 1996, Dunn 1996, Drummond and MacDermid 1997, www.electionsontario.on.ca/results.

Table 2 - Key Dates in the History of Ontario's Child Care Activism

1946	Toronto Day Nursery and Day Care Parents' Association formed to protest closing of war-time day nurseries – led to establishment of Day Nurseries Act
1950	The Nursery Education Association of Ontario (later the Association of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario) established
1970	Federal Local Initiatives Projects (LIP) provides limited funding to provincial women's groups and non-profit child care services
1971	Community Day Care Committee conference held in Toronto
1971	National Day Care Conference held
1972	Day Care Organizing Committee of Toronto formed
1973	LIP funding ends
1973	Federal Secretary of State Women's Programs provides limited funding to provincial women's groups
1974	Group for Day Care Reform established by DCOC
1974	Day Care Reform Action Alliance established to succeed the DCOC
1975	International Women's Year
1976	DCRAA disbanded
1976	Ad Hoc Committee Against Day Care Cutbacks formed
1977	Ottawa Carleton Day Care Association formed
1979	Action Day Care formed
1981	Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care established
1981	<i>Day Care Deadline: 1990</i> policy paper released by OCBDC
1981	Day Care Coalition of Metro Toronto (later Metro Toronto Coalition for Better Child Care)

	established
1985	OCBDC joins Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association
1985	Improvements to provincial advocacy funding begin
1986	OCBDC changes name to Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care
1990	Day Care Deadline is not met by government
1991	OCBCC holds 10 th Anniversary Conference and Lobby in Toronto
1991	Further improvements to provincial advocacy funding
1996	OCBCC halts annual conference and Queen's Park lobby due to lack of government participation

Source: Women's Movement Archives, Kyle et. al. 1992, personal interviews.

The Day Care Organizing Committee (DCOC) was founded in Toronto in 1972 as a coalition that tried to avoid the “dogmatic leftyism” demonstrated by more radical activists; it appealed to a wider range of women who were interested in “free universal day care” (DCOC Minutes of November 21, 1972 meeting, Women's Movement Archives), but remained a socialist organization (Prentice 1987:76). Even though it tried to draw provincial advocates together, the DCOC was not very successful in broadening its appeal due to limited funding, access to government and an inability to define a clear issue agenda (Kyle et. al. 1992:372).

In 1974, the Tory government released the Birch White Paper, known as *Day Care Services to Children*, the first provincial statement about day care. The White Paper suggested relaxing child care regulations in support of commercial operations and angered many in the provincial movement who believed non-profit care was superior to services that operated for-profit. Opponents formed the Day Care Reform Action Alliance, and mobilized against Birch's proposed cuts to staff positions in centres (DCRAA 1975, Women's Movement Archives).¹⁴ In the end, the DCRAA was unable to shift from its defensive campaign against Birch to a more proactive lobby for better quality day care. By mid-1975, the Alliance was broke; it officially disbanded in 1976 (DCRAA 1975, Women's Movement Archives). The fight against the Birch proposals was significant as it galvanized the movement against a common threat and demonstrated that there was strength in unity. Unfortunately, this unity was short lived.

The goal of a united child care lobby continued to elude provincial advocates for the remainder of the 1970s, at the same time advocates made real progress in focussing their agenda vis-à-vis the state and in beginning to publicize the need for child care services. Yet government access remained poor and funding was still an obstacle to growth.

In 1979, Action Day Care formed in Toronto. Despite the fact that ADC was a relatively small group of child care activists, it took a lead role in organizing and setting the agenda at the federally-sponsored 1982 Winnipeg Day Care Conference.¹⁵ Awareness of the lack of child care services was still minimal at the time, and the Ontario

¹⁴ Radical child care groups that joined the Alliance agreed to support a “moderate platform to uphold a basis of unity” (Prentice 1987:79).

¹⁵ While the 1982 conference was the second national day care conference in Canada, it was significant as a catalyst for forming the Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association later in the year and for focusing national attention on the need for universal day care (Confidential interview with child care advocate 2000, Prentice 1987).

movement under ADC's lead was "at the forefront" of child care advocacy compared with other provincial organizations.

ADC endorsed the creation of a comprehensive child care system under a "neighbourhood hub model."¹⁶ ADC's biggest accomplishment arguably came in 1981, when it helped to establish the first provincial child care organization, involving the Association for Early Childhood Education Ontario, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the Ontario Association of Professional Social Workers, the Ontario Students' Federation, the Ontario Welfare Council, the Ontario Association of Family Service Agencies, several teachers federations and the Ontario Federation of Labour. The Ontario Coalition For Better Day Care (later Child Care) sponsored a series of public forums on day care in eight Ontario communities and produced a policy paper on day care, *Day Care Deadline: 1990* (1981), calling for a "well-funded, not-for-profit, comprehensive system of day care" accessible to all families, to be organized in a separate division of the Ministry of Education by 1990.

The OCBDC focussed more clearly on changing the state through "larger policy frameworks on macro levels" instead of "hippy-dippy small-scale solutions" (Prentice 1987:83-84). It established a yearly lobby at Queen's Park and worked to raise the profile of the child care issue. Including teachers' federations and the labour movement within the coalition drastically improved funding levels.¹⁷ The coalition also gave the impression that it was more cohesive and that the movement's ongoing internal debate over support for not-for-profit care instead of commercial care options had been largely settled or was no longer important.¹⁸

In 1986, the OCBDC changed its name to the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care. The group also widened the provincial child care network by creating two sub-units, the Metro Toronto Coalition for Better Child Care and the Northwestern Ontario Regional Day Care Committee (OCBCC 1992, Women's Movement Archives). Setting up the latter group helped the Coalition to improve its level of representation in Northern Ontario and advanced the OCBCC's claims of being a truly provincial advocacy organization.

Movement lobbying for 'non-profit' care rather than commercial options became pronounced during this period.¹⁹ Even though some within the Coalition, particularly the professional associations such as the AECEO, were not as convinced of the merits of

¹⁶ The Neighbourhood Hub Model is an arrangement supported by child care advocates in Ontario and nationally. Its main features are a 'Hub and Spokes' organization which includes a variety of coordinated child care services including special needs programs, supervised private home care, care for ill children, overnight care, play groups, drop-in centers and toy lending libraries, as well as after-school care. Quality would be monitored by the state and the model would be funded accordingly.

¹⁷ Confidential interview with child care advocate, 2000.

¹⁸ Many in the OCBDC wanted to lobby for only non-profit child care to ensure the highest quality along with affordability. Others within the coalition were less happy with limiting the availability of programs by shutting out commercial child care options. While the importance of the not-for-profit debate did wane after the creation of the OCBDC and the formal adoption of lobbying for a not-for-profit child care system, disagreement on this issue would still cause some minor problems within the coalition even if these largely occurred behind the scenes. See minutes of Oct. 13, 1982 OCBDC meeting, Women's Movement Archives.

¹⁹ According to Prentice, "[e]very childcare article, newsletter, pamphlet and interview [from the 1980s] draws attention to the commercial issue" (1987:89)

non-profit over commercial child care, they supported the non-profit focus to remain part of the stronger OCBCC (Women's Movement Archives 1982).

Informal links to the Ontario NDP helped improve movement access to government policy-makers during the period when both Liberal and NDP governments held office. The OCBCC also became more state-focussed. In January 1987, an OCBCC document observed:

Things have come a long way since the Seventies. Now we are able to have our daycare demonstrations INSIDE Queen's Park with the politicians in front of us responding to our questions and concerns. In the old days, we would rally OUTSIDE Queen's Park, hear speeches and shout slogans, but essentially it all fell on deaf ears. This is perhaps the key indicator of how far we've come in a few years (in Prentice 1987:85, emphasis in original).

Government funding of OCBCC groups steadily increased since the 1980s and was particularly strong at the provincial level (Prentice 1988). This greatly improved the OCBCC's ability to lobby the state and communicate its message to the public. Child care issues continued to be seen as key demands of the feminist movement, which had also gained more legitimacy and a higher profile in the province and nation-wide during these years.

However, once the Harris Tories took office in 1995, all partisan ties to the government were severed, formal consultative bodies became inactive and the movement withdrew from its previous state-focussed agenda to one that avoided state lobbying. The most obvious evidence of this withdrawal by the movement was the 1996 OCBCC decision to suspend its annual Queen's Park lobby and conference because of lack of government participation. According to one activist, the government just stopped "show[ing] up" so there was little point in continuing the yearly effort.²⁰ The movement also backed away from contact with the official opposition during these years. According to Marie Bountrogianni, Liberal critic for Women's Issues during 2000, not one child care activist contacted her during the year and a half she held the critic post.²¹

The OCBCC protested against government cutbacks to child care under the Harris Conservatives by issuing critical press releases and submissions to committees. These actions occurred from a weaker position outside Queen's Park, instead of inside, were less public than previous mobilizations, and produced less media coverage of child care issues.²² During the Harris Tory years, the political agenda was dominated by fiscal concerns, tax breaks and a myriad of cuts to a wide variety of programs. Women's programs, including child care, had largely fallen off of the platforms of the major parties in the 1995 and 1999 elections. If they did get mentioned, it was on the periphery, which contrasted with the prominence of women's issues during previous elections, notably in 1985, 1987 and 1990.

The OCBCC vigorously opposed the 1997 downloading of responsibility for child care services to the municipal level under the Harris Conservatives, but were unable to

²⁰ Confidential interview with child care advocate, 2000.

²¹ As a result, child care issues were not a focus for the Liberal opposition and Bountrogianni was not moved to raise the issue until some of her constituents started to mention child care problems in 2001 (Interview with Marie Bountrogianni, June 2001).

²² Interview with NDP government insider 2000.

draw public attention to the issue. In the end, downloading raised the prominence of local child care organizations such as the Metro Association for Family Resource Programs and the Metro Coalition for Better Child Care, which were treated with more legitimacy and given better access to government channels than the OCBCC, thus fragmenting the movement among more locally-focussed groups.²³

In short, the child care movement grew in strength and potential influence between 1970-1985, worked through some internal division to reach its initial peak in the late 1980s and into the 1990s and, despite remaining united, saw its potential to influence the state dramatically decline after 1995.

The Ontario Anti-Violence Movement 1970-2000

Table 3 – Key Dates in the History of Ontario’s Anti-violence Activism

1973	Toronto Interval House opens
1975	First National Conference of Canadian Rape Crisis Centres held
1975	Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres (OCRCC) formed
1977	Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses formed
1977	Toronto Day of Protests against Violence Against Women held
1977	Women Against Violence Against Women formed
1977	Snuff out Snuff protest in Toronto
1979	Federal <i>Toward Equality for Women</i> report released
1980	Federal CACSW book <i>Wife Battering In Canada: the Vicious Circle</i> released
1981	Justice for Assaulted Women formed
1981	Ontario Status of Women Council holds Symposium and Brief on Battered Wives
1982	The Toronto Pink Ribbon Committee formed
1983	WAWAW and OCRCC protest versus video pornography
1983	Federal government releases new Sexual Assault law – Bill C-127
1984	Final Report of Toronto Task Force on Violence Against Women (the Pink Ribbon Committee) released
1984	Metropolitan Toronto Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC) founded
1985	Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic formed
1989	The Montreal Massacre
1991	The White Ribbon Campaign is established
1992	Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women held
1992	Education Wife Assault formed
1992	The Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children established
1994	Ontario Women’s Justice Network founded
1996	Coalition in Defence of Women’s Anti-Violence Services established
1998	May/Isles Coroner’s Inquest and Recommendations
2000	The Cross Sectoral Violence Against Women Strategy Group formed
2000	Emergency Measures for Women and Children’s call for all-party co-operation in the Ontario legislature released
2000	Coroner’s Inquest in murder of Gillian Hadley announced

Source: Women’s Movement Archives, Walker 1990, OAITH 1997, personal interviews.

Beginning in the early 1970s, grassroots groups worked to establish transition and interval houses in order to provide female victims of violence with financial support, temporary shelter, and legal advice in the face of growing need. After the first interval

²³ Confidential interview with MCSS bureaucrat, 2000.

house in the province was established in 1973 in Toronto, the issue of violence against women started to gain some attention in public discourse. However, anti-violence groups at the time were mostly concerned with service provision and paid less attention to lobbying for broader changes aimed at ending the victimization of women. The focus for many early groups was providing services for women victims where no services existed. As a result, most groups were small, locally-based and largely reliant on volunteer labour and donations.

Transition houses, women's centres and rape crisis centres formed in major Ontario cities between 1970 and 1978. While women's centres focussed on attaining equality and offered services to women victims of violence as part of that effort, transition homes and crisis centres focused more directly on delivering services, including 24-hour distress phone lines and legal advice. The groups mainly operated in isolation from one another even though they all were committed to ending violence against women. This isolation had much to do with a need to provide local level services, and the high costs of lobbying for systemic changes to prevent violence. Competition for limited provincial and federal funding, in turn, pitted transition houses, rape crisis centres and women's centres against one another and further separated these groups. Reliance on government funding also locked many of these groups into a service-provider relationship with provincial and federal governments, which drew attention away from the larger goal of ending women's inequality and preventing violence. Tensions within the movement emerged between working with the state for service funding versus criticizing the government for contributing to women's inequality.

Over time, grassroots groups in the transition house and the rape crisis sectors of the movement formed separate provincial organizations, which perpetuated divisions between them. The Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres (OCRCC) was formed in 1975 to share information and coordinate the lobbying efforts of the province's rape crisis centres.²⁴ In 1977, the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OAITH) was founded to represent shelters, transition homes and related services. While both organizations were more state-focussed than in the past, access to government channels was limited and advocacy efforts centred on securing more funds for service delivery.

At the same time, a broad-based anti-violence group formed that was less service-oriented and less state-focussed. Women Against Violence Against Women grew out of a November 1977 Day of Protest against Violence Against Women and the showing of a pornographic movie that featured female murder, entitled SNUFF. WAVAW in Ontario saw itself as a radical group that relied on grassroots protest to communicate its messages. It refused to work alongside groups that did not meet strict criteria for being "feminist," including "non-women-only groups" (WAVAW Statement of Perspective and Intent 1981, Women's Movement Archives).²⁵

After a number of high-profile sexual assaults and murders occurred in the Toronto area in 1982, a group of Toronto women joined together under the Toronto Pink Ribbon Committee to demand that the municipality do something concrete to stop the

²⁴ The OCRCC official website states that it officially formed in 1977, although the Women's Movement Archives has records of OCRCC activity dating back to 1975.

²⁵ Much of its advocacy was not focussed on the state but instead on society as a whole, through Take Back the Night demonstrations, pickets, and petitions (WAVAW 1983, Women's Movement Archives).

violence (METRAC n.d.). This led to the formation of the Metro Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC) in 1984. Unlike WAVAW, METRAC bridged the gap between non-feminist and feminist organizations, and focussed broadly on ending violence against women within Toronto.²⁶ Cross-sectoral and cross-national cooperation were rare during these early years.²⁷

Between 1985 and 1995, OAITH and the OCRCC expanded their membership bases²⁸ and were able to gain consultative status with the Liberals and the NDP. Yet relations between these groups and provincial governments were often strained. Both groups were very critical of NDP improvements in the anti-violence arena and were “adversarial instead of working with” state actors.²⁹ One NDP insider noted the government started to see OAITH in particular as not being very representative of the broader movement and noted that OAITH would “talk about shelters as being the most important,” were “territorial” and would only “fight for their part” of the available anti-violence funding as opposed to a wider agenda. This ultimately hurt the entire anti-violence movement, especially since OAITH grew to be the largest coalition within it and was seen as a leader even though it still mainly focussed on its own agenda.

In 1994, METRAC formed the Ontario Women’s Justice Network (OWJN) under full funding from the provincial NDP. The OWJN performed some advocacy work but was initially created to be a virtual chat room for local advocacy groups across the province as well as for women victims of violence to share information and network together.³⁰ As such, it performed a co-ordinating role of sorts between women across the province, although it was not focussed on bringing the movement together provincially.

After 1995, the anti-violence movement came up against a hostile government and any improvements to government access that occurred between 1985 and 1995 largely disappeared. But, instead of fading from public view as the child care movement did after losing government access in 1995, the anti-violence movement, spurred on by cuts to anti-violence programs, put aside their separate sectoral agendas and joined together to protest government action.

In 1996, OAITH along with the OCRCC, METRAC, OWJN and the Schlifer Clinic formed The Coalition in Defence of Women’s Anti-Violence Services. The Coalition was a cross-sectoral and cross-Ontario group formed to protest the 1996 Framework for Action on the Prevention of Violence Against Women in Ontario or the McGuire Report (Media release, April 28, 1997). The McGuire Report’s proposed cuts to anti-violence services and negative portrayal of shelter and crisis centre advocacy angered many activists. The Coalition made submissions to government and the media to protest what it saw as an attack on feminist services for women victims of violence

²⁶ For more on METRAC see Whitzman (2002 :101-105 and 108-109).

²⁷ In 1983, the OCRCC joined Women Against Violence Against Women in Ontario and BC to picket private video stores that sold pornography, particularly Red Hot Video in Vancouver (OCRCC 1983, Women’s Movement Archives). However, this co-operation was not formally sustained and once the protest had ended, both the OCRCC and WAVAW continued with their own agendas. This lack of cohesion and co-operation, along with tensions between radical and moderate approaches characterized anti-violence activism in Ontario during these early years.

²⁸ For example OAITH went from representing a few transition homes in 1977 to representing over 60 homes and shelters in 1996 (OAITH 1996).

²⁹ Interview with NDP government insider 2000.

³⁰ Confidential interview with anti-violence advocate, 2001.

within the McGuire Report. The coalition was successful in stopping many of the specific recommendations in the report but were unable to convince the governing Tories to reinstate crucial funding to feminist anti-violence service providers. The Coalition disbanded shortly after the furor over the Report died down, but cross-provincial ties remained in place as the OWJN took on a co-ordinating role using its website.³¹

In short, even though the Conservatives after 1995 were quite closed to the anti-violence movement, the movement improved its legitimacy by becoming more united and by trying to make the most of media coverage. Of particular note were two widely reported murders of women by their former male partners - Arlene May by her former boyfriend Randy Iles in 1996, and Gillian Hadley by her estranged husband Ralph in 2000. Each murder led to a separate Coroner's inquest in 1998 and 2001, respectively, and brought the issue to the forefront of public discourse.

Media attention after 1998 also drew together many anti-violence groups under a new umbrella known as the Cross Sectoral Violence Against Women Strategy Group. The Group drew up a set of demands, including large funding increases for anti-violence services, and requested meetings with all three provincial parties (OWJN 2000).

Overall, Ontario's anti-violence movement emerged and grew between 1970-1985, but the newness of the issue and divisions among activists meant it was not very strong. In the mid- to later 1980s and early 1990s, the movement saw continued growth under Liberal and NDP governments, but divisions meant it missed important opportunities to capitalize on this situation. By 1995, the movement was internally stronger but external political opportunities were largely absent.

Child Care Policy in Ontario

Table 4 – Significant Child Care Policies 1970-2000

Year – Party	Policy/Program	+/- Rating
1974 – PC	Birch White Paper is released	-
1985 – PC	Enterprise Ontario announced including New Child Care Initiatives	+
1985 – Liberal	Child Care Initiatives in Enterprise Ontario implemented along with further increases in subsidy funding	+
1987 – Liberals	New Directions for Child Care released including Direct Operating Grants offered to non-profit centres and private home day care to increase staff salaries and benefits. The 50% provincial share was also offered to commercial centres	+/-
1991 – NDP	NDP announces Wage Enhancement Grant	+
1991 – NDP	The Conversion Program is announced	+/-
1992 – NDP	JobsOntario program initiated	+
1995 – NDP	Early Years Program announced	+
1995 – PC	Early Years Program cancelled	-
1995 – PC	JobsOntario child care subsidies reduced	-
1995 – PC	Funding supporting inclusion of child care facilities in new school sites cancelled	-
1995 – PC	Conversion Program cancelled	-
1995 – PC	Policy limiting new subsidies to non-profit programs was reversed	-
1996 – PC	\$4,500 pay cut for all child care workers in non-profit centres	-

³¹ Ibid.

1996 – PC	Improving Child Care in Ontario policy review released (the Ecker Report)	-
1999 – PC	Integrated Children’s Services Division formed	+/-

+, -, +/- ratings established by the author.

Sources: Kyle et. al. 1992, Jenson and Thompson 1999, Child Care Resource and Research Unit 2000, Monsebraaten 1989, OCBC files, provincial government documents, personal interviews.

The Birch White Paper was released in 1974, when the movement was quite weak and divided. At the time, provincial Secretary for Social Development Margaret Birch announced that the government had no plans to increase general access to day care and would “not establish a system of ‘free universal’ day care across Ontario” (Birch 1974, p.4, Women’s Movement Archives). According to Birch, such a system would lead to large across-the-board tax increases for services that the government believed parents were “easily accessing on their own” (in Steinecker 1978:4, Women’s Movement Archives). The Tories pledged support to the needy, including disabled, low-income and native families who qualified for subsidies. The Birch Paper also proposed an increase in child-staff ratios and a loosening of training restrictions on child care staff to make it easier for commercial day care centres to establish themselves in the province (Steinecker 1978:5, Women’s Movement Archives).

Most of these proposals angered feminist child care advocates who endorsed free universal day care in more ‘utopian’ communities. They claimed the Birch proposals loosened licensing restrictions on new child care centres and threatened to destroy the quality of services in the province. Demonstrations at Queen’s Park attracted large numbers of advocates and garnered wide coverage in the media. In the end, lobbying efforts were successful in preventing the implementation of the Birch Paper proposals, even though the government philosophy behind it remained. The subsequent absence of any new policy or program announcements during the later 1970s and into the early 1980s demonstrated that the Tories were largely indifferent to child care issues and managed only the minimum in progress during the dynasty years.

It was not until the 1985 election that the Tories made significant and positive child care promises. Premier Bill Davis’ successor Frank Miller released the pre-election package titled *Enterprise Ontario*, which was part of a larger effort by the Miller campaign to appeal to female voters.³² The package proposed substantial pro-movement promises including \$30 million to provide for 7,500 new child care spaces over 2 years, along with \$22 million for 6 Child Care Initiatives aimed at helping mothers obtain job training. This positive shift in Tory child care policy was likely linked to a perceived electoral payoff associated with appealing to the much stronger and cohesive movement prior to the 1985 election. In the end, Miller was not successful in keeping the Tories in power, and *Enterprise Ontario* never became a reality. However a strong movement helped ensure a better package from the Liberals governing in an accord with the NDP later that same year.

In 1987, the Liberals announced a mixed, but mostly positive program entitled *New Directions for Child Care*, which created 6,868 new licensed child care spaces (Ontario Liberals 1987, Women’s Movement Archives). Advocates were pleased with the large increase in spaces yet, by 1988, a significant portion of the New Directions funding was redirected and Direct Operating Grants were offered to for-profit as well as

³² For more see Speirs 1986.

non-profit centres.³³ The redirection was seen by child care activists as a largely negative announcement and suggested that like the centre-right Conservatives, the Liberals were not strongly committed to explicitly pro-feminist child care changes.

Advocates rated policy advances under the Bob Rae NDP government (1990-1995) as the most significant of the entire thirty-year period.³⁴ These included the 1991 Wage Enhancement Grant and the 1992 JobsOntario program. The former raised child care workers' salaries by \$2000 per worker per year – making a significant improvement that the Direct Operating Grant announced earlier by the Liberals had failed to do. The implementation of the Wage Enhancement Grant saw Ontario become the first province in Canada to recognize that child care workers' pay was completely inadequate.³⁵ Although the \$105 million Conversion Program to convert commercial centres to non-profit status was seen by the movement as a mixed result,³⁶ substantial increases to subsidized child care spaces under the 1992 JobsOntario program were heralded.³⁷

After the return of the Conservatives to power in 1995-2000, negative policy announcements became more common. During their first year in power, the Harris Tories halted much of the progress begun by the NDP by cancelling the Conversion Program, the Early Years Program (and made it more difficult for school boards to finance Junior Kindergarten programs) and decreasing child care subsidies under JobsOntario from 100% to 80% (resulting in the loss of 9,000 spaces; OCBCC 1998). Harris cut funding for child care on new school sites, and eliminated the NDP policy that gave new funding exclusively to non-profit child care centres. The sheer magnitude of the 1995 cuts prompted OCBCC Director Kerry McCuaig to typify the actions as “an all out attack on the quality of daycare in Ontario” (quoted in Baines and Lightman 1996:149).

In 1996, the Tories eliminated the proxy mechanism that allowed child care staff to benefit from pay equity legislation. This resulted in a \$4,500 cut to each non-profit child care worker's salary. Also in 1996, the Tories released *Improving Child Care in Ontario*, also known as the Ecker Report, named after Janet Ecker the Minister of Community and Social Services. Reminiscent of the 1974 Birch White Paper, it called for lower wage subsidies for child care staff, increased funding for commercial centres, less frequent centre monitoring and higher child-staff ratios. Child care advocates were outraged by what they saw as the Ecker Report's willingness to sacrifice the quality of child care delivery in exchange for strong commercial centre support and relaxed child care licensing requirements. In the end, the Tories did not implement the report, but remained committed to supporting commercial child care centres in the province.³⁸

It is unclear why the Tories backtracked on this decision as the child care lobby was not particularly influential during these years. One possible reason was a shift in the Conservative government's approach to child care which surfaced more clearly later on

³³ Confidential interview with child care advocate, 2000; Kyle et. al. 1992:432.

³⁴ Confidential interview with child care advocate, 2000; Interview with NDP government insider 2000.; OCBCC file, Women's Movement Archives.

³⁵ Confidential interview with child care advocate, 2000.

³⁶ Even though it addressed advocates' long-standing demands to restrict financial support to non-profit care, the OCBCC saw the Conversion Program as a mixed result due to the fact that closing centres, even if they were commercial, did not increase the number of child care spaces in the province. Also see Tyyskä (2001).

³⁷ A total of 8,200 new spaces were created under the program.

³⁸ See Child Care Resource and Research Unit, 2000.

in its mandate from a willingness to address child care issues in the Ecker Report to a position that largely ignored child care and the provision of child care spaces in favour of a focus on child development services. After the 1999 release of the Fraser Mustard *Report of the Early Years Study*, the Tories “embraced” what they referred to as “an integrated approach” to early childhood development under the newly formed Integrated Services for Children Division.³⁹ Even though advocates viewed the Fraser Mustard Report with some renewed optimism mostly due to its focus on the benefits of high-quality care and education during a child’s first years of development⁴⁰, the new integrated approach did not appear to deal with improving the quality of child development services for children under the age of six as recommended. According to a bureaucrat in the MCSS, the new Integrated Services for Children Division did not concentrate on “child care narrowly but children’s services more broadly.”⁴¹ She argued that the ministry would focus on issues of “child health and education” and “the needs of the whole child” instead of throwing money into child care programs that were not what most children needed.

Later in 2000, the federal government agreed to transfer \$2.2 billion to the provinces for the next five years for early childhood development. Yet as of 2003, the Tories had failed to put any of that money into child care. Brenda Elliott, Ontario’s Children’s Services Minister, said in 2003 that the federal government believes “early child hood development means subsidized day care, and we believe that there’s more to be considered here” (in Campbell 2003:A15).

The analysis of child care outcomes above shows that all of the significant policy gains coincided with periods when the Ontario movement was cohesive, well-funded and strong. The 1985 Enterprise Ontario electoral platform’s inclusion of substantial child care promises was particularly significant for this study as it showed that the child care movement could motivate a party in government to address key issues if there appeared to be an electoral payoff associated with such a move. In the end, the Tories did not hang onto power long enough to follow through on those promises. However, the Liberal-NDP Accord went even further with the Child Care Initiatives announced later that same year, further rewarding a strong, cohesive child care movement.

The movement saw negative policy announcements at times when it was weak and did not hold much sway with the governing Tories. The Birch White Paper’s release in 1974 occurred under a fledgling child care movement that was able to mobilize more advocates to the cause to stop the white paper’s implementation. Even though this fight was successful, divisions, a lack of leadership and lack of longer-term funding was unable to sustain the success after the fight over Birch was over. The next time the movement saw negative policy results was in the late 1990s under the neo-liberal Harris Tory regime. Although child care advocates were united, well-funded and seemingly still a strong movement, the movement was labelled ‘illegitimate’ by government actors and the child care issue had fallen off of the wider public agenda. Advocates were able to mount some opposition to the 1996 Ecker Report, but the government decision to redirect money away from child care spaces into 2000 and beyond demonstrated the continued

³⁹ Confidential interview with Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services bureaucrat, 2000.

⁴⁰ Confidential interviews with child care advocates, 1999 and 2001.

⁴¹ Confidential interview with MCSS bureaucrat, 2000.

lack of movement influence during these years. Therefore, internal movement strength was not enough to secure favourable gains, and losses became more commonplace than at any other time in provincial history.

Anti-Violence Policy in Ontario

Table 5 – Significant Anti-Violence Policies 1970-2000

Year – Party	Policy/Program	+/- Rating
1981 – PC	All-Party Standing Committee on Social Development study the problem of violence against women	+
1982 – PC	All-party Standing Committee on Social Development releases <i>First Report on Family Violence</i>	+/-
1982 – PC	Ontario Solicitor General instructs provincial police chiefs to ensure incidents of domestic violence are investigated and charges are laid when evidence warrants	+
1986 – Lib/NDP	Ontario Joint Family Violence Initiatives for a five-year term announced	+
1987 Liberals	\$7 million increase in family violence spending– includes first second stage funding	+/-
1991 – NDP	10 new sexual assault centres and more funding for 21 existing centres – total increase of 250% under Ontario Sexual Assault Prevention Initiative	+
1991 – NDP	Attorney General directive to Crown Attorneys to fight attempts to make victims' sexual history admissible at trial	+
1991 – NDP	\$12 mil spent on wife assault prevention and \$8.3 mil on sexual assault prevention added to \$66 mil current spending in both areas	+
1991 – NDP	\$4.6 mil spent to improve accessibility of battered women shelters and 42 new beds includes some core funding	+
1992 – NDP	Additional \$11.5 mil to help prevent sexual assault	+
1995 – PC	100% of Ministry and Community and Social Services funding for counselling services for second stage shelters, education and prevention services, for provincial anti-violence advertising campaign, for counselling of male batterers and for culturally specific services was eliminated	-
1996 – PC	<i>Framework for action on the prevention of violence against women in Ontario</i> is released (the McGuire Report).	-
1997 – PC	Prevention of Violence Against Women: An Agenda for Action released with \$27 mil in new funding for Violence Prevention Initiatives	+/-
2000 – PC	Funding to Ontario Women's Centres is cut	-

+, -, +/- ratings established by the author.

Sources: Ontario Submission to the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Working Group on Wife Battering 1984, Women's Movement Archives, Walker 1990, OAITH 1997, Lightman and Baines 1996, OWJN 2000, Provincial government documents, Internal party documents.

Other than two very minor initiatives during the 1970s, state attention to anti-violence issues did not begin until the Tories conducted their own study of the problem in 1981. By 1980, the movement had achieved greater credibility at the federal level, reflected in the Status of Women report titled *Toward Equality for Women* (1979), and the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women study called *Wife Battering in Canada: the Vicious Circle* (1980). The growing prominence of the anti-violence issue along with a concerted lobbying effort by OAITH to get Ontario to study the problem of wife assault and shelter funding helped convince the Tories to acknowledge the issue of violence against women (Walker 1990).

According to anti-violence researcher Gillian Walker, the provincial Tories framed the issue as one of family violence instead of wife abuse, which corresponded to the Ministry of Community and Social Services mandate of responsibility for children and families. The family focus was not a feminist response but fit into the Conservative government's more recent "reinforce[ment of] the role of the family as a key focus for social welfare policies" (Walker 1990:123). This distinction was also important as it showed how the Conservatives cast violence against women as a gender-neutral issue from the beginning, which made it difficult for activists to persuade governments to accept specifically feminist solutions to anti-violence problems.

Yet it took some effort for the Conservatives to adopt liberal gender-neutral action on violence against women at a time when the issue was still not well understood by governments across the country. According to Walker, the Tories initially appeared reluctant to do anything with the 1982 All-Party Standing Committee on Social Development's *First Report on Family Violence* once it was released. Many within the Tory caucus were in favour of shelving the report, but pressure from female cabinet ministers Margaret Birch and Bette Stephenson helped convince the government to put some of the recommendations into action (Walker 1990:200).

During these years, the movement was generally divided and weak, although OAITH was able to help push anti-violence issues onto the public agenda and began to be identified as an advocacy leader as a result. This may help explain why a service-delivery framework was also well-established between the government and the anti-violence movement during the 1970s and beyond, as OAITH was more focussed on lobbying for increases to shelter funding during these years and not a more coordinated and broad-based agenda for ending violence against women.

Attention to anti-violence issues increased under the Liberal majority government (1987-1990). Yet, the only significant response during these three years was the mixed \$7 million increase in family violence spending, including new funding to wife assault initiatives and the first announcements of second-stage funding in the province (Walker 1990:203). Groups such as OAITH and the Ontario Advisory Council on the Status of Women had campaigned strongly for affordable longer-term or second-stage housing for battered women, and were very pleased with that part of the funding announcement (OACWI file, Women's Movement Archives). But according to Walker, OAITH was critical of the wide range of "traditional agencies and institutions" that would receive provincial funding, which left only a small portion for feminist organizations (1990:15).

The Peterson government seemed more open to anti-violence interests in 1988 and invited OAITH to consult on a new funding formula for interval and transition homes. However, the Liberals unilaterally announced the formula in the middle of the consultation process without considering OAITH's position, angering many within the movement (Walker 1990:203). Even though funding changed from a per diem model to core funding, the new formula allowed the provincial government to define core services, staffing levels under the existing hostel model, and the maximum length of stay for victims. The Liberals also wanted OAITH to act as a mediator between the government and the shelters. Advocates saw this as state usurpation of service delivery, which, they argued, rightly belonged in feminist hands (Walker 1990:203).

The fact that the anti-violence issue was still being framed as a gender neutral "family" problem, was also reflective of the lack of cohesion and strength within the

provincial movement during these middle years. However even though the movement remained divided, responses to activists improved dramatically once the centre-left pro-feminist NDP assumed power in 1990. Among the most notable movement wins were large increases in sexual assault and wife assault prevention and shelter funding in 1991 and 1992. The Rae government committed \$12 million for existing wife assault programs as well as \$20 million for a new sexual assault program. The latter announcement was particularly significant, since previous provincial governments had generally ignored sexual assault. The Toronto Rape Crisis Centre said that this period marked the first time in twenty years that funding was anywhere near the necessary levels to provide proper anti-violence services.⁴²

The NDP also made some attempts to adapt the criminal justice system to take the needs of women and the demands of activists into consideration. In 1991, the NDP attorney general directed crown attorneys to make every effort to fight attempts to bring up a victim's sexual history during sexual assault trials; this move was consistently praised by activists. However, even though activists recognized the NDP years were, in hindsight, the best of our study period, advocates were not always prepared to work with the centre-left government between 1990-1994, often preferring a combative approach to communication. An NDP insider noted that while the NDP were in office, there was "no respectfulness" from the movement and eventually the dialogue between anti-violence advocates, particularly OAITH and the OCRCC, and the NDP dried up.⁴³ On top of this, anti-violence advocates still had trouble projecting a united approach to ending violence against women during these years, which further frustrated communication between the two sides.

When the Harris Conservatives took power in 1995, government responses, not surprisingly, turned negative. Although cuts were modest in scope when compared to those suffered in the environment and education sectors, they had important negative effects on existing programs.⁴⁴ These included significant cuts in 1995 to the entire Ministry of Community and Social Services budget for second-stage housing, education and prevention services, male batterer counselling programs and culturally specific anti-violence services. The Tories cut interval and women's shelter funding by 2.5% in 1995 and another 5% in 1996.

In 1996, the Tories decided to re-examine anti-violence policy and drew up terms of reference for what they called the Framework for Action on the Prevention of Violence Against Women in Ontario (the McGuire Report). Increased publicity surrounding the issue of violence against women put it into sharper focus for the Tory government, but did not help the movement gain any influence. Advocates learned in a leaked document that the first terms of reference would not recommend any initiatives that might increase government costs. Once these terms were criticized in the media, the government drew up another set that toned down the language of fiscal restraint but reviewers were still "directed not to suggest any changes that would incur additional government costs" (OAITH 1997:1). OAITH and other groups criticized the resulting McGuire Report

⁴² Confidential interview with Ontario Anti-Violence Advocate, 2001.

⁴³ Interview with NDP government insider, 2000.

⁴⁴ Advocates cited these cuts as the most significant of our study period (Confidential interviews with anti-violence advocates, 2001; Interview with NDP government insider 2000; Interview with Marie Bountrogianni, June 2001).

because it focused on violence against women by male partners and ignored sexual assault. Advocates also worried about the Report's view of women's shelters and rape crisis centres as helping to create a victim-centred dependency on services instead of empowering women (OAITH 1997: 2-3), and about its implied support for further cuts to services (OAITH 1997:3).

The movement joined together, in a rare cross-sectoral response, to form the Coalition in Defence of Women's Anti-Violence Services. According to one NDP party insider, the fact that the McGuire Report was so "awful" provided a much-needed impetus toward bringing the movement together. In her words, "They were able to band together with the wolf at the door."⁴⁵ Yet, despite movement criticism, the Tories released *An Agenda for Action* later in 1997. It was a mixed but largely negative document, which backed off from specific critiques of existing shelter services but underlined the Tory commitment to "flexible service approaches and local solutions" (OWD 1997).

Early in 2000, three high-profile murders of women in the Toronto area occurred in just over a week's time.⁴⁶ The Liberal critic for women's issues in 2000 admitted that the media attention surrounding women's deaths in the summer of that year seemed to positively impact Tory attention toward the issue of violence against women.⁴⁷

In 2000, advocates banded together again to form the Cross Sectoral Violence Against Women Strategy Group to pressure the Tories to restore a commitment to feminist services. The group drew up a set of demands in a document called *Emergency Measures for Women and Children*. These measures included an immediate increase of \$50 million for shelters, crisis lines, sexual assault programs and the renewal of second stage housing, and a further \$50 million to implement legal reforms suggested by the May Inquest (including better legal aid funding). Finally, the group demanded better economic security for women as well as improvements to workplace safety (OWJN 2000b). The NDP and Liberal leaders both met with the Strategy Group and signed the document. However, the Tories only sent cabinet ministers to a second meeting with the Strategy Group after the media criticized the government's decision to send a parliamentary assistant to the first meeting. During both meetings, the Tories refused to commit to any of the measures put forward by the Strategy Group. They instead announced \$5 million for a program to assist children who witness domestic violence and a \$5 million increase in funding for transitional support programs just prior to the delegation's news conference. According to OWJN, some media mistakenly saw this as a "speedy and very positive response" to the delegation, when in reality the money had already been allocated in the Spring budget and had nothing to do with the movement's lobbying efforts (OWJN 2000b).

The analysis of anti-violence outcomes above showed that the 1980s through to the mid-1990s held a number of positive anti-violence gains for the movement, even though the movement itself was very divided and not particularly strong as a whole. Specific sectors were sometimes strong on their own, for example OAITH as leader of

⁴⁵ Interview, 2000.

⁴⁶ This increased media attention was also aided by the 1998 Arlene May Coroner's Inquest and 2000/2001 Gillian Hadley Coroner's Inquest.

⁴⁷ Interview, June 2001.

the transition house sector of the anti-violence movement, but the overall anti-violence movement did not work together during these years. Despite this fact, positive gains were realized, which indicates that even a weak anti-violence movement was able to influence government policy, although that policy often fell short of feminist demands. However, it is interesting to note that violence against women was not a part of the Miller Tory *Enterprise Ontario* pre-election platform. This was likely the case because the anti-violence movement was too weak to put the issue onto the Tory agenda. It is also important to note that initiatives to address the problem of violence against women, including increases to service funding, are not as expensive as child care costs, fit into a gender-neutral, liberal law and order framework and are more affordable and perhaps more attractive to all party governments as a women's issue.

Empirical evidence also demonstrated that negative policy announcements were present after 1995, including the first significant cuts to anti-violence service delivery and expenditures. This negative response sparked the movement to bridge some of its earlier differences in order to fight back against the cuts and improve its internal strength. This action was reminiscent of the child care movement's response to the Birch White Paper in 1974, but was only partially successful in altering the government agenda. The anti-violence movement was able to sustain its cohesion and strength, yet it was unable to substantially impact its perceived legitimacy by the Harris Tories and therefore unable to really affect positive change.

Conclusion

The comparative analysis in this study has shown that movement strength is able to positively impact government policy agendas and conversely, movement weakness can help facilitate negative government responses. Therefore to answer the first question posed at the start of this paper, it appears that women's movements in Ontario have been effective in advancing their agendas, but this effectiveness has been hampered when movements have been weaker. As to whether we can establish a strong link between movement lobbying and actual policy results, there does appear to be some connection but, the study did not demonstrate a *direct* causal link between movement strength and positive policy results. There are obviously other factors that come into play that help us understand why a government enacts policy favourable to social movements. However, the study did make a strong argument to include a measurement of strength, particularly when it uncovered the presence of a perceived electoral benefit associated with the child care movement in 1985. During that year, a strong Ontario child care movement was able to convince a less open government to add child care policy promises into its pre-election platform in order to secure women's votes. This reaffirms arguments by Young (1996 and 2003) that movements will achieve some success if they have the potential to generate electoral benefit to a party in power.

The lack of a direct causal link between movement strength and policy results, therefore, does not detract from the importance of measuring this variable when attempting to understand the policy influence of women's movements. Yet it does indicate that we need to look at other factors to understand how movements are best able to utilize political opportunities made available to them at particular points in time. Some of these hinted at in this study include the party composition of government, government openness to feminist concerns, and issue legitimacy.

In the end, it is clear that more research needs to be done to further uncover links between movement lobbying and policy results, as well as to further understand why governments make particular public policy decisions. It is also clear that much important movement activism and policy responses have occurred at the provincial level in Canada and it is crucial to continue to research this level of women's activity to understand the complexity of the relationship between movement activism and social movements' abilities to achieve substantive policy success.

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