BETWEEN COLLIDING WORLDS: THE INHERENT AMBIGUITY OF SPECIAL POLICY AGENCIES FOR ABORIGINAL AND WOMEN’S ISSUES IN CANADA AND AUSTRALIA

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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Abstract

Between Colliding Worlds: The Inherent Ambiguity of Special Policy Agencies for Aboriginal and Women’s Issues in Canada and Australia

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This dissertation explores the inherent contradictions surrounding institutional linkages between governments and social movements, by focusing on Canadian and Australian government units for women’s and aboriginal policy, such as the Ontario Women’s Directorate and the Western Australian Department of Aboriginal Affairs. These units are referred to as “special policy agencies.”

I argue that these agencies interact with two distinct external environments or “worlds” -- the world of public administration and the permanent bureaucracy, and the world of social movements and activists -- and that the values, characteristics and expectations of these two worlds differ sharply from one another. These differences create contradictory pressures on special policy agencies, leading to inherently ambiguous identities.

This ambiguity creates conflicts and misunderstandings, but also allows agencies to play boundary-spanning roles between the two worlds, linking tightly-organized public administration with fluid movements, to a greater degree than other state structures. The dissertation examines these boundary-spanning roles through several case studies of agencies. In turn, the case studies are organized around three variables affecting agencies’ roles -- political change, relations with other public servants, and the “new public management.”
I argue that special policy agencies are not just one of many interchangeable battlegrounds between social movements and the state, nor simply attempts by governing authorities to neutralize or dominate social movements. Instead, special policy agencies are best understood as shifting and ever-changing terrains of struggle, which provide valuable ground for studying the complex and evolving relationships between social movements and public administrators.
Acknowledgements

Conventional wisdom is that no one ever reads acknowledgements, but I suspect that nearly all academics secretly do check them out. And while it’s unlikely many people will ever peruse this particular dissertation, this section is important to me, and I want to do my best to recognize those who contributed to this study.

The idea for this dissertation came from David R. Cameron, who was giving me a ride down University Avenue one day in July 1995. I told him that I was interested in looking at the Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat as an organization, but that his recent RCAP study seemed to have already covered much of this ground. He noted that agencies similar to ONAS could be found in a variety of policy fields, and suggested they might be worthy of study.

From this I went to Evert Lindquist, who jumped at the idea and suggested a flood of relevant sources and starting points. Evert urged me to turn to organization theory to understand these agencies, and oversaw the development of my research plan and preliminary inquiries. When he departed to the University of Victoria, he arranged a seamless transition of supervision responsibilities to Graham White, under whose direction the chapters took shape and the entire study came into increasingly clear focus. Throughout the project, Sylvia Bashevkin and David Rayside played invaluable advisory roles, giving me support when I needed it but never letting up on their inconvenient habit of pointing out flaws and suggesting remedies in my research and writing. Nelson Wiseman and Peter Silcox served ably as the internal examiners of the dissertation.

Much of this research was presented at annual meetings of the Canadian Political Science Association, and I thank Ken Rasmussen, Robert J. Williams and Greg Poelzer for their valuable comments. Tone Careless gave important feedback on an early version of Chapter Five. Other political scientists and academics, particularly in British Columbia and Australia, also gave valuable advice as I went about my research. The insights of Peter Aucoin have been particularly helpful, as he both commented on an early draft of the research proposal in 1996, and served as the external examiner of the entire dissertation in 2000.

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Apparently some people struggle through their Ph.D.s without a lot of friends to support them; I’m glad I didn’t. The number of fellow doctoral students who made my life special over the last six years is immense, and I can only list a few. They include: Darin Barney, Cheryl Collier, Gina Cosentino, Mirella Eberts, Catherine Frost, Ellen Gutterman, Lawrence Hanson, Sylvia Kissin, Tim Lewis, Jeff Loucks, Elizabeth Moore, Julie Simmons, Andrew Staples, Neil Thomlinson, and Lisa Young. Special mention is due to Jenna Sindle for being such a good friend and her valuable advice on things Australian, and to Marci Wallace and Ted Glenn for many years of friendship. Most of all, Troy Goodfellow stuck with me from our beginnings of the program in September 1994 right up until his own defense six weeks before mine, always being my sounding board and happy companion in the Common Room of Massey College.

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My parents, Stu and Reta Malloy, have always supported my academic wanderings in every way possible, financial and otherwise. I have been blessed with wonderful parents.

Like so many doctoral dissertations, this one would never have gone anywhere without the support of a long-suffering spouse. Ruth is everything to me, and it is because of her presence and spirit and love that I managed, after so much time and so many seeming dead ends, to complete my research and the PhD. While it’s not much to give in return, this is her dissertation too.
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Chapter One: The Colliding Worlds of Public Administration and Social Movements

Introduction

This dissertation explores the inherent tensions between the worlds of public administration and social movements. It does so by focusing on institutional relationships between the two, and specifically on the contradictory roles of government units established for women’s issues and aboriginal issues in Canada and Australia. I call these units “special policy agencies”; key examples include the Ontario Women’s Directorate and the B.C. Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. My overall argument is that the worlds of public administration and social movements display very different normative values which collide and clash within special policy agencies. I explore how agencies evolve and develop ambiguous and shifting identities in response to these underlying contradictions at the heart of their mandates.

Why study these units? Although special policy agencies are commonly found in a wide variety of European, Canadian and Australian jurisdictions, only women’s policy agencies have ever attracted much scholarly attention. Almost no comparison of different movement experiences exists, nor has there been much study of agencies at the sub-national level in federal countries. Furthermore, little attention has been paid to how these organizations have coped and evolved under pressures during the 1990s to reduce the size and scope of government.

This lack of attention to special policy agencies is easy enough to explain. From the immediate perspective of social movements, the name and internal organization of government structures is not as important as the larger political context. The question of
who ultimately makes decisions is more important than the structures through which policies are developed and processed. Therefore, while movement activists and scholars may explore whether institutional configurations have independent effects on policy outcomes, most studies of movements and public policy have concentrated on struggles at the levels of governing parties, legislatures and the media, and external activities such as protests and demonstrations.¹

Similarly, public administration practitioners and scholars often consider special policy agencies to be quite inconsequential, compared to resource-rich line departments and powerful central agencies. With small staffs and budgets, agencies work largely behind the scenes in the ambiguous roles of policy development and coordination, in which it is "virtually impossible" to assess actual achievements or contributions.² Again, the most obvious and seemingly most significant activity takes place at what public administrators refer to as the "political level." The interests and priorities of the governing party seem to have much greater significance for policy outcomes than the structure and activities of a small policy unit.

However, I believe there is considerably more to the story. What makes special policy agencies interesting is not necessarily their internal structures and operations, but the fact that they bridge two very different worlds - public administration and social movements. Agencies are commonly a place of collision between the fundamental


values, norms and expectations of these two worlds, and agencies cope and evolve in different ways to deal with these tensions.

To survive as government organizations, special policy agencies must conform to such bureaucratic norms as hierarchy and “upward” accountability to elected officials. Yet to be effective and credible among movements, agencies must also adapt and accommodate themselves to movement norms of “downward” accountability, such as extensive consultations and more consensual decision making among diverse and independent groups. These pressures are different from the ones posed by ministers and governing parties – that is, no matter who holds elected power, both the permanent bureaucracy and movement activists will continue to pressure agencies in their separate ways. Of course, changes in government greatly influence agencies' goals, activities and available resources. But this study will show how agencies must contend with these other, more permanent pressures that often conflict with each other.

To be sure, these pressures are not the same everywhere; there are significant differences across time, jurisdictions and movements. But a clear contrast is evident between the two sets of expectations and values, particularly when these values are juxtaposed against each other in special policy agencies. For example, in the British Columbia Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs in the early 1990s, one division of the Ministry (Treaty Negotiations) represented the Crown in negotiations with aboriginal nations, while another (Aboriginal Relations) was explicitly designated to “act as advocates for aboriginal people within government.” As explored in more detail in Chapter Five,

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these contradictory roles have given the Ministry an ambiguous identity and unclear status among both public servants and aboriginals.

Of course, many government departments and other organizations play multiple roles and pursue functions that appear either contradictory or at least in tension with each other. Labour departments, for example, typically house both quasi-judicial tribunals that arbitrate between labour and management, and other units that explicitly advocate for workers' interests in areas such as health and safety. But the conflicts surrounding special policy agencies are more stark, the roles more contradictory and the problem seemingly insoluble. The demands placed on them are anchored in very different worlds of values and assumptions, which make compromises and balances very difficult to construct. A former head of an Australian women's policy agency described her dilemma:

The women's movement always had the view that we probably didn't go hard enough, or fast enough, or achieve anything...And that's true as far as their expectations are concerned. But when you're in the position you've just got to take the view of what's possible and what's not possible in the situation. Within government you were seen very much as a radical activist, and outside government you were seen as somebody who's putting a block on things and stopping things from happening.4

As this quotation illustrates, agency staff members see themselves as caught between very conflicting pressures and expectations. But the same person went on to say:

It was very much of being in the middle; and that's fine...that was something that I realized was our role, really: to try and represent government to the women's movement as favourably as you could and try and represent the women's movement to government as favourably as you could.

4 Confidential interview with author. All unattributed quotations in this study are taken from confidential interviews with the author, as explained below in the "Research Methods" section of this chapter.
Agencies evolve and adapt, although not always by conscious design, to their ambivalent position. Because they are "in the middle," they tend to develop ambiguous identities and play contradictory roles, and I argue that this assists them in working with the worlds of both public administration and social movements.

**Agencies as Links Between State and Society**

I am interested in studying these ambiguous agencies for what they can tell us about the relationships between governments and social movements. Special policy agencies are by no means the only type of institutional arrangement between governments and social movements, which are also linked by such structures as advisory councils, independent commissions and other entities (which I describe in more detail later in the study). But policy agencies are of particular interest because they are part of the regular bureaucracy - staffed largely by permanent public servants and integrated into the established hierarchy and order of governments.

Public policy scholars have long identified the importance for policy outcomes of connections and institutional relationships between state and societal actors. In particular, the broad "policy community" or "policy networks" approach to policy studies argues that differences in policy outcomes are at least partly dependent on differences in the configuration and activity of both state and societal actors involved in the policy area. Policies and programs are not simply a product of whatever governing ideology

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holds power, or of some mysterious “black box” of processes within the state, but are partly dependent on the configuration of relationships between government actors and societal actors.

In this study I build on these assumptions, but not in the way policy community scholars have often proceeded. Most policy community studies have started with structural and institutional variables rather than examining the underlying values, beliefs and assumptions of actors. For example, Atkinson, Coleman and Skogstad have developed a sophisticated typology of different types of state-society relationships. The typology relies on variances in the number of actors on either side; their relative centralization; and their autonomy from each other, allowing scholars to classify different policy sectors as pressure pluralist, clientele pluralist, corporatist, etc., based on the configuration of structures and their interactions. This focus on identifying and classifying tangible structural relationships, and their effect on policy outcomes, is also present in the work of Pross, Rhodes and others.

However, Evert Lindquist and Leslie Pal identify a second strand of policy community approaches which focuses more on ideas and values, and this is where my study builds. The most prominent of these approaches is Paul Sabatier’s “Advocacy Coalition Framework” (ACF), which does not focus on structural and institutional

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variables as much as Atkinson et al. Instead, Sabatier and his colleagues examine how state and societal actors interact through information exchange and policy learning. Allies tend to form “advocacy coalitions,” bringing together both state and societal actors and organizations “who share a set of normative and causal beliefs and who often act in concert.” These beliefs can be further separated into “deep core,” “near core” and “secondary” values. Advocacy coalitions consist of actors who share the same deep core beliefs - even if they differ somewhat over near core and secondary values.

For example, an environmental interest group and government environmental agency may share a similar deep core belief that pollution and environmental degradation are among the most serious problems facing society - but they may differ somewhat on the causes of pollution and what tactics should be used to stop it. In turn, a government mining department and an association of coal producers may share their own deep core belief that economic growth through activities such as mining is a vital need of society - but differ on how the resource is best managed and how much its use can be constrained by environmental regulation. These two coalitions - one centred around environmentalism, the other around economic growth - will struggle over a range of issues, with each coalition held together by the “core beliefs” that link state and societal actors together even when they differ significantly over tactics and priorities.

The importance of underlying values and beliefs on state-society relations and policy outcomes is also identified by Bruce Doern, again in the environmental arena. In

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10 Lindquist, “Public Managers and Policy Communities” 146.
his prospectus for an effective environmental policy coordinating agency, Doern argues that it must have a strong and supportive set of societal partners.\textsuperscript{11} To gain influence and resources in government, such a unit must be able to rely on the information, advice and political support of societal partners. But to build such relationships, the unit must have a strong “shared paradigm” with the societal partners – a clear and common set of values, assumptions and priorities that bind them together, much like Sabatier’s “deep core values.” Long-term effective relations can only be built on strong and deeply shared beliefs and understandings, rather than temporary tactical alliances or one-time efforts.

But special policy agencies and their corresponding social movements rarely or never have such shared paradigms, and thus are generally unable to build long-term coalitions. In this study I argue that public servants and movement activists tend to hold deeply different normative values and understandings of policy making and governance. While there may be vague agreement on very basic principles, such as the equality of men and women, the outlooks of each side reflect very significant differences in priorities and methodologies - differences that suggest they do not even share the same “deep core values.”\textsuperscript{12} This creates ongoing tensions, suspicions, and inherent ambivalence in their relationships.

Special policy agencies reflect these conflicts and the lack of shared values in many ways. Indeed, as we see in the chapters to follow, agencies are often established


\textsuperscript{12} Unlike other social movements, the environmental movement is more capable of engaging with state institutions because of the greater reliance on scientific and quantitative methodologies, permitting what Sabatier calls “analytic tractability.”
with vague and unclear mandates, reflecting the unresolved struggles between
governments and social movements seeking political and social change.

But special policy agencies are not just one of many interchangeable
battlegrounds between social movements and the state. Nor can they be defined simply
as attempts by governing authorities to neutralize or dominate social movements.
Instead, special policy agencies are best understood as shifting and ever-changing terrains
of struggle. They reflect and adapt to the ongoing conflicts and collisions of values
around them, developing ambivalent identities that attempt to bridge the two disparate
worlds. As such, they provide valuable ground for studying the complex relationships
between social movements and governments. By looking through the perspective of
colliding values rather than structural characteristics alone, we gain a greater
understanding of the dynamics of relationships and their possible effects on policy
outcomes.

**Agencies as Boundary-Spanners**

To approach and understand these agencies as shifting terrains of struggle, I draw
from organization theory concepts. A key tenet of organization theory is that
organizations tend to conform to their external environments and surroundings. Scholars
have shown how organizations evolve to meet the pressures and expectations of others,
often at the expense of their actual tasks or activities. This conformity is necessary for
the organization to ensure continuing support or survival, even if it becomes less efficient
or effective as a result.

In a classic article of this genre, Meyer and Rowan distinguish between the *task*
environments and the *institutional environments* of organizations, arguing that
organizations “dramatically reflect the myths of their institutionalized environments instead of the demands of their work activities.” The “task environment” is where the organization carries out its mandate and activities, while the “institutional environment” provides the organization with its structural setting, resource supply and legitimacy. The organization’s survival depends on the latter’s support; hence, organizations tend to reflect the “myths and ceremonies” of this surrounding institutional environment, regardless of their relevance to the organization’s actual tasks. For example, the physical setting of a frontline social services agency is more likely to resemble the traditional offices of the sponsoring government, rather than physical arrangements or hours of operation that might make clients more comfortable or the agency’s work more effective.

Meyer and Rowan’s argument suggests that since special policy agencies are government bodies, they will conform to the practices of the public administration world that funds them, rather than to the norms and values of the movements or constituencies to which they are nominally linked. And, as we will see, the practices and workplace settings of policy agencies tend to resemble those of other government units rather than those of social movement organizations.

Using a somewhat different approach, DiMaggio and Powell inquire why nominally independent organizations in a field (such as hospitals) tend to resemble each other and display similar patterns of behaviour. These authors note several forms of organizational conformity (“isomorphism”), including coercive and normative

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isomorphism. Coercive isomorphism is particularly evident in public institutions linked to the state, where the common denominator of government funding pressures organizations, such as social service agencies, to conform to a homogeneous model or face illegitimacy. The implication for special policy agencies is obvious: emulate the norms of public administration to maintain legitimacy within government. (In turn, state organizations, including policy agencies, often pressure clients and grant recipients to conform to similar models if they wish funding and support).

But normative isomorphism works in a more subtle and more consensual way. It is best illustrated in professional occupations: as personnel from different organizations draw together and standardize their credentials and practices, their autonomous organizations (such as hospitals or universities) inevitably come to resemble one another. This type of isomorphism places conflicting pressures on special policy agencies. For agencies it can mean either (1) conforming to the behavioural standards of the professional public service, such as neutrality, hierarchy and “professional” demeanor or (2) following the norms and values of social movements, such as extensive consultation activities, respecting the diversity of voices, and consensus decision making. These two pressures clash, producing dilemmas and tensions for agencies.

Thus special policy agencies feel pressured to conform to two different environments - the public administration world of which they are formally part, but also the world of social movements in which they interact to varying degrees. These pressures may be overt or subtle, and revolve to a significant degree around values and symbols - the “myths and ceremonies” or normative pressures mentioned above.
We might assume, as Meyer and Rowan argue, that agencies will be more attentive to public administration pressures since that environment has greater power over agencies' basic survival. But while this is often true, there are also exceptions and nuances that suggest a more complicated situation. For example, the experience of the Ontario Women's Directorate under the 1990-95 NDP government (described in Chapter Four) shows that if a political party with strong social movement links comes to power, policy agencies are likely to be directed to emulate movement values. Similarly, the personal background of agency staff may be rooted more in movements than in government; they may steer agencies toward movement values instead of bureaucratic norms.

In order to offer a more nuanced understanding of their responses to conflicting environmental pressures, I approach special policy agencies as "boundary-spanning" organizations. While formally part of the public administration world, agencies work in policy areas of direct interest to social movements, and may interact to varying degrees with social movements themselves. They thus sit at the boundary between the two, and work (again, to varying degrees) in two separate contexts of normative values and assumptions. Such entities are called "boundary spanners" -- persons or units in an organization responsible for interacting with elements outside the organization's formal boundaries, by processing information and representing the organization to the outside world.\(^{15}\)

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Organization theory has shown that boundary-spanning units often develop conflicting identities. Friedman and Podolny write that "one of the problems most frequently associated with boundary spanning is role conflict,"16 which is examined in studies of identity conflicts faced by employees with both professional and company affiliations (for example, a physician or scientist working for a private firm).17

This literature argues that persons and organizations with boundary-spanning roles often feel unsure or conflicted over their loyalties and proper roles. Kahn and others have separated these dilemmas into role conflict and role ambiguity. Role conflict occurs when clear but different expectations are placed on an organization or individual, and these expected roles conflict with one another. In contrast, role ambiguity results from a lack of information in a given position - the individual (or organization) may not be sure of what expectations exist, what resources are available, or how performance will be evaluated.18

What does this mean for special policy agencies? Most research on role conflict and ambiguity has focused on natural scientists working for private firms and government agencies, who may encounter conflicts between the needs and demands of their employers, versus the norms or values of their respective scientific and epistemic communities. Such "technical professionals" are portrayed as "torn between an


organizational and professional identity.” Similar dilemmas are certainly evident in special policy agencies and other government units, where some (but by no means all) staff struggle to reconcile their loyalty to government with their personal identification with a social movement's values and demands.

However, a number of researchers have argued that role conflict and ambiguity are not entirely bad things. Van Sell and her colleagues wrote in 1981 that “with few exceptions, research on role conflict and role ambiguity has investigated or assumed their dysfunctional effects on individuals and on organizations. Little attention has focused on the possibility that ambiguous or conflicting roles may contribute to organizational effectiveness.” More recently, Zabusky and Barley argue that company scientists and similar professionals do not necessarily experience role conflict to the degree that is often assumed. Instead, they argue, scientific employees may develop permanent “liminal identities” - that is, as people who are “neither quite in or quite out; they are “betwixt and between.” They go on to say that this “liminality is not necessarily to be avoided. To be betwixt and between enables freedom of movement and a type of flexibility generally foreclosed to people with firmer identities.”

The colliding values of the two worlds make it difficult or impossible for special policy agencies to avoid role conflict and ambiguity. But I argue that, precisely because of these conflicting pressures, agencies tend to develop ambiguous or contradictory

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19 Stacia E. Zabusky and Stephen R. Barley, “You Can't be a Stone if You're Cement” Reevaluating the Emic Identities of Scientists in Organizations” in L.L. Cummings and Barry M. Straw, eds., Research in Organizational Behaviour, Volume 19 (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1997), 361.


21 Zabusky and Barley, “You Can’t be a Stone,” 370.
identities which allow them to play boundary-spanning roles that link the two different worlds. This development may or may not be deliberate, but is an example of how organizations "self-correct" their design and activities in the face of new contingencies and uncertainties. As Van Sell and her colleagues suggest, role conflict and ambiguity can be the "...means by which organizations provide their members with the discretion to respond to new information and to pursue sequentially a set of conflicting but necessary organizational goals." They go on to suggest that "attempts to integrate and clarify expectations for such roles may reduce the organization's ability to register and respond to change." In other words, retaining a certain level of ambiguity allows the organization to adapt to new and conflicting demands, whereas excessive clarity may prevent the necessary flexibility.

In this study, I suggest that ambiguity and liminality can be useful characteristics for special policy agencies, allowing them to adapt to the inevitable contradictions and collisions stemming from the clashing values, pressures and demands placed on them by the two worlds. However, ambiguity also leaves agencies in permanent limbo, lacking full legitimacy with either side and remaining vulnerable to political shifts and organizational turmoil. Hence ambiguity has both advantages and disadvantages for special policy agencies, and this is evident in the case studies examined later in the dissertation.

22 Zabusky and Barley, 371
24 Van Sell et al, "Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity," 62
25 Van Sell et al, 62.
We cannot easily measure the relationship between agency ambiguity and agency effectiveness. As previously mentioned, it is difficult or impossible to assess accomplishments in the area of policy development and coordination, since so much depends on subtleties that are difficult to track and analyze. Hence, we cannot make definitive conclusions about whether ambiguity helps agencies operate in ways that other types of structures cannot. But this study shows in detail the conflicting pressures placed on agencies, and evaluates how agencies evolve and adapt in response. It then explores how these pressures and agencies' adaptation are further affected by different variables such as political change, the attitudes of other public servants, and new public management theories.

**Agencies Under Different Pressures**

To explore the collisions between the two worlds and attempts to bridge them, I look at special policy agencies in both women's and aboriginal policy in several jurisdictions. Following a general introduction to agencies and the pressures placed on them by the two worlds, I explore three additional factors that affect and exacerbate agencies' balancing act between each world.

The first pressure or factor is changes in governing parties and leaders. These actors are likely to prefer the views and priorities of one world over the other, ordering special policy agencies to conform accordingly. Social democratic parties may (but certainly not always) encourage agencies to act as advocates within government for movement demands, while neo-conservative governments may order agencies to neutralize or head off movement demands. Such shifts in the political winds, along with changes in public opinion and judicial and constitutional developments, present further
tensions for agencies. Agencies change from ambiguity to favouring one side over the other. Although this means clarity and focus in the short term, agencies become increasingly inconsistent over time as different governments come and go, leaving them ultimately without legitimacy or effectiveness with either world. This is explored in Chapter Four through a case study of the Ontario Women's Directorate.

In some cases, movements may not directly pressure government agencies to conform to their values and perspectives. This may be because they do not even recognize the government's jurisdiction over them, as aboriginal people generally do not, or because activists are reluctant to enter into relationships for fear of co-optation. In such cases, movements would rather have relatively clear delineations between themselves and the state. But this does not necessarily mean a diminution of the colliding pressures on agencies, since movement demands and expectations may be replicated by other government actors. In Chapter Five's study of the Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat and B.C. Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, we will see how this replication takes place in aboriginal policy, and how agencies are caught between different parts of the surrounding bureaucracy that place contradictory pressures upon them.

The third pressure is the influence of the "new public management" (NPM) theories and practices that spread through public administration in the 1990s. Broadly speaking, these ideas have argued for greater responsiveness and accountability of government units to both elected officials, and the societal "clients" or "customers" they serve. However, as I argue in a study of several Australian policy agencies in Chapter Six, new public management has largely created a third set of normative pressures and expectations on agencies. New public management attempts to clarify agencies' roles
and measure their performance and effectiveness. But, rather than helpfully reducing agencies’ role ambiguity, new public management tends to reduce agencies’ ability to bridge the two worlds and adapt to new contingencies. Consequently, new public management tends to create new conflicts and problems for agencies, either exacerbating existing tensions between public administration and social movements, or introducing entirely new conflicts and problems.

**Contribution and Significance of this Study**

This study draws from and builds upon several bodies of literature in political science, public administration, and the study of social movements - particularly women’s movements and aboriginal peoples. In addition to the policy network and organization theory approaches discussed in this chapter, it builds on both traditional public administration research, and the public sector restructuring and “managerialism” literatures. I rely heavily on several areas of empirical feminist research, particularly studies of representative political structures in Canada and the “femocracy” literature in Australia.

This project aims to contribute both academic and practical insights in these areas. In particular, it tries to provide a more nuanced understanding of the complex relationships between public servants and social movements. Many researchers have studied the relationship between states and movements, and particularly between
feminism and the modern bureaucratic state. But I want to document and analyze how special policy agencies embody the contradictions and tensions of these state-movement relationships, grappling with both the demands of movements and the expectations of other bureaucrats. Both movement activists and public servants already know a lot about these themes, through their own experiences. This study, by comparing different jurisdictions and policy areas, tries to bring this accumulated knowledge together, giving activists and public servants a greater understanding of their relationships with each other, and a context for scholars to pursue further research on the interactions between the two. In particular, I suggest that the boundary-spanning roles of policy agencies are not properly understood, and that their inherent ambiguity may actually assist them in surviving political and other environmental changes and adapting to new pressures and contexts -- in a way that other institutions cannot.

The dissertation also makes a number of other significant contributions. In looking at agencies, it offers a broad perspective on the dynamics of policy coordination and development within government. Building upon an earlier body of 1970s research, I explore the importance of various factors in successful policy coordination, such as access to political support, close cultivation of public servants, conformity to bureaucratic norms and standards, etc. But drawing from the more recent work in policy networks and advocacy coalitions discussed above, I focus on the crucial importance of “shared paradigms” between state and societal actors for building influence with external decision-making agencies.

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makers and achieving mutual success. The study adds to these bodies of literature - in particular, I apply policy network models to the non-economic policy area of aboriginal affairs. Additionally, I evaluate the effects of new public management practices in women's and aboriginal policy areas, arguing that these new developments in public management need to be approached in a more nuanced fashion. Rather than simply considering new public management as part of a broad neo-conservative policy agenda, I attempt to review its actual effects as an institutional and organizational phenomenon, regardless of governing ideologies and policies.

**Research Methods**

Much of this study is based on research interviews with public servants and societal activists. I centre particularly on the conflicting narratives they give when describing and evaluating special policy agencies. Because they view agencies through different prisms of expectations and normative values, public administrators and movement activists can give strikingly different interpretations of the same organizations. Even within agencies, different staff can display very different understandings and expectations for their organization. This study thrives upon such conflicting accounts and understandings, since my overall argument is that the worlds of public administration and social movements display very different normative values, and these differing values shape and colour their interactions with each other.

Over one hundred and twenty individuals were interviewed for this study, either in-person or by telephone, in Ontario, British Columbia, Victoria and Western Australia. The majority of these interviewees were public servants, from both inside and outside special policy agencies. It was difficult and perhaps impossible to identify and interview
the full range of relevant and interested activists and organizations in a given policy area, but a variety of movement activists were interviewed to provide alternative perspectives on both agencies and each other’s views. Five ministers or former ministers and several political staff were interviewed at length, and academics in each jurisdiction were consulted for further perspectives on government processes, movements, and the general dynamics of issue areas. All interviews were conducted entirely or largely on a not-for-attribution basis and, with one exception, respondents have not been identified in the text of the dissertation.27

In addition to interviews, a wide range of agency and other government publications were examined - particularly annual reports, business plans, policy statements and other significant public statements of agency priorities and activities. These documents were often discussed in subsequent interviews. Because most of the organizations and events described are less than fifteen years old, archival documents are limited and generally not well sorted; however, a large number of uncatalogued pre-1986 files from the Ontario Women’s Directorate were consulted through the Archives of Ontario.

Outline

The study is organized as follows. In the following chapter, I define more precisely what I mean by “the worlds” of public administration and social movements, and delineate their differing ideals, values and orientations. I then demonstrate how these values place different pressures and expectations on state structures, and how collisions

[27] A quotation from former Ontario cabinet minister Gregory Sorbara about his relationship with other ministers appears in Chapter Four.
between the two provoke conflict, suspicion and tension between the two worlds. In Chapter Three, I look specifically at special policy agencies, reviewing the available literature and discussing, in both historic and systematic ways, how agencies are created and evolve, what they do, and how they differ from other types of structures linking governments and social movements.

I then move to specific case studies of special policy agencies, and how they have evolved under these pressures. As mentioned above, in each of Chapters Four, Five and Six I focus on a particular variable - political change, relations with other public servants, and the "new public management" - and their effects on agency activities and interpretations of agency effectiveness. Throughout these chapters I also discuss other important factors such as the organization and configuration of movements and their political history. The study concludes with a discussion of special policy agencies' ultimate roles and contributions in the complex relationships between social movements and governments.
Chapter Two: The Colliding Worlds

This chapter describes the worlds of social movements and public administration. It explains why I call these “worlds,” defines their boundaries, and explores a variety of categories in which their respective values, orientations and other characteristics differ. The chapter then explores how the two worlds each place particular pressures and expectations on state structures, and how these expectations collide with each other. I emphasize in particular the conflicts over information and knowledge, and the mutual wariness and fear of co-optation felt by both movement activists and public servants. To discuss these worlds, the collisions and their larger significance, I draw on several different strands of scholarship, particularly from the literatures on social movements and public administration.

Throughout this chapter, the emphasis is on the most widely accepted norms and characteristics of the two worlds. This obviously leads to some generalizations, and tends to emphasize ideal rather than actual behaviour. But I want to focus on ideals, because they are the measures and guidelines used by each world to assess their behaviour. For example, public administration emphasizes the ideal of “upward” accountability to senior managers and ultimately elected officials. In sharp contrast, social movements place great value on the ideal of “downward” or grassroots accountability to their diverse components. While neither of these may always be present in reality, they are the standards against which each group tends to evaluate itself. This chapter describes and contrasts a number of such differences between the two worlds. This prepares us for a discussion of how the ideals actually collide in real situations, and how they place very different and contradictory pressures on special policy agencies.
The Idea of “Worlds”

The idea of “colliding worlds” is provocative for several reasons, but particularly because it suggests that we can speak of public administration and social movements as “worlds.” Can public administration be seen as an entity entirely separate from other portions of the political system - particularly governing parties and leaders? Is it possible to recognize and respect the inherent diversity of a social movement or movements, such as feminism, by containing movements within boundaries based on identifiable and shared characteristics? In this study I do not mean to suggest that these worlds are all-encompassing and impermeable, or that their inhabitants are in harmonious agreement. In fact there is considerable variety and tension within them - this is what makes a comparative study of special policy agencies worthwhile, as we explore the permeability and adaptability of each world as well as the varieties of behaviour and structures that develop and evolve. But the idea of “worlds” remains appropriate - for social movements and public administration are fundamentally different in their orientations, processes and normative values. This creates inherent tensions and contradictions in structures designed to bridge the two.

This section of the chapter explores different areas in which social movement activists and public servants have strikingly different assumptions, orientations, beliefs and goals. These conflicts are primarily around processes -- that is, whether the two groups differ on desirable policy outcomes, they definitely approach the processes and channels of policy making differently. Some of these areas are best understood as norms - that is, as values that are widely accepted and celebrated within a world, even though they may not always be evident in reality. An example of a norm is grassroots
accountability. Other areas are more characteristics - empirical facts that do not necessarily stem directly from value choices. An example of a characteristic is the much greater range and depth of financial and other physical resources available to public administrators. Norms and characteristics at times overlap, and so I have not drawn a strict distinction between the two. (For example, a movement organization may choose for normative reasons not to engage in a for-profit venture that would generate money for its movement activities.) The key point is that these norms and characteristics are widely evident and accepted in their respective worlds, and thus underlie the structures and colour the activities of each.

**Movements**

What is a social movement? How do they differ from interest groups and other types of political actors, or from other forms of collective activity? Are “new” social movements different from other movements? Movement activists and scholars present multiple alternative and conflicting understandings of movements - how they arise, why they exist, what their purposes are, etc. This makes it difficult to answer the above questions definitively.

A social movement might be defined fairly simply as a loosely organized grouping of individuals and groups aimed at social and political change, usually in a particular issue area. This excludes phenomena such as political parties, which are disciplined enough to elect single leaders, collect and account for their resources, and focus on contesting paid political offices. It also excludes such institutions as religious denominations, which are also relatively well organized with clear accountability and
decision making structures. These organizations may be affiliated with or provide resources for a social movement, but they are not movements themselves.

Social movements also differ from "interest groups." While some organizations within a social movement can be classified as interest groups, movements as a whole cannot. Interest groups tend to focus on particular policies and programs, and generally rely on non-confrontational techniques such as personal lobbying or letter-writing. In contrast, movements are "more challenging vis-a-vis the institutional status quo" and often turn to protests, boycotts or other more confrontational activities (although they also use the milder techniques mentioned above). Interest groups operate as organizations, often with formal memberships and physical facilities. In contrast, movements' boundaries are only partly defined at best, making them extremely open systems without formal leaders or members.

Finally, of course, and particularly crucial for this study, social movements are not the same as their corresponding societal groups. For example, the women's movement is not synonymous with women as a whole, or even with "women's groups," a category which includes groups that are not committed to political and social change. This is a particularly difficult issue for special policy agencies which are typically mandated to work on general "women's issues" or "aboriginal affairs," rather than issues and priorities identified by movements themselves. This distinction can also be exploited by governments hostile to social movements, favouring people who are from the societal group but who do not identify with the movement and its goals.

A special point should be made about why I call aboriginal peoples a “social movement,” since aboriginals in Canada and Australia generally do not accept this label for themselves. I do not mean to imply that aboriginal peoples are merely one of many movements within a society, as are feminist movements. Aboriginal peoples in Canada with Indian “status” as defined by the Indian Act refer to themselves as “First Nations” to indicate their identities as societies and nations apart from Canadian society, while other groups and individuals, such as Metis and aboriginals without “Indian Status,” may also claim sovereignty outside the Canadian state. In general, aboriginal peoples demand the recognition of inherent self-governing and land rights and to negotiate their own relationships with the Canadian state. Australian aboriginals generally do not identify themselves as nations in the way that Canadian natives do, but do strongly seek a special political relationship with the Australian state and the recognition of self-determination rights.

I also do not mean to imply that aboriginal nations form a unified group. Aboriginal nations claim independence from one another and are extraordinarily diverse in their cultures, values and political goals. Aboriginals holding “Indian status” in Canada are highly organized into over six hundred “bands” and nearly a hundred tribal councils. Non-status Indians and Metis display even greater diversity, and Inuit have their own organizations and dominate the government of Nunavut. Australian aboriginals are not as formally organized, but identify strongly with hundreds of different

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2 I use phrases like “Canadian aboriginals” loosely here for convenience, since my main point is that many aboriginal peoples within the current political boundaries of Canada do not accept Canadian sovereignty over them. Hence they do not identify formally with the term “Canadian aboriginals,” although it is a convenient shorthand to describe aboriginals within the political boundaries of Canada.
communities and tribal groupings. In short, the identity, needs, goals and aspirations of aboriginal peoples differ remarkably and defy simple generalization.

However, from an analytical standpoint the organizations, groupings and interrelationships of aboriginal peoples are similar in many ways to those of such social movements as feminists, gays and lesbians and others. Highly diverse with many internal disagreements, aboriginal peoples form a fluid group of persons strongly coalesced around shared collective identities, and they pose strong and non-traditional demands on the Canadian and Australian states. Hence it is reasonable to incorporate aboriginals into this discussion of the two colliding worlds, since they provide interesting similarities as well as contrasts with the experiences of feminists and other self-identified “social movements.”

Returning to the larger discussion, it is still a challenge to define and place boundaries on the term(s) “social movement” and/or “new social movements,” and this has become a crucial aspect of the academic literature. Edited studies of social movements often avoid defining the term, since the contrasting perspectives and understandings of the term are at the centre of the studies themselves. When definitions are given, they tend to be very complex and unwieldy. For example, Sidney Tarrow defines social movements as “those sequences of contentious politics that are based on underlying social networks and resonant collective action frames, and which develop the

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3 No formal definition of “social movement” is given in Doug McAdam, John McCarthy and Meyer Zald, eds., Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). In Russell J. Dalton and Manfred Kuechler, Challenging the Political Order: New Social and Political Movements in Western Democracies (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990) the authors offer their definition in the concluding chapter on p 278.
capacity to maintain sustained challenges against powerful opponents." He argues that they should be studied as "collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents and authorities."

Some scholars differ with Tarrow's tying together of historic forms of collective action (such as strikes or rebellions) with the forms of collective activity that emerged in the latter half of the 20th century. For these writers, there is an important distinction between "old" and "new" social movements. Dalton, Kuechler and Burklin argue that "old" social movements (such as agrarian reform movements or organized labor) can be understood as grievance-driven forms of collective behaviour by particular social classes, while "new" social movements (such as feminism or environmentalism) reflect a more ideological and broadly-based challenge. They argue that theories of collective rebellion or rational self-interest can provide plausible explanations for older movements, but not for the new movements. However, this dissertation does not draw such a distinction. It is particularly difficult to speak of aboriginals as a "new" social movement -- although they only began to organize politically on a large scale in the 1970s, they obviously emanate from historic identities and collectivities, and their perspectives and demands come out of this history. Similarly, the feminism of the 1960s traces its roots to the suffragettes of the early 20th century, and the varied strands and movements of feminism vary enormously in their challenge to existing structures and dominant

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ideologies. Hence I avoid the category of "new" social movement, which may overestimate differences and distinctions between different forms of collective action and political challenges.

Problems also develop between different approaches that emphasize different aspects of movements, particularly vis-a-vis politics and the state. For example, the broad "resource mobilization" approach focuses less on grievances and more on the available resources, organizations and leadership contributing to the creation, growth and decline of movements. But such approaches can appear indistinguishable from the study of interest groups like an industry council or neighbourhood association. According to McAdam, McCarthy and Zald, scholars have lamented "how little significance proponents of the resource mobilization perspective attached to ideas and sentiments."

Partly in response to the resource mobilization school, more "cognitive" approaches that emphasize the unique role of ideological framings and cultural prisms have arisen to fill this perceived gap. For these authors, social movements are best approached and explained through the ideological focus, shared meanings, and personal commitments and satisfaction experienced by those participating in them. Others, particularly those who emphasize the role of social movements in politics, have developed and emphasized the role of political opportunities and openings, or what Tarrow calls the "signals" to potential movement actors to mobilize or not to mobilize.

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7 Dalton, Kuechler, Burklin "The Challenge of New Movements."
9 McAdam, McCarthy and Zald, eds., Comparative Perspectives, 5.
themselves to action.\textsuperscript{11} As McAdam, McCarthy and Zald suggest in a recent edited collection, there is considerable overlap between these approaches, and they are best understood as different perspectives but not polarized schools of thought.\textsuperscript{12}

In many ways, the vast and diffuse literature on social movements reflects the diversity and range of social movements themselves (however defined). Movements consist of a broad tapestry of different ideological strands, drawing upon an equally broad range of tactical and strategic behaviours, and the literature attempts to grapple with this diversity. Dalton and Kuechler thus suggest that movements range along two major axes: the range of ideological orientations and the variety of strategic repertoires.\textsuperscript{13} This leads to varied combinations; groups with “moderate” ideological goals may turn to radical means, while more radically focused groups may still rely on relatively moderate strategies (the interpretation of what is “radical” and “moderate” is of course up in the air). With this diversity in mind, I focus on two questions to demonstrate what I mean by “the world of social movements.” First, I address whether there is a distinctive social movement style of political organization and behaviour. Then, if there is a distinctive style, how do its norms and characteristics differ from those of public administration?

If there is such a thing as “the world of social movements,” it should exhibit a distinct and reasonably unified style in its political activities. But it is difficult and perhaps impossible to demonstrate this conclusively, for reasons already mentioned. Social movements do not have fixed boundaries; their members, organizations and efforts

\textsuperscript{11} Sidney Tarrow, “States and Opportunities: The Political Structuring of Social Movements” in McAdam, McCarthy and Zald, eds., \textit{Comparative Perspectives}, 54.

\textsuperscript{12} McAdam, McCarthy and Zald, eds., \textit{Comparative Perspectives}
spill over and overlap with other forms of political and social action, such as political
parties, churches, unions, etc., and with their corresponding societal group itself. Where
do we draw the line? As well, movements (however defined) encompass a variety of
different levels of organization, behaviour patterns, and overall goals, and are usually
split into multiple strands with quite different strategies and orientations.

This permeability and diversity mean that movements are normally unable to
organize themselves into formal and defined associations with agreed priorities and
defined memberships. It is more likely, in fact, that in most social movements “we
immediately start out with opposing factions...opposition exists at every level.”14

Umbrella organizations that do emerge, such as Canada’s National Action Committee on
the Status of Women (NAC) and Assembly of First Nations (AFN), lack the authority to
enforce decisions on their members. Instead, in most social movement organizations,
issues of proper representation and participation in decisions tend to be more important
than “expertise” or unity of voice.15 Most movement activists are volunteers; their
involvement stems from personal identities and passions and they often give more than
they receive. As well, because movements are based on individuals identifying with a
collective orientation, it is difficult to set formal boundaries or establish membership
criteria. (Neither NAC or the AFN even offer membership to individuals; their

13 Manfred Kuechler and Russell J. Dalton, “New Social Movements and the Political Order: Inducing
Change for Long-Term Stability?” in Dalton and Kuechler, eds., Challenging the Political Order, 288.
14 Del Riley, “What Canada’s Indians Want and the Difficulty of Getting It” in Leroy Little Bear, Menno
Boldt and J. Anthony Long, eds., Pathways to Self-Determination: Canadian Indians and the Canadian
State (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 162.
"members" are hundreds of smaller organizations or aboriginal nations, respectively.) Therefore, not only are there few sanctions available to maintain formal relationships of accountability or responsibility, but such formality contradicts the core values of movements.

Therefore, elements of a movement are not brought together through formal organization or agreement, or even clearly shared strategies and perspectives. Dalton and Kuechler suggest that what does bring movements together is an "ideological bond" - a bond that transcends different organizations, goals and strategies and tactics. The strength of this bond may not be as firm as they suggest -- in fact, movements may be considerably divided over ideological questions. But movements do share common outlooks and commitments to political and social change, and these are rooted in shared and often deeply personal identities.

Thus, while we cannot identify a model of behaviour that fits all movements at all times, we can isolate some common norms and characteristics that are broadly applicable to social movements. As previously mentioned, these norms and characteristics shape the broad direction of movements and influence their disparate elements, often acting as checks on behaviour or ideals to uphold. And, as we see in a later section, they are strikingly and fundamentally different from the norms and characteristics of public administration.

See Jill Vickers, Pauline Rankin and Christine Appelle, Politics As If Women Mattered: A Political Analysis of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), especially p 211; see also Caroline Andrew and Manon Tremblay, eds., Women and Political Representation in Canada (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1998); and Little Bear, et al., eds., Pathways to Self-Determination.

Kuechler and Dalton, "New Social Movements" in Dalton and Kuechler, eds., Challenging the Political Order, 282.
Thus, the following eleven points describe key norms and characteristics of social movements. I have already noted the distinction between norms and characteristics, and their overlapping nature. Similarly, many of the following points overlap with each other. These points encompass organization, structure, hierarchy, accountability, resources, membership, personal commitment and ambitions, the role of personal views, decision making, relations to political parties and task/goal orientation, and each will be explained briefly below. (Later a similar list of public administration norms will be given, and the two are contrasted in tabular form in an appendix at the end of the chapter.)

1. **Organization:** Movements consist of multiple organizations and sub-movements, as well as many individuals without formal organizational affiliations or with multiple organizational memberships and roles. They overlap with other movements (for example, lesbian involvement in both women’s and gay/lesbian movements), political coalitions and “base” organizations, such as churches, from which they draw resources and other support.

2. **Structures:** Movements may spawn formal structures and processes, to ensure accountability to members or tactical advantages (such as qualifying for government funding). But there is often a preference for informal relations and understandings, either for practical reasons or as an explicit rejection of formal rules.
3. **Hierarchy**: Movements tend reflexively to resist hierarchy, and social movement organizations often have informal or unclear internal reporting relationships. There are rarely hierarchies of different organizations; organizations tend to treat each other as relative equals regardless of size, history or accomplishments.

4. **Accountability**: In social movements and movement organizations, “accountability” is very much a grassroots concept. A high premium is usually placed on activists and staff remaining in close contact with members and each other, “listening” to perspectives and views. Considerable emphasis is placed on remaining true to past struggles and movement history. Yet there is no such thing as ultimate accountability in social movements, since no overall structure or organization exists to enforce or coordinate it.

5. **Resources**: Movements usually have very limited revenue sources, and remain extremely dependent on volunteer labour, fundraising, support from other organizations and in some countries, government funding. (One possible exception is the labour movement, which in Western societies is closely tied to unions which raise dues from members. In turn, unions may support other social movements.) As generally shoestring operations, they often lack the capacity for long-term strategies and capital-intensive initiatives, such as information technology.

6. **Membership**: Of course, movement membership is not fixed, and depends ultimately on personal choice and actions. Efforts are propelled overwhelmingly by volunteers and
the contract staff of individual organizations, with a strong reliance on informal assistance and services from sources such as the legal and academic community.

7. Personal Commitment: Movement participants are chiefly motivated by personal convictions and goals stemming from the political and ideological commitments they share with one another. Because their affiliation and activism stem primarily from deep personal identities and choices, movement activity commonly becomes a central part of a person’s life.

8. Personal Views: The personal views of individual movement members may be subsumed or overridden for strategic and tactical considerations, but (at least in an ideal sense) there is a great deal of respect for personal choices and opinions. Personal choices to not support a strategy or effort because it is “watered down” or compromised are fairly common, and are often respected or even celebrated by the broader movement.

9. Decision Making: As with accountability, movements strongly emphasize “grassroots” orientations in decision making. Such grassroots activity generally involves considerable consultative exercises, where “consensual” decisions are strongly valued. Leaders act more as organizers and coordinators than as decision makers, and in negotiations can very rarely “speak” for their organization’s members (much less the overall movement) without going back for further consultations.
10. **Partisanship:** While movements very rarely affiliate explicitly with political parties or form their own (with the notable exception of the environmental Green Party), there is often significant overlap between movements and parties on an individual and organizational basis. However, activists are generally very wary of close affiliation with political parties because of parties’ discipline, pragmatism and focus on elections, and so when seeking links may try to retain unusual independence.

11. **Task/Goal Orientation:** Movements tend to be focused primarily on long term ideological goals and broad political and societal challenges. This leads to considerable internal conflicts between pragmatic and more radical wings on short-term tactics and tasks. There is often no agreed ideal; instead this is a characteristic dilemma with which movements constantly grapple in “an insoluble predicament.”

Let me stress again, at the risk of repetition, that these are not universal properties of social movements. Rather, they are widespread characteristics, and normative ideals against which movement organizations tend to evaluate themselves and others. As such, these norms and characteristics are crucial and central aspects of the world of social movements. In the following section I explore the norms and characteristics of the public administration world. Following this, I juxtapose the two sets to show how deeply and fundamentally they collide with each other.

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Public Administration

The literature and range of approaches to public administration are at least as diverse as those pertaining to social movements, but there is far more agreement on the nature of public administration itself. "Public administration" normally refers to the relatively fixed structures and permanent staff serving elected officials in governments. Sometimes the term is extended to the broader public sector of arms-length institutions funded by government, such as schools and hospitals; and/or the politically appointed officials found particularly in the American system of government. In this study, the term "public administration" refers to the permanent corps of paid non-partisan staff in government whose work is directly overseen by elected officials. This corps excludes temporarily appointed political staff, broader public sector workers, legislative staff, the courts and police, and arms-length regulatory and adjudicative agencies.18

Unlike the diversity that is generally prized by movements, public administration or "bureaucracy", as it is understood in the Weberian sense, values organization and structure. It is anchored in the ideas of control and accountability - control of issues, resources and personnel, and accountability up the hierarchy to elected officials and ultimately citizens and taxpayers.19 This emphasis on control is necessary because public services exist to serve others and wield coercive means to do so. Hence "bureaucratic...

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18 The terms "public administration," "bureaucracy" and "public service" have several meanings and connotations, although these are usually clear according to the context. For example, public service can refer to everything from a very broad concept of sacrifice (commonly used by elected officials justifying their career choice) to the specific corps in a given jurisdiction (i.e., "the Ontario public service"). "Bureaucracy," is used in a variety of ways - including as a method of organization ("bureaucratic") , a body of officials ("the bureaucracy"), etc. In this study I will use the terms "public administration" and "bureaucracy" interchangeably to refer to permanent "public servants" and their worlds, and avoid "public service" except to refer at times to the specific corps in a jurisdiction.

organization is...essential to a democratic government”\textsuperscript{20} precisely because it can be reliably controlled.

Unlike the political and ideological commitments that bind elements of a movement together, public administration tends to distinguish between the routine or administrative and the “political.” This distinction has a long history from Woodrow Wilson’s “politics-administration dichotomy” down to the current popular distinction between ‘steering’ (policy) and ‘rowing’ (service delivery).\textsuperscript{21} The advent of the “new public management”\textsuperscript{22} or “the discourse of management”\textsuperscript{23} in public administration has further emphasized the role of public servants as managers who implement “political” decisions made by elected officials. Thus, while social movements are built on challenging established precepts and contesting a wide range of public policies and institutions, public administration has always been exceptionally sensitive to issues of politicization and ideological bias. However, it is very difficult to define what is “political” as opposed to “bureaucratic” activity. For example, public servants regularly advise ministers on how to approach or avoid questions and criticism from opposition parties. While this is a nominally neutral activity, in the sense that similar service is given to whatever party happens to hold power, it is an obviously political task done for


political ends. Furthermore, although the public servant is designated as a non-partisan, they may still have very political views that can influence their behavior.

It is easier to identify the norms and characteristics of public administration than those of social movements, and many authors have made such lists. Max Weber’s classic description of bureaucratic characteristics includes: the impersonal growth of hierarchical organization and defined spheres of competence; hiring of full-time salaried staff based on technical qualifications; and making staff stewards, rather than owners, of the administrative apparatus. While there are obvious variations, this description of ideal bureaucratic norms and characteristics is clearly evident in the formal structures of public services throughout the twentieth century.

Kernaghan and Langford list seven “principles or ‘commandments’ to which the ‘responsible public servant’ is expected to adhere...: act in the public interest; be politically neutral; do not disclose confidential information; protect the privacy of citizens and employees; provide efficient, effective and fair service to the public; avoid conflicts of interest; and be accountable.” While they leave much room for interpretation, these ideals are certainly widely accepted and applauded in public administration, although are not always evident in practice. Similarly, a 1997 survey found the major values and orientations of senior Canadian public servants to be "obedience to chain of command, dedication and loyalty to the organization, reinforcement of authority, rules and regulations, restraining individual desires for

organizational goods, self protection and self interest."\textsuperscript{26} (The last two seem somewhat incongruent with the others, but presumably refer to career ambitions). A leading scholar of Canadian public administration reports that these characteristics correlate with his own findings in interviews with senior public servants.\textsuperscript{27} In a recent book, Dwivedi and Gow present a complex chart of Canadian public administration values and their evolution over time, distinguishing between values that are desirable and those that are actually observed. While too complicated to allow easy summary here, their lists support similar sorts of norms and assumptions.\textsuperscript{28}

Studies of Australian public administration tend to detect similar values. Halligan reports that through the 1980s Australian public administration generally followed other Westminster systems in its emphasis on career service, independence, accountability up the hierarchical ladder, promotion by merit, etc.\textsuperscript{29} However, as many scholars have noted, the growth of "managerialism" has had profound effects on Australian public administration, to the point that some argue the entire administrative culture has been transformed.\textsuperscript{30} This trend will be explored in more detail in Chapter Six's discussion of

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{26} Guidance to the Principal on Research Priorities for 1998-99 (Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Management Development, 1998); quoted in Donald J. Savoie, Governing From the Centre: The Concentration of Power in Canadian Politics (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 275.
\item\textsuperscript{27} Savoie, Governing From the Centre.
\item\textsuperscript{28} O.P. Dwivedi and James Iain Gow, From Bureaucracy to Public Management: The Administrative Culture of the Government of Canada (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press and the Institute of Public Administration of Canada, 1999).
\item\textsuperscript{29} John Halligan, "Career Public Service and Administrative Reform in Australia," \textit{International Review of Administrative Sciences} 57:1 (September 1991), p 347.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
new public management; for now, we will concentrate on the traditional attributes of public administration in both countries.

This brings us to a list of public administration norms and characteristics. Like the earlier list for social movements, it must be stressed that these are generalizations and sometimes ideals, and may not always be evident in practice. These are broadly accepted in the public administration world, and they are the norms and standards against which public servants and their organizations measure themselves.

1. **Organization**: Public services are tightly organized. Each jurisdiction has a single overall public service, with precise statutory boundaries. There are further divisions into clear and discrete departments, branches, units, etc. These designations are carefully measured and comparable - that is, within the Canadian government a department “division” is always headed by an assistant deputy minister.

2. **Structures**: This is closely related to #1, since the attention to clear organization also shows how highly public administration values the development and following of clear structures and processes. While informal relations and rules develop and often become essential, formal processes (particularly reporting relationships, business planning and budgeting) remain paramount and must be adhered to.

3. **Hierarchy**: Public administration has clear, multi-rank hierarchies. Reporting relationships are carefully detailed, and titles, job rankings and organization names are all important codes indicating levels of authority and responsibility. (The exception to this
The clear hierarchy is the relationship between different government departments and between personnel of the same rank. Nominally equal, there is often an informal hierarchy based on budgets, experience, personal connections, public profile and other less tangible factors.

4. Accountability: As with social movements, accountability is exceptionally important to public administration, but in an upward direction. Public administrators report through the hierarchy to elected officials, who are accountable to the legislature and voters. "Watchdog" agencies such as auditors-general normally do not hold public servants directly accountable, but focus on their political masters. There is some emphasis on accountability to "customers" or "clients," but this is not conceptually clear, and is largely limited to routine services such as garbage pick-up or drivers' licenses.

5. Resources: Unlike resource-poor social movements, public servants enjoy tremendous potential resources, financial and otherwise. While efforts to raise new revenue are constrained by public and voter opinion, public servants still have access to considerable corporate and strategic capacities for areas such as training, information technology, office space, etc.

6. Membership: Public services have fixed memberships, since members are paid employees who are recruited and resign, retire or are dismissed. The same formal relationships and roles govern both temporary members (secondments and contract
workers) and permanent public servants. Public servants below the management level are usually organized into bargaining units with fixed boundaries and clear rules.

7. **Personal Commitment:** Since they have paid jobs, most public servants’ efforts and commitments are propelled by wage relationships and career ambitions. While many public servants are committed to broader ideals of “public service” and enjoy working in government, commitments to individual issue areas vary greatly. Lateral moves to different issue areas are often encouraged, either for simple variety or to gain new skills and experiences for careers. Public administration is not a lifestyle, as social movement activism can be, and its effects on personal lives are usually no greater than those of any other job or occupation.

8. **Personal Views and Behaviour:** The behaviour of public servants is often different from their personal views, which are expected to be subsumed to the decisions of elected officials and more senior public servants. Furthermore, public servants’ actions are often inconsistent over time, due to changes in governments and officials. Public servants that fail to carry out directives are likely to be punished or dismissed; “moral choices” are likely to be respected only if they are accompanied by resignations.

9. **Decision making:** Decision making in public administration is generally hierarchical. While there is considerable team or consensus decision making between equals, higher officials retain final authority and make most major decisions. Thus decision making is closely linked to the above concepts of hierarchy and accountability.
10. **Partisanship:** Routine services in public administration are to be delivered in a non-partisan manner, while policy work and program initiatives follow the directives of governing parties. The latter activity might be described as "political," since it adheres to governing ideologies, and public servants advise governing leaders on the political implications of their decisions. But as mentioned above, it is not strictly "partisan," in the sense that public servants will give similar service to whatever party happens to hold power. Senior bureaucrats are generally expected to remain non-partisan in their personal lives, while other public servants are expected to keep a clear division between their work and their partisan beliefs and activities.

11. **Task/Goal Orientation:** Public administration is focused on both short- and long-term tasks. Most units and individual public servants tend to be focused on relatively short-term tasks - either routine daily services or projects that take two years or less to develop or implement. Unlike the ideology-pragmatism debate in social movements, public administration is more likely to engage more uniformly in pragmatic bargaining, trade-offs and compromises in the setting and pursuit of objectives and goals.

These are the key norms and characteristics of public administration. Like the earlier description of social movements, they may not always be evident in practice, but they clearly reflect the broad expectations and experiences of public administration.
Pressures on State Structures

To show how these norms and characteristics create particular pressures and challenges for state structures, I will examine their effects on two types of government institutions. The first, advisory councils for women’s issues, illustrate the challenges presented by social movements. The second type, horizontal ministries, demonstrate the pressures of public administration.

Social Movement Representation in State Structures

The relationships between governments and social movements are usually vertical; arrangements are top-down and governments have greater resources and power. Movements lobby and pressure governments to take action in various ways, but have few sanctions available to compel action. In fact, movements in many countries rely on state agencies for funding, creating a tense and imbalanced relationship of dependency.

Movement-government relationships take many institutional forms, including core funding of organizations and contracts to deliver services. But to explore the pressures placed by social movements on state structures, I focus here on government-appointed “advisory councils,” and particularly advisory councils for women’s issues. These are government bodies, but are outside the boundaries of the regular public service — unlike the special policy agencies on which this study concentrates. Councils normally consist of individuals appointed by government, but these people are not public servants. Similarly, councils usually report directly to ministers, and are not directly linked to the regular bureaucracy. The formal mandates of these councils are inevitably to “advise” governments, and particularly ministers, of the needs, concerns and demands of a
particular social group - not a social movement. Thus women’s advisory councils advise
ministers of the views of “women,” rather than those of feminist movements. To carry
out these mandates, councils hold consultation meetings and roundtables, generate
reports, commission research studies, sponsor public education campaigns, etc.

Advisory councils appear to stem in part from older ideas of elite accommodation,
rather than movement-centred ideals of participation and diversity. From the view of at
least some activists, advisory councils should only be temporary expedients rather than
permanently desirable arrangements. In Australia, according to Marian Sawer,
“(w)omen’s advisory councils were envisaged by feminists as an important means for
ensuring that women had a say in government, particularly in the 1970s when women
were almost uniformly absent from Australian Parliaments and from senior levels of
bureaucracy”31 But some governments may feel that appointing advisory councils will
sufficiently assuage movement demands, and so advisory councils have often been
initiatives of relatively conservative regimes. For example, the advisory councils in
Ontario, Alberta, New South Wales and Victoria were all created by Progressive
Conservative and Coalition governments in the 1970s. In contrast, when Labor and New
Democrat governments created advisory councils in Western Australia, Queensland,
Manitoba and Saskatchewan, they set up special policy agencies within the regular
bureaucracy at the same time - suggesting that councils by themselves were not

181. See also Lyndsay Connors, “The Politics of the National Women’s Advisory Council” in Marian
sufficient.\textsuperscript{32} (Below I will discuss in more detail the differences between councils and special policy agencies.) One reason why advisory councils may be more palatable to conservative governments is that councils represent members of the societal \textit{group}, not the social \textit{movement}. Thus women's councils are presented as representing all women, not just feminists, and have often featured members from very traditional and non-feminist organizations.

Advisory councils do produce a range of research and resources for women, such as educational materials for schools or information and referral lines. They can also contribute to public policy by publicizing issues and providing forums to continue discussion and debate, although some scholars suggest this can actually detract from issues, by manipulating discourse and excusing or masking government actions.\textsuperscript{33} Generally, feminist activists have little confidence that councils can be made legitimate and representative bodies. Feminists protested when the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women and the Ontario Advisory Council on Women's Issues were eliminated (in 1995 and 1996, respectively), with governments arguing the councils' functions of consultation and communications could be performed by Status of Women

\textsuperscript{32}Circumstances are more complex at the federal level, where both Canada and Australia created their policy agencies prior to their advisory councils. The Australian council was created by the Liberal-National government in 1978 at the same time that the Women's Interests Branch was shifted from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Canadian council was created in 1973, two years after the Status of Women unit began in the Privy Council Office, and during a Liberal minority government when the NDP held the balance of power.

\textsuperscript{33}Lise Gotell, "A Critical Look at State Discourse on 'Violence Against Women'; Some Implications for Feminist Politics and Women's Citizenship" in Andrew and Tremblay, eds., \textit{Women and Political Representation in Canada}. Gotell looks primarily at Royal Commissions rather than advisory councils, but her arguments are generally applicable to the latter.
Canada and the Ontario Women’s Directorate. But it is significant that there have not been widespread calls for the reinstatement of the councils in their previous form.

Looking at the experiences of advisory councils and their relations with feminist movements gives us a clear view of the impact of movement norms and characteristics on state structures. Unlike units in the regular bureaucracy, advisory councils were designed with more freedom and flexibility to interact with societal groups and activists. But this freedom was not enough, and councils have generally failed to find solutions to at least four key issues emanating from movement norms. These four are (1) the preference for collective rather than individual representation, (2) activists’ relations with political parties, (3) the necessity for diverse agendas, and (4) the danger of co-optation. Each illuminates a particular issue or problem affecting state bodies’ ability to represent the full diversity of movements.

Of course, structures do not need to respond to movement norms to ensure their survival. In fact, agencies may be more likely to survive as government entities if they ignore the concerns of movements. They may become ineffective as representatives of either the societal group or movement, but still retain status and some resources as long as they serve government in some way, even if that purpose is only symbolic. They thus illustrate Meyer and Rowan’s argument (Chapter One) that organizations can survive by emulating the “myths and ceremonies” of their institutional environment, even at the expense of their actual activities and effectiveness.

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34 The Ontario council was eliminated along with twenty-one other similar advisory boards and commissions, on the recommendations of the Agency Reform Commission, a committee of government
Collective Representation through Individuals

The first problem is the difficulty of representing collective movements through individuals. Advisory councils are founded on an assumption that the accumulated knowledge, opinions and demands of a group can be substantially funnelled through a small collection of individuals appointed to the council. Across government the general purpose of advisory boards is to give governments an outside source of supposedly detached advice, from persons who have the experience and credentials to speak on behalf of their group. Thus in medicine, law and various industries, members are drawn from professional or trade associations where credentials and/or peer opinion are relatively clear and measurable.

In contrast, it is more difficult to set the criteria for membership on advisory councils for social movements. There are no fixed governing bodies or professional credentials in social movements, and the diversity of movements prevents easy identification of individuals who can speak on behalf of broad groupings. Movement leaders and spokespersons are expected to make considerable efforts to consult and understand the diversity of voices in movements before speaking for them, and to be very careful not to overstate their status or ability to represent the full range of movement perspectives and demands. The unorganized nature of most groups and movements means that others may speak and act independently; a movement representative, therefore, cannot necessarily “deliver the vote” or ensure that “everyone is on side.” This presents a significant problem for advisory councils, even when appointed by

backbenchers. This was thus not just an attack on the idea of arms-length representation of women, but a general reduction of organized and independent advice to government on many issues.
governments that are strongly connected to feminist movements and appear genuinely interested in receiving advice from councils.

Because of the difficulties of representing such a multifaceted movement, advisory council appointments can vary widely and include individuals whose links to and legitimacy with feminist movements are unclear. Some governments, notably the Victoria Labor government of 1982-92, attempted to resolve this problem by designating council seats for different organizations. But this expands the problem: what criteria should be used to select organizations? This ambiguity is exploited by hostile governments and confuses indifferent governments, often leading to the appointment of women with substantial personal achievements (often in business or mainstream professions) but few ties to the organizations and networks of the feminist movements. A further complication is that the groups most capable of agreeing and nominating councillors tend to be the most traditional and moderate. Non-feminist and openly anti-feminist groups may therefore appear in the forefront pressing for council seats. The result is that, as two researchers declared, "(l)ooking from the inside out, the [Canadian Advisory] Council [on the Status of Women] is often mistaken for a feminist group by elected officials and bureaucrats alike." The council may be legitimate in the eyes of government, but not the movement.

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35 In Australia, members of the Countrywomen's Association are common fixtures on advisory councils. This association is primarily identified with traditional, older farm housewives.

Partisanship and Movement-Party Overlap

The experience of advisory councils also illustrates a second tension affecting vertical relations between governments and movements - the partisan rather than ideological role of political parties. Social movements rely on multiple avenues for change, and this may include participation in, or endorsement of, political parties and candidates. The level of involvement in parties differs considerably within and between movements, but there may well be informal and formal links between political parties and particular activists and organizations.

The problem of political parties is a significant dilemma for advisory councils. Governing parties normally use council appointments, which are usually paid positions, as patronage opportunities and rewards at their disposal. Hence many - although not all - appointees are associated with the governing party in some way. As one Australian public servant stated, "[the current] government made sure that it had somebody it was comfortable with as chair of the [advisory council], and in time it's gradually pushed to have people appointed who are consistent with party politics...All governments do it." In interviews for this study, three successive Ontario ministers for women's issues, each from a different political party, blamed partisanship problems in the Ontario Advisory Council on Women's Issues on their predecessors. All three claimed to have ended the practice and successfully implemented a non-partisan system of merit appointments. So despite claims of unbiased appointment procedures, the pool of potential council appointees is likely to be limited to those with acceptable partisan credentials. This is particularly difficult in brokerage party systems, where party ideologies are not rigidly defined; a potential appointee may well be ideologically acceptable but hold the wrong
party card. This excludes many movement activists, particularly under centrist parties such as the federal Liberals in Canada.

Movement activists that do make it onto councils, with or without party links, often face pressures to avoid criticism of the governing party or endorsement of opposition party positions. A notable example is Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW) President Doris Anderson’s struggle with her Liberal colleagues over the convening of a women’s constitutional conference.\(^{37}\) As well, the CACSW in the 1980s modified at least one external research report against the wishes of the authors, because certain aspects were deemed too critical and/or politically controversial.\(^{38}\) Australian councils have similar records of conflict.\(^{39}\)


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\textit{Agenda Control}

A third conflict results from the tension between the wide, diverse agendas of decentralized movements, on the one hand, and councils’ tendency to concentrate on a relatively limited range of priorities, on the other. This strikes at the heart of advisory councils’ mandate to represent societal views. Does the council have the right to funnel societal concerns and demands, ranking them in priority and packaging them into more palatable requests? Most movement activists and organizations, and even groups that do not identify with the women’s movement, pressure councils to not modify societal

\(^{37}\) Doris Anderson \textit{Rebel Daughter: An Autobiography} (Toronto: Key Porter, 1996). Although Anderson ran as a Liberal candidate in 1978, she resigned from CACSW in 1982 to protest its lack of independence from the government and governing party.


\(^{39}\) Marian Sawer, \textit{Sisters in Suits: Women and Public Policy in Australia} (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1990), Chapter Six “Giving Women a Say: Advisory Bodies and Information Services”
demands before presenting them to government; that is, the role of councils is to repeat rather than significantly modify, interpret and funnel what they are hearing.

How and why do councils resist this pressure? In most jurisdictions and time periods, women’s advisory councils have been nominally free to set their research, consultation and advocacy agendas, without instruction from government. This freedom is often explicitly incorporated into council mandates and is a regular boast in publications and annual reports. However, many restrictions on council agendas and activities appear self-imposed, with councils choosing to downplay more controversial issues and demands. Societal activists and organizations have little say in this funneling process, since no institutional mechanisms are available to ratify or approve council agendas and activities.

Sandra Burt documents how the CACSW often acted as a self-censoring body, anticipating rather than reacting to government pressures and demands. Councils, particularly under conservative governments, often quietly choose to pursue narrow, generally acceptable agendas such as non-traditional career paths for girls and professional networking between middle- and upper-class women. More independent-minded council members may be pressured by their colleagues to avoid controversy and toe the government line. It is often not clear whether council self-censorship, in the CACSW or elsewhere, is prompted solely by partisan solidarity or by a more sincere belief that requests to government are most effectively presented in a non-confrontational manner. Interestingly, Burt writes that in the CACSW, disagreements often arose in the

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41 Anderson, Rebel Daughter.
1980s between the appointed council members and the permanent research staff, with the latter arguing for a more radical “discourse of difference” than councillors were willing to accept.\textsuperscript{42} This might suggest that partisan solidarity is the chief factor in the narrowing of agendas, since councillors have more explicit party ties than most council staff. Although councils may be mandated to represent all aspects of the diversity of women as a social group, their actual agendas and activities generally follow a much narrower and more mainstream route.

\textit{Co-optation and Power}

Finally, advisory councils illustrate how power remains concentrated in government, rather than dispersed and shared with movements and their organizations. Advisory councils may only be symbolic structures, in which governments influence activities more than are influenced themselves. Women’s advisory councils have little real power, and are often unwilling to distribute even this small amount to the feminist movement.

As Phillips argues, truly consultative bodies promote citizenship and a sense of power by acting not only as representative or advocacy bodies, but also as participatory ones.\textsuperscript{43} A participatory relationship here is one in which power and discretion are shared, rather than retained by one side. Like many of the state consultative bodies Phillips analyzes, advisory councils rarely engage in real power sharing. Examples of potential

\textsuperscript{42} Sandra Burt, “The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women,” 139
power sharing include allowing the reports and research papers funded by councils to be presented directly to decision makers, without editing or censorship by the council, or engaging in more direct and extensive consultation forums where movement activists, not council members, chair and conduct meetings. Power sharing might also include opening up council meetings and files to outside scrutiny.

But instead of sharing power and influence, advisory councils may be instruments of co-optation. Councils can provide a thin cover for policies that are contrary to the preferences of most strands of the feminist movement. One activist interviewed for this study said that councils are “used to put a good face on...unprogressive ideas,” while Sue Findlay argues that councils are “...often mistaken for a feminist group by elected officials and bureaucrats alike.” The provision of formal representative structures is not accompanied by any decision-making power. Councils’ level of access to their ministers, and influence upon them both remained unclear and vary between governments. Marian Sawer reports that Australian state agencies have often enjoyed good access and working relationships with their ministers; on the other hand, Findlay noted in 1987 that “outside of formal occasions, it is as difficult for the [Canadian Advisory] Council to see the Minister as it is for the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.”

44 See Burt, “The Canadian Advisory Council” and Findlay and Sweet, “Canadian Advisory Council”.
45 Findlay and Sweet “Canadian Advisory Council,” 90 (Comments are by Findlay only)
46 Marian Sawer, Sisters in Suits.
Dynamics of the Public Administration World

Thus women's advisory councils illustrate how the norms and characteristics of social movements produce challenges for state structures. In the following section, we briefly examine another type of structure, horizontal ministries, and how they illustrate the challenges of the public administration environment.

In the 1970s and early 1980s, Canadian governments created a number of special policy-coordinating ministries, which I call "horizontal ministries." These units did not deliver programs, but were concerned solely with the development and coordination of policy, and their proliferation led one scholar to note "the Canadian fascination with coordination machinery." Horizontal ministries focused either on a specific policy area that cut across department boundaries - such as urban affairs or science and technology -- or oversaw very broad areas such as economic development or social policy. (Special policy agencies, the focus of this study, can also be considered a type of horizontal ministry, but their affiliation with specific societal groups make them considerably more complex.) In this section I briefly describe examples of the two types of horizontal ministries, and identify three major challenges, emanating from the world of public administration, with which they grappled.

Created in 1971, the federal Ministries of State for Science and Technology and for Urban Affairs had no statutory or program responsibilities; they were intended to produce research and promote ideas and initiatives based on that research. To ensure influence, they were equipped "with strong coordinating mandates - hence to be reckoned

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47 Findlay and Sweet, "Canadian Advisory Council". (Comments by Findlay only).
with - and considerable research funds - hence strong intellectual leadership."  

But the results were disappointing - "all brains and no brawn."  

Departments ignored requests, did not share information and generally resisted ministry activities that infringed on their own responsibilities. The Ministry of State for Urban Affairs was quietly eliminated in 1979, while the activities of the Ministry of State for Science and Technology were gradually merged with the Department of Industry.

Another type of horizontal structures from the same era were the "superministries." In 1971 the Ontario government created three policy secretariats which each coordinated a portfolio of line departments and were to coordinate the policy activities of these portfolios (hence the tag "superministries"). But line ministries guarded their power over programs and budgets, and without program responsibilities the policy secretariat ministers lacked power or visibility in the media and Question Period. The superministries quickly dwindled in importance, although not disappearing until 1985. A similar system was implemented in Quebec by the Levesque government in 1977, and was discontinued in 1982 for the same reasons as Ontario.  

At the federal level, the Ministries of State for Resource Development and Social Development were created in 1979 to assist committees of line ministers in deciding on policy priorities and

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50 Saumier, "The Ministry of State," 43.

then making the appropriate resource allocations between departments.\textsuperscript{52} However, this system quickly became cumbersome and slow with no noticeable advantages in policy coordination or expenditure control.\textsuperscript{53} The ministries were eliminated in 1984.\textsuperscript{54}

These brief descriptions have already suggested reasons for the demise of these ministries -- particularly the problem of "turf wars" with other units. But to coordinate policy, horizontal ministries by definition need to interact with the ministries working in different functional areas and delivering actual programs. Analyses of horizontal ministries' failure have shown that their key problem was not ideological opposition or lack of physical resources like money. Rather, they could not win the trust and support of other public servants, because they failed to conform sufficiently to the norms and characteristics of public administration. The designers of the 1970s horizontal ministries concentrated on emulating the superficial structures and practices of public administration -- creating separate ministries, establishing a department hierarchy, etc. But the structures did not really conform in more important and subtle ways to the underlying values and assumptions of public administration, such as accountability "upward" to bureaucratic superiors and ministers. The experience of the horizontal ministries demonstrates three key challenges placed on state structures by the norms and expectations of public administration. These are (1) the essential need for ongoing

\begin{itemize}
\item Donald J. Savoie, \textit{The Politics of Public Spending in Canada} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).
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support from the existing hierarchical structure ("clout"); (2) the recruitment and orientations of staff ("contacts"); and (3) the need to choose battles by ranking priorities ("priorities").

*Clout - Political and Moral Support from the Hierarchy*

Without regular and sustained support from the regular government hierarchy -- cabinet, the Privy Council Office and its supporting agencies -- line departments had few incentives to cooperate with horizontal ministries. This central "clout" was separate from ideological support. Horizontal ministries whose mandates were in principle supported by the governing party and ministers nevertheless faced the challenges of limited cabinet and legislative time. Because the public administration world places a high value on discipline and hierarchy, this discourages public servants from cooperating without clear direction from their superiors. This was particularly the case for horizontal ministries, whose activities were innovative rather than routine, and hence required regular decisions and direction from senior bureaucrats and politicians. This often depended on personal relationships and individual personalities; for example, the Quebec "superministers" were often stymied or blocked by Finance Minister Jacques Parizeau, who considered them a threat to his own power as well as his ministry's program of fiscal restraint.55

Working with a horizontal ministry could be a liability for public servants. Cooperating too much with a horizontal ministry was potentially risky for line department staff, since the two groups reported to different ministers and risked being caught in an intra-cabinet struggle. As Robertson and Beresford suggest, without clear

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55 Dion and Gow, "The Budget Process under the Parti Quebecois".
direction from the political centre or new financial and other incentives, departments will engage in “non-decision-making”; neither wholly ignoring nor cooperating with horizontal ministries.56 Public servants simply wait for clear direction from their superiors before committing themselves to any course of action.

The inability or refusal of departments to cooperate extensively with horizontal ministries in the absence of incentives can be out of self-interest, as the Parizeau example suggests. But it also reflects the deep cultural differences between government ministries. For example, the holistic planning approach of the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs grated against the narrower functional planning of individual departments.57 The horizontal ministries reflected something new in the public administration world, representing different prisms of issues and activities that overlapped onto existing models and responsibilities. Consequently, unless horizontal agencies derived clout through strong central support, they could not overcome or adjust the existing practices and routines of public administration.

Agency designers were aware of the need for clout, but felt it could be acquired by elevating agencies to ministry status and appointing strong and interested ministers to the portfolios. This led to other problems. The “amateur” principle of Westminster cabinets is that capable ministers can oversee any ministry, and so agency designers assumed that shuffling already-strong ministers into horizontal portfolios would give the ministries automatic legitimacy and weight. This ignored the two-way relationship

between ministers and portfolios. While ministers may have important external political bases, their clout within bureaucracies is closely linked to their control of enormous budgets, staff and regulatory instruments, and their exposure in Question Period and the media. The limited resources and behind-the-scenes work of horizontal ministries actually lessened ministers’ clout, and made the ministries undesirable except as entry-level cabinet posts.58

In short, while it was important for the horizontal ministries to have ideological and moral commitments from governing parties, to be truly effective they also needed to find their place in the hierarchical structure. Without clear standing or sustained support from the hierarchy, the ministries were ignored or avoided by other public servants.

Contacts - Staff Background and Orientations

A second problem presented by public administration norms was the recruitment of staff and their connections and contacts within the bureaucracy. In retrospect, the horizontal ministries were set up with a surprising amount of naivete, for it was assumed that veteran administrators in line departments would automatically cooperate with the policy analysts in the horizontal ministries. This assumption, rather than cultivation, of

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57 For example, Transport Canada attempted to locate airports in the hub of urban activity to meet the current needs of users; the planners of the MSUA argued for building in underpopulated areas as catalysts to balance future growth. See C.I. Jackson, “Six Minutes to Six Months” in Oberlander, The Ministry of State for Urban Affairs.

58 For example, the first Minister of State for Urban Affairs, Robert Andras, was interested in the policy area and helped design the ministry prior to his appointment. However, after two years he happily accepted the higher status portfolio of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, and his successors displayed much less interest in the issue area. The consequent lack of sufficient ministerial authority gave the horizontal ministries even fewer incentives to compel cooperation.
cooperation led to many ruffled feathers and outright resistance from traditional public servants.

Like most government policy units in the 1970s, the staff of horizontal ministries was relatively young and/or new to the public service. With their strong emphasis on research, the horizontal ministries in particular drew many of their staff directly from universities and other external sources. In a traditional line department, the inexperience of the policy staff would be balanced by experienced administrators and other veteran public servants. Departments had mechanisms, incentives and final authority to contain and sort out conflicts and tensions. But horizontal agencies had neither a balance of staff, nor the ability to contain conflicts within the portfolio. Combined with general staff inexperience, this greatly limited ministries' ability to interact with the rest of the public administration world.

The absence of personal connections, friendships and loyalties with other departments prevented informal sharing of information and discussion, and the horizontal agencies often failed to display familiar public service norms such as caution and discretion. The lack of public service acclimatization made horizontal ministries even more dependent on clout from the central hierarchy (see above) and led to negative reputations. Superministries were often considered overbearing, while the issue-based ministries (particularly Science and Technology) developed reputations as indiscreet leakers of information and project details.60

Choosing Priorities

Finally, the norms of public administration encourage a disciplined focus on a small set of priorities, at the expense of other possible projects. In the public administration world, successful units and individuals choose their battles, focusing on some areas and negotiating or compromising on others. But horizontal ministries were notorious for a lack of direction and inability to set priorities. This was due partly to their sweeping and vague mandates, but also to problems in their design and management. For example, the lack of decisive leadership in the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs created a "rudderless ship" where "confusion and conflict...reigned below deck." The superministries, charged with coordinating the overall direction of their portfolios, had even more difficulty selecting specific goals or ranking priorities.

In addition to allowing the concentration of limited resources, prioritization sends signals to other public servants, indicating levels of flexibility and willingness to negotiate or compromise on lesser items. These are important values in public administration. But horizontal ministries rarely gave such indications, further damaging their image as team players and reliable allies. Furthermore, horizontal ministries developed a reputation for micromanagement of issues and interference in department programs, violating another key norm in public administration - respect for department

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and unit boundaries. (Whether this reputation was justified is not clear, but it was a widespread belief within line departments.\textsuperscript{62})

Because of the above obstacles, the horizontal ministries of the 1970s and 1980s failed to achieve very much. They had difficulty coordinating policies and programs because they failed to pay sufficient attention to the norms of public administration, missing such key aspects as the need to fit within the hierarchical structure, cultivate good personal relationships, and clearly indicate levels of flexibility and interest.

\textit{Collisions Between the Two Worlds}

The previous sections have shown how the norms and characteristics of each world create different and significant sets of pressures and expectations on state structures. But the focus of this study is what occurs when the two different pressures collide. If the expectations of movements can hamper advisory councils and those of public administration block horizontal ministries, what might the impact be on structures that have to cope with both?

The norms and consequent expectations of each world are profoundly different, and often complete opposites. This suggests that when they interact, as they do in special policy agencies, there will be conflicts. For example, in 1988 a Canadian group of senior women public servants and other government insiders met with the National Action Committee on the Status of Women to "advise" the latter how to influence government

policy. According to one set of external academic observers, the well-meant tips missed the point. The public servants argued that:

....the movement should adapt to the pace and workings of the public-policy agenda, with its “windows of opportunity” (usually created on the basis of pollsters’ advice) that permitted little time for consultation between leaders and the grassroots. The message conveyed was that movement groups that wished (and could afford) to compete for time on the government agenda and would accept the short-circuiting of the consultation process could achieve some short-term policy objectives if they behaved in “appropriate” ways.63

For many movement activists, this sort of pragmatic approach -- rooted in public administration norms -- ignores and negates the basic norms and values of social movements. Movements are decentralized and long-term-oriented, based on collective identities but multiple perspectives and values. While there are certainly individual organizations and activists within movements that lean toward more pragmatic and incremental approaches, movements as a whole strongly resist losing control of their agendas and priorities in the interest of short-term gains, and generally insist on time to consult and reach consensus decisions.

But this can exasperate public servants. “If you find out something is going to cabinet tomorrow morning, there isn’t a lot of time to call in people and have meetings about it,” said one analyst. Another public servant said, “I’ve tried to get them [women’s groups] to work in a more constructive fashion, rather than one that alienates [governments]...They sit there and mutter but they don’t do anything because they haven’t talked to anyone [in government].” A senior public servant, who identified strongly with the feminist movement, described her frustration with the movement’s

63 Vickers et al, Politics As If Women Mattered, 222.
reaction after she convinced a highly reluctant Premier to attend a street-level meeting and launch a policy document on women and violence:

...it was a huge step forward, getting [the Premier] down there, and what does the women’s refuge movement do? They plan a protest! So we had to go and talk to them. Because the government got heaps and heaps of negative publicity and they [the government] got very negative about the issue, and you had to be very careful.

Thus there is a constant tension between the two worlds. What appears quite natural or logical to one is seen by the other as ineffective or even dangerous.

These differences in views and orientations tend to reinforce each other, particularly as both social movements and public administrators fear co-optation - either of the movement by the state, or of particular government agencies by their “client” movements. Philip Selznick’s distinction between “formal” and “informal” cooptation is useful here, as it illustrates the particular problems of institutionalized relationships between state and societal actors. For Selznick, formal co-optation involves the public absorption of “new elements” (such as a social movement) into visible representative and consultative structures (such as a government advisory board). This may enhance legitimacy or administrative efficiency, but it is co-optive if there is little sharing of real power through decision making, implementation, monitoring and evaluating. On the other hand, informal co-optation means involving external groups or individuals in actual decision making and other aspects of power, without formal recognition or public visibility. Social movements are well aware of these dynamics, and deeply suspicious of the power of formal co-optation to blunt their efforts and to legitimate existing regimes.

Governments, though, fear informal co-optation through “agency capture” - agencies so devoted to their client groups that they cannot advise governments objectively or promote government goals.

The effects of these fears are particularly evident in social movements, which grapple with the aforementioned “insoluble predicament” of pragmatic and radical tendencies that deeply differ in their approaches toward government. Incremental policy victories are actively sought by more pragmatic activists, while radicals view small steps with trepidation, constantly fearing the costs of compromising with the inherently cooptive state. One feminist writer suggests that because of these deep-set fears about co-optation, “strategic issues” become “moral axioms,” so that:

...the debate shifts from assessments of when and how it is appropriate to involve the state to moral assessments of the political motives of women and agencies according to their degree of involvement with the state. Women who work in the state are by definition bad, complicit individuals; women who work with the state are certainly suspect..."

Similarly, public administrators splinter into different approaches. Obviously the views of governing parties and cabinets influence the actions of the overall bureaucracy, and many public servants are broadly unsympathetic to movements’ goals and arguments. But there are considerable divisions of opinion among public servants who appear to share movement goals (as already seen), and particularly between ones who identify themselves as members of movements. Should movements strive for any incremental victory, no matter how small? Can large-scale change come through state channels at

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all? Should movements be given core funding to conduct consultations and research or can the public service perform these roles as well or better? These questions divide public servants, although the splits are generally not as deep or visible as those in social movements.

Collisions over Information and Knowledge

Much of the collision between the two worlds involves differences over information and knowledge. In the public administration world, information-handling has a strong rationalist streak. Policy analysis is based primarily on the collection of information and interpretation of it according to established professional and organizational principles. In contrast, social movements generally see information and “knowledge” as highly contestable concepts, involving multiple interpretations and methodologies. Movements may confront society’s dominant ideas or “neutral” facts, arguing that they are in fact ideologically based and/or unfairly serve the interests of some groups over others.

This has profound implications for public policy making. Policy coordination by public administrators involves information trading and bringing together different functional areas, constructing compromises between them through the sharing and exchange of knowledge. But for social movements, knowledge can be more than a commodity or resource. Susan Phillips writes that social movements do not just use knowledge “as a vehicle for refuting or defending a particular policy option,” but also as a “creative force in constructing meaning systems” that place new perspectives on public
goods and policies. Knowledge is not just a means toward a policy goal, but can be a goal itself in the creation of new ways of identifying and approaching social, economic and political problems.

These are paradigmatic differences. Traditional public administration downplays the existence of paradigmatic thinking within the public service; rather, public servants supposedly strive to be “neutral” even as they implement the ideological agenda of the government in power. But - even apart from the personal political and ideological biases of some public servants - the comparative table above suggests public administration does have a paradigm or bias of its own: the very idea of neutrality, the value of dispassionate rationality, and the practices of deference, hierarchy and discretion. One special policy agency head described such a situation and the absurd solution:

It was the job of [the central agency in which the unit was housed] to give “objective advice,” and objective advice on the whole appeared to mean economic advice. It was a game, and I had to teach my staff to give the same advice, but they’d cast it in “on the one hand and on the other hand.” And so as long as you got people to cast it [that way], it would be accepted as objective advice. But if they said anything like “government needs to,” “government ought to,” [senior decision-makers] would go: “this is not objective advice; this is partisan advice.” There was a real tension right across that time between the notion that [my unit] gave partisan advice, whereas the rest of the [central agency] gave objective advice.

The tension between “political” and “objective” advice is also evident in other ways. In her discussion of “gender-based analysis” in the Canadian federal government, Grace argues that “mixed messages” are sent to policy analysts across government.


68 Eyerman and Jamison, Social Movements: A Cognitive Approach.

analysis in the government documents she studies is ultimately based on liberal concepts of the individual, and identifies problems as stemming from individual attitudes and actions, rather than systemic, built-in deficiencies. This distracts or prevents policy analysts and developers from considering larger collective differences. For example labour market data, subjected to gender-based analysis, identifies differences between male and female participation rates, wages, job status, etc. But when considering causes for these differences, Grace says, gender analysis lacks larger considerations of structural barriers to women entering or staying in the work force, including child and elder care responsibilities, sexual harassment, etc. Therefore, she writes, “gender” analysis is objective and welcomed, but more collectively based thinking about “women” is not. Like the difference between “objective” and “political” advice above, the individualist bias of gender analysis reflects the assumption that policy analysis and development are normally neutral, reflecting the supposed neutrality of public administration as a whole.

Another type of conflict between movement and public administration expectations occurs in the link between research/analysis and actual decision making. In government, the connection between policy analysis and final decisions is not always very clear - often policy analysts are not even sure themselves whether their work is at all influential. While movement activists are probably even more accustomed to not knowing whether their efforts are having any real impact behind closed doors, a critical difference is that public servants have less personal commitment to their work, and are more willing to accept that much of their effort may be futile. According to one staffer whose agency was located in an Australian state’s Department of Premier and Cabinet: “...you spent a lot more time working on cabinet briefings, which were often ineffective.
You’d do a lot of work and background and briefing the Premier on issues, and then nothing would happen. Sometimes it would but that was sort of a breakthrough situation.” This was accepted by the career public servants within the office as perfectly normal, if not necessarily desirable.

The reason for this acceptance is suggested in Martha Feldman’s discussion of the paradox” of policy analysts who produce policy papers they know will never be directly used by decision-makers.\textsuperscript{70} The explanation for this, apart from maintaining their own employment, is that the production of analytical discussions plays an indirect role in policy making, by spanning the invisible boundaries between conceptual thinking and actual decision making. Policy papers set the parameters, often unconsciously, of discussion, and their options and calculations eventually metamorphosize into the final points of decision. Yet this role can never be wholly uncovered or traced because it is largely a mental process; neither analysts nor decision-makers can say for sure how an analysis led to a decision. This grey world suits the process-oriented norms and career ambitions of traditional public servants, who are paid for this work, can transfer to new units and areas for variety, and may or may not have any personal interest or connection to their issue areas. In contrast, movement activists by definition will have considerable personal commitment to their research and policy suggestions, and experience greater frustration when their research and ideas appear to go nowhere.

Conclusion

We have discussed the concept of two separate worlds of public administration and social movements. While these remain highly permeable concepts, they do illustrate two very different sets of norms and characteristics, reflecting distinctly different underlying values, assumptions and orientations to the public policy process and the workings of state structures. When these differences come together, they often collide and lead to conflict.

Later research chapters will analyze how special policy agencies find themselves pulled between both these worlds. As stated in the introduction, my interest is not so much in agencies’ internal structures and operations, but their relationships with the two worlds and their ability to reconcile them. How do agencies interact with these two worlds, with their different norms, characteristics, pressures and expectations? Are they crushed or bypassed like advisory councils and horizontal ministries have been, even though they only had to cope with one of the two worlds? Or do agencies represent a different type of organization, one which can link or bridge the gap between the two worlds?
Table 2-1 - Comparing the Two Sets of Normative Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Public Administration</th>
<th>A Social Movement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>- clear overall body for each jurisdiction (&quot;the Ontario Public Service&quot;) - although exact boundaries may be fuzzy (i.e., semi-independent agencies)</td>
<td>- multiple organizations and sub-movements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- individuals without organizational affiliations</td>
<td>- overlap with cross-cutting movements, coalitions, &quot;base&quot; organizations such as churches or unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structures and Processes</td>
<td>- explicit structures and processes developed to assist hierarchy and resource distribution (see below)</td>
<td>- formal structures and processes primarily developed to ensure accountability to members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- while informal relations and rules develop, formal processes remain essential and respected</td>
<td>- common preference for informal relations and understandings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- structures and processes broadly comparable across jurisdictions</td>
<td>- significant variations in structures and processes among different organizations in overall movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchy</td>
<td>- exceptionally clear, multi-rank hierarchy</td>
<td>- little to no hierarchy, rarely more than one or two ranks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- organization names clear and important (i.e., &quot;division&quot; outweighs &quot;branch&quot; in Ontario); titles and job rankings are important codes; broadly comparable across jurisdictions</td>
<td>- organization names, titles and job rankings inconsistent, unclear; important but rarely comparable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>- accountability is primarily upward ultimately to elected officials, who are accountable to legislature, voters and &quot;watchdog&quot; agencies (Auditor-General, Environmental</td>
<td>- accountability is primarily downward and across, to members, other organizations, and movement ideals and history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration</td>
<td>A Social Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Commissioner)</td>
<td>-while paid organization staff may be accountable to membership-elected boards of directors, staff are often informally accountable to individual members as well</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-some emphasis on accountability to &quot;customers&quot; or &quot;clients&quot;; focused on micro-services and not conceptually clear</td>
<td>-no such thing as &quot;ultimate&quot; accountability in movement, since no overall body exists</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>-tremendous potential resources due to tax power</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-strong corporate and strategic capacities (e.g. HR, IT and consulting services, meeting rooms, phone directory, etc.)</td>
<td>- limited revenue-raising sources (reliance on government and private donations)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-strong emphasis on accountability for expenditures; using common services, etc.</td>
<td>- limited corporate and strategic capacities (ad hoc initiatives, informal arrangements)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>-exclusively paid employment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-membership fixed by recruitment and dismissal</td>
<td>-primarily unpaid volunteers and members of individual organizations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-secondments and contractual relationships are formal and governed by similar rules as regular public servants</td>
<td>-movement membership not fixed - ultimately by personal choice rather than approval by others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-strong reliance on informal assistance and services from supporters (i.e., academic, legal, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment/ Ambitions</td>
<td>Public Administration</td>
<td>A Social Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
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<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- chiefly propelled by salary and career ambitions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- commitment to ideal of &quot;public service&quot; and individual issue area varies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- lateral moves to different issues usually encouraged; emphasis on &quot;gaining skills&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- commonly &quot;my job&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- chiefly propelled by personal convictions and goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- strong commitment to movement and its issues, with possible spillover effects to other similar movements and issue areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- commonly &quot;my life&quot;</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Personal Views and Behaviour | - personal views not necessarily suppressed, but expected to subsume to "public interest" and elected officials' |
| "moral choices" = refusal to behave in a way inconsistent with one's deep personal convictions | - common dissonance between personal views and actual behaviour |
| - behaviour inconsistent under different governments, senior officials |
| - "moral choices" likely to be punished by sanction or dismissal |
| - personal views are chief propellant, although they may be subsumed for strategic and tactical considerations |
| - dissonance and inconsistency questioned and criticized |
| - "moral choices" against the rest of movement are common; usually respected or even celebrated |

<p>| Decision making | - generally hierarchical; team-based and lower-level management still remain subservient to higher officials' decisions |
| - no &quot;opting-out&quot; - must implement decisions made by others |
| - closely linked to above concepts of ultimate accountability and hierarchy |
| - generally consensual, although some leaders may have legitimacy to speak and negotiate on behalf of others |
| - &quot;opting-out&quot; common and usually respected |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Public Administration</strong></th>
<th><strong>A Social Movement</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partisanship</strong></td>
<td>- routine services to be carried out on non-partisan basis</td>
<td>- while movements rarely affiliate explicitly with political parties, there is significant overlap and affiliation on individual and organizational basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- policy work and initiatives follow decisions of governing party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- public servants cannot engage in partisan work</td>
<td>- some sharing of resources; endorsements in elections (varies significantly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- senior public servants expected to remain non-partisan in personal as well as professional life</td>
<td>- movement activists may have partisan backgrounds or current affiliations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Orientation</strong></td>
<td>- most units and individual public servants tend to be focused on relatively short-term tasks</td>
<td>- focused primarily on long term ideological goals and broad political and societal challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- likely to engage in pragmatic bargaining, trade-offs and compromises in the setting and pursuit of objectives and goals.</td>
<td>- considerable internal conflicts between pragmatic and more radical wings on short-term tactics and tasks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Three: What Are Special Policy Agencies?

In the previous chapter, I outlined the very different sets of norms and characteristics found in the worlds of public administration and social movements, and discussed examples of how they collide in various contexts, such as the “femocrat” experience. However, the focus of this study is how the two worlds collide in organizations - namely, special policy agencies - and how the organizations adapt to and balance these competing pressures.

This chapter introduces and discusses special policy agencies, in several ways. It lays out a formal definition, distinguishes policy agencies from other structures and institutions, and reviews the different forms they may take. This chapter also discusses the creation of special policy agencies and key factors precipitating their creation. Once we have an idea of what agencies do and what they look like, why agencies were created, and how they differ from other types of government structures, we can turn in the following chapter to the very different pressures placed on them by the two colliding worlds.

What Are Special Policy Agencies?

While I gave a brief definition of “special policy agencies” in the introduction to this study, this section sets out a more formal description. A special policy agency is a permanent government structure, staffed by permanent public servants and under the day-to-day authority of a cabinet minister - it is not “arms-length” or semi-independent. (I use the multi-purpose term agency to cover different organizational terms such as “unit,”
"secretariat," "department," etc.) It primarily engages in policy activity - policy analysis, policy development, and policy coordination - rather than delivering and funding actual programs. And, most importantly, it has a special purpose distinct from other government departments and units - to focus upon issues pertaining to or affecting a particular societal group. Although the group is likely to have a corresponding social movement (i.e., women and the women's movement), it is very important to note that agencies are normally mandated to work on behalf of the former rather than the latter. Furthermore, agency mandates, and how they are interpreted, vary enormously over time and between different agencies as we will explore later in the chapter.

This study focuses on special policy agencies for women's and aboriginal issues. However, special policy agencies are often found in at least one other area - disability issues - and occasionally for policies affecting senior citizens. Agencies for gay and lesbian issues have appeared at the local level in several European countries but I am not aware of any in Canada or Australia. (However, I refer briefly below to AIDS agencies and their relations with gays.) In a later discussion of the literature on special policy agencies, I reflect briefly on the experience and prospects of agencies outside of the issues of women's and aboriginal issues.

To understand the particular qualities and challenges of special policy agencies, we need to understand how they fit in the larger context of similar structures and policy machinery linked to movement demands. Much of the existing literature pertaining to special policy agencies treats agencies much like any other government structure, such as line departments or advisory councils. But this tends to downplay the complex dynamics within governments, and particularly how different structures have different
constitutional and/or reporting relationships to elected officials. For example, a royal commission normally has considerably more independence and latitude than a special policy agency, but does not necessarily represent government opinion, as does a policy agency.

Thus the following section introduces agencies by briefly tracing the historical development of women’s and aboriginal policy agencies in Australia and Canada. Later sections discuss agencies in a more systematic fashion, by comparing them to other structures, reviewing the scholarly literature on them, classifying possible causes for their creation, and describing some of their common forms and activities.

The Evolution of Special Policy Agencies in Canada and Australia

Women’s Policy Agencies at the Federal Level

In both Canada and Australia, the growth of the feminist movement in the early 1970s was accompanied by the creation of federal women’s policy agencies. The Canadian government in 1971 appointed a Co-ordinator of the Status of Women in its chief central agency, the Privy Council Office, following the report and recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. (The male Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs was also named Minister Responsible for the Status of Women). The Co-ordinator’s office evolved into the Status of Women Canada unit, which became independent of the Privy Council Office in 1976. This arrangement and the part-time ministership remained largely unchanged until 1993, when Status of Women Canada was
made a special unit of a line department, Human Resources Development Canada, reporting directly to a full-time but junior minister.

In Australia, newly elected Labor Prime Minister Gough Whitlam appointed in early 1973 an advisor for women's issues to his personal political staff. In 1974 a Women’s Affairs Section to support her was created in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (the rough equivalent of the Canadian Privy Council Office) and this was upgraded to a Women’s Affairs Branch in 1975. These developments were strongly supported by the most prominent national feminist lobby group, the Women’s Electoral Coalition, from which many of the initial staff were drawn.¹

The subsequent structuring of Australian women’s policy machinery was affected by the 1975 report of the Royal Commission on Australian Government Administration. The new Liberal government of Malcolm Fraser followed the Commission’s recommendation, based on suggestions by the Women’s Electoral Lobby, to construct a “hub and spokes” model of women’s policy structures. Rather than creating a sizable separate unit like Status of Women Canada, the Women’s Affairs Branch would remain within the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, acting as a central hub for smaller units located in various line departments including Health, Social Services, Housing, Attorney-General, etc. A full-time Minister Assisting the Prime Minister in Women’s Affairs was also appointed at this time.

The “hub and spokes” approach appeared useful in coordinating policy across departments. However, subsequent conflict with other public servants in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet apparently led to the 1977 transfer of the “hub” Branch

(now the Office of Women's Affairs) to the Department of Home Affairs, a newly created hodgepodge of units ranking low on the cabinet scale. In 1983 the new Labor Prime Minister, Robert Hawke, returned the Office (now the Office of the Status of Women) to his own department and took charge of the portfolio. This arrangement continued under his Labor successor, Paul Keating. When Liberal John Howard was elected in 1996, the Office remained in his department, but it now reports to a separate Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

Women's Policy Agencies at the Sub-National Level

While federal women's policy agencies were created in the early 1970s, sub-national agencies were not widespread for another decade in Australia, and took even longer to develop in Canada. Australian states commonly followed the federal "hub-and-spokes" arrangements of small central agencies linked to units in different departments. The Labor premiers of Victoria (1982), Western Australia (1983) and New South Wales (1976) all created women's policy agencies within their own departments soon after their election to power, and appointed themselves Ministers Responsible for Women's Issues. Similar but less high-profile agencies were created in the 1980s in Tasmania, South Australia, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory. The lone holdout, Queensland, was governed by a strongly conservative Premier, Joh Bjelke-Peterson, from 1968-1987. When Labor was elected in 1989, Premier Wayne Goss named himself

2 Sawer, Sisters in Suits.
Minister Responsible for Women’s Affairs and created a women’s policy unit in the Cabinet Office.  

Despite similar constitutional powers, Canadian provinces were much slower to create women’s policy agencies. The creation of Canadian provincial units appears more idiosyncratic than the Australian experience; there are few clear causative factors such as changes in parties and leaders or strong demands from women’s groups (as discussed below). For example, as I explain in Chapter Four, the Ontario Women’s Directorate was created by a complex set of political and bureaucratic initiatives.

In general, Canadian provinces have been noticeably hesitant about creating women’s policy agencies, and relied more on “advisory councils” of individuals outside the permanent bureaucracy. While all Canadian provinces had created women’s advisory councils by 1980, by 1985 only three had policy units within the bureaucracy. In 1999, seven provinces have advisory councils on women’s issues, but only four have permanent bureaucratic units for women’s policy (Alberta is the one province to have neither). In contrast, in 1999 all Australian states have women’s policy agencies and most have advisory councils. Canadian provincial advisory councils - particularly in the Atlantic provinces - do perform some policy analysis and research. However, they lack the

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4 See Table B-1 “Provincial Status of Women Offices” in Sharon L. Sutherland and G. Bruce Doern, Bureaucracy in Canada: Control and Reform (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 1985), 195. The three provinces with policy units were Alberta, B.C. and Ontario.

5 All provinces except Alberta, B.C. and Ontario had advisory councils in 1999. The four provinces with women’s units were B.C., Ontario, P.E.I. (two people) and Saskatchewan.

6 See Pauline Rankin, “Canadian Experiments with State Feminism: A Comparative Analysis of Provincial Status-of-Women Machinery” a paper presented at the Canadian Political Science Association annual meetings, Memorial University of Newfoundland, June 1997.
access, resources and intra-bureaucratic influence possessed by most special policy agencies. 

Aboriginal Policy Agencies at the Sub-National Level

The story of sub-national aboriginal policy agencies is considerably different from women’s policy agencies, for historical and constitutional reasons. In Canada the Constitution Act, 1867, gave powers over “Indians and lands reserved for the Indians” to the federal government, creating the Indian Affairs bureaucracy to control and manage programs for “status Indians” living on reserves. Provincial governments had no jurisdiction (and limited interest) in this area, and neither level of government took much responsibility for non-status aboriginals, Metis, or Inuit living in Quebec or Labrador. Until the 1970s, provinces viewed aboriginal poverty, racism and other problems through the prism of liberal individualism - programs and solutions designed for aboriginals as a collective group were extremely rare. 

The creation of provincial structures in Canada in the 1970s and 1980s can be linked with the growing politicization and militancy of aboriginal peoples, leading to land claims, constitutional talks, and a growing recognition by governments of a need to coordinate aboriginal-related programs with more coherence and sensitivity. Currently,

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7 Rankin, “Canadian Experiments with State Feminism.”

8 Approximately 700,000 aboriginals in Canada are registered as “status” Indians, as defined by the Indian Act, and a further 300,000 people also identify themselves as aboriginal. Many aboriginals in the past lost their status for various reasons, most notably women marrying non-status men. As well, although Inuit were, in many ways, accorded the same treatment by the federal government as status Indians, they have never been subject to the Indian Act.

four provincial governments have policy agencies dedicated solely to the coordination of aboriginal issues - defined as both land claims and coordination of social programs directed at aboriginals. These provinces are B.C., Saskatchewan, Ontario and Quebec, suggesting that the size of the provincial aboriginal population (both in sheer numbers and as a proportion of the overall population) and/or the presence of NDP governments are important factors. Three provinces (Alberta, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia) have joint ministries for intergovernmental and aboriginal affairs, and two provinces (Manitoba and Newfoundland and Labrador) have combined units for native policy with northern policy. Prince Edward Island has no designated structures for aboriginal affairs.

The creation and maintenance of Australian state aboriginal policy agencies is also linked to federalism, but in a much different way. Australia has no equivalent to the Canadian "Indian status" and never set up the complex system of reserves for such persons. Instead the original 1900 Commonwealth constitution granted aboriginal policy responsibilities to the states, leading each to continue its individual colonial structures and follow noticeably different policies at times, particularly in definitions of who was an aboriginal. In 1967, following a national referendum (in which aboriginals were ineligible to vote), jurisdiction was transferred to the Commonwealth government - whose fiscal and coordinating capacity was widely seen as the obvious solution to aboriginal poverty and discrimination. A new federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) was created to house the many new social and economic programs developed in the 1970s by non-aboriginal public servants. Each state then negotiated its own

11 Scott Bennett, Aborigines and Political Power (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1989).
arrangements with the DAA, leading to continuing differences in program responsibilities and powers - particularly over resource developments and land rights. States such as Queensland that retained many program responsibilities (or resisted Commonwealth encroachment) kept the general form of their old aboriginal affairs departments; states like Western Australia, which signed program agreements with Canberra, created small new agencies like the WA Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority.  

To bring consistency to national aboriginal policy, the Commonwealth government used a mix of legislation and various incentives in the 1970s and 1980s to encourage states to transfer their programs to the federal level, and by the mid-1980s most states had relatively similar sets of machinery and program responsibilities. The state departments gradually shrunk to the size and status of special policy agencies, while the federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs delivered most large-scale programs.

A final point to make in this historical overview of agencies is that they almost never disappear. Even under governing parties hostile to most feminist and aboriginal demands -- such as Ontario’s Harris government and Victoria’s Kennett ministry -- special policy agencies have at least survived in name. This survival may be largely symbolic as the agency is largely stripped of influence and resources, but it remains an interesting benchmark. To the best of my knowledge the only Australian or Canadian women’s or aboriginal policy agency to be completely eliminated was the Alberta Women’s Secretariat in 1986.  

(However, other structures described below, such as advisory councils, have been more likely to disappear). Interestingly, the Alberta agency

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12 Bennett, Aborigines and Political Power.
never had primary responsibility for domestic violence (overseen by an Office for Domestic Violence Coordination), while the Ontario Women's Directorate always retained that file throughout its history. Thus the Alberta secretariat could not cite this important responsibility as a reason for its retention - although it is not clear whether this was the key to its demise.\textsuperscript{14}

\textbf{Other Types of Machinery}

Now that we have a basic overview of special policy agencies, we can discuss how they differ from other state structures. This section discusses briefly four types of state structures - line departments, arms-length commissions, advisory/representative councils, and legislative committees - and their relationship to the worlds of public administration and social movements. While they certainly have various aspects in common with special policy agencies, these structures do not experience as much role conflict and role ambiguity as do policy agencies. Traditional structures tend to have clearer mandates and more defined relationships with both worlds, which reduces possibilities for administrative conflicts and contradictory expectations.

\textit{Line Departments}

Most public servants and government programs are organized into line departments that oversee programs and services in functional areas (such as health or transportation). Many departments have specific units or staff with significant

\textsuperscript{14} Speers, "Alberta Women and the Provincial State."
relationships to movement activists and organizations - such as women’s health units or aboriginal court workers. One particularly interesting type of unit is the women’s bureau in many labour departments, which protected or increased women’s employment and workplace rights, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s.\textsuperscript{15}

Unlike special policy agencies which grapple with a wide set of issues, these units have more specific mandates and functions. Their efforts are normally focused on programs rather than broad policy making, giving them reasonably defined roles and strategic directions. Consequently, as a whole these units have clearer orientations and much less role conflict or ambiguity than special policy agencies. While there are certainly conflicting pressures and expectations on what these units should do, these are less systematic and ongoing than those of special policy agencies. And, because these units work in functional policy areas within specific functional departments, they have clearer identities which normally fit well within the larger departmental culture.

For example, a women’s health unit is normally situated in a health department, among many other public servants also working on various health care issues and programs. This allows for some common orientations and views, since all units are working on improving health care and health care access. As well, since they are program-oriented, department units concentrate on securing resources rather than developing brand new policies. This is seen as perfectly valid in the public administration world - a women’s health unit will naturally lobby for more funding for

\textsuperscript{15} Joan Sangster, “Women Workers, Employment Policy and the State: The Establishment of the Ontario Women’s Bureau, 1963-1970” Labour/Le Travail 36 (Fall 1995) 119-146. See also Leslie Pal, Susan Phillips, Daniel Savas and David Hawkes, Public Interest Groups in the Policy Process: A Study Prepared for the Department of the Secretary of State of Canada (School of Public Administration, Carleton
women’s health programs, because the unit’s overall mandate is to help improve women’s health. In comparison, a women’s policy agency may be more cautious in lobbying for an increased women’s health program, since this is a decision that requires trade-offs in other areas. The differences between policy agencies and line department units will be illustrated in Chapter Five, when we look at the configuration of aboriginal policy units in provincial governments. That discussion will show how aboriginal-related units in line departments tend to have much clearer priorities and orientations than aboriginal policy agencies.

Line department units, however, are not without conflict. Department staff often struggle with their loyalties and feel caught between the two worlds. But as organizations, special policy agencies have considerably more wide-ranging and unclear mandates, making them more vulnerable to the colliding worlds. Furthermore, as separate organizations, agencies have considerably more room to evolve and adapt to new and changing pressures, making them particularly interesting to study.

Structures Outside the Public Service

Unlike line departments, other structures tend to be outside the public administration world; they are normally not staffed by regular public servants, and sit outside the normal organization of departments and ministries. As a result they are less likely to be pressured to emulate the normative values of public administration, such as deference to hierarchy and adherence to traditional and standard practices. They can also

come closer to the world of movements, since they have significant independence over their internal operations and may even have movement activists on their boards. But all of the institutions listed below are highly vulnerable to political and partisan forces, and hence can easily come to reflect the priorities and views of governing parties, more than those of either social movements or public administrators.

Arms-Length Commissions

Most jurisdictions have a variety of commissions or tribunals empowered to investigate and review public and/or private actions from various perspectives. Such commissions are arms-length from government, in that their decisions and caseloads are not directly overseen or controlled by politicians or senior bureaucrats. Normally they operate from a statutory and quasi-judicial base; that is, they test government (and sometimes private) actions against constitutional and legal criteria. Obvious examples are human rights commissions or pay equity tribunals. Most such commissions focus on specific cases, situations and incidents, and are often retrospective, in that they focus on past wrongs. Their decisions are final, subject only to judicial appeal.

A temporary arms-length institution is the royal commission, task force or public inquiry. These often possess large resources and may focus on the past or future, but have no decision making or implementation powers. Commissions such as the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, and the Australian Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and Inquiry into the Removal of Aboriginal Children produced powerful reports that significantly, if unevenly, influenced government policy. Many less successful inquiries occurred which did not engage public and government
interest to the same degree, and whose recommendations were generally ignored. Some non-Westminster systems feature a broader range of administrative commissions; in Sweden, the Equality Ombudsman has links with political parties and is somewhat more willing to address specific policy issues.¹⁶

Because they are not directly controlled by government and are not usually staffed by regular public servants, commissions may not be caught between the public administration and social movement worlds as much as special policy agencies. However, much depends on the appointment of individual commissioners and the mandate of the commission, both of which are heavily dependent on the government in power. For example, a pay equity tribunal may be filled with feminist activists and other pro-pay equity appointees; by way of contrast, it can include employers, opponents of pay equity and indifferent persons who are being rewarded for party loyalty. Hence a commission can be very closely linked to a social movement at one point, but at other times the two can be very far apart.

Representative Councils

A second institutional structure are representative councils which include movement activists and leaders. We have already discussed women's advisory councils extensively in Chapter Two, but must note some variations and the use of councils in aboriginal affairs.

In women’s policy internationally, two powerful bodies of this type are the Danish and Norwegian Equal Status Councils, whose members represent organized constituencies. These councils produce policy research and recommendations, but also draft legislation and other specific documents for governments. They receive high praise for both their level of influence and accessibility to women’s groups, making them unusual examples of state organizations that appear to be closely and permanently linked to the world of movements rather than that of public administration.17

Such bodies appear highly unlikely in Westminster systems of responsible government or societies with less corporatist political and economic systems. One very interesting representative council within a Westminster system is the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC). Commission members are elected by aboriginal peoples to oversee nearly all Commonwealth programs for aboriginals. However, decisions can be vetoed by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs or state and regional managers, who are largely non-aboriginal and usually career public servants. Thus no matter how close ATSIC emulates the values and perspectives of aboriginal people, public servants and politicians are always able to yank the Commission back to the hierarchical and “upward accountability” models of public administration. While vetoes are relatively rare, most aboriginal groups argue that they reveal the ultimate loyalty and orientation of ATSIC.18

Less influential advisory councils abound, including most or all of the advisory councils for women’s issues in Australia and Canada. Ontario and B.C. have also

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17 See Stetson and Mazur, Comparative State Feminism.
experimented with advisory councils for native issues, and Western Australia has a Commission of Elders and Aboriginal Cultural Committee, both appointed “in consultation with aboriginals.” But as we saw in Chapter Two, it is difficult or impossible for these councils to be legitimately representative of movements. And, since they are not part of the regular bureaucracy, they have limited powers and opportunities to influence decision-making and are largely reliant on their ministers.

Legislative Committees

A final type of state structure is the legislative committee focused on particular movements or issues of concern to movements. Again, a clear distinction can be drawn between the Westminster system and others. In Westminster systems legislative committees enjoy relatively little influence, since members are closely tied to their political parties and often simply reflect existing party positions and divisions—particularly in Canada. They cannot compel governments to follow their recommendations, and so their primary policy role is examining general proposals and providing forums for discussion and awareness. Thus, while the national Canadian and Australian lower houses have over the years had both temporary and permanent committees on aboriginal affairs that produced groundbreaking reports, these committees usually wielded little policy influence and retained a low public profile. The 1989-93 Canadian House of Commons’ “Status of Women Subcommittee of the Standing

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19 In 1985 Ontario also created advisory councils for senior citizens, multiculturalism and disabled persons; none built a large profile or lasted more than five years.

20 I discuss this point in J.Malloy “Reconciling Expectations and Reality In House of Commons Committees: The Case of the Finance Committee and the GST Inquiry” Canadian Public Administration 36:3 (Fall 1996).
Committee on Health, Welfare, Social Affairs, Seniors and the Status of Women" is one of the few examples of a "women's issues" standing committee; its name alone illustrates the peripheral status of such committees and the tendency to lump multiple and diverse issues together. Lisa Young writes that this sub-committee had some influence, particularly with its 1991 report on violence against women, entitled *The War Against Women.* But, "although the subcommittee was a relative success, its potential impact on public policy should not be overestimated," partly due to the limitations of committees in the parliamentary system.

Women legislators may also form caucuses either within their parties or across party lines. For example, in the 1980s the Victoria Labor government relied extensively on the Labor Party's Status of Women policy committee (comprising both legislators and other party members) for policy ideas and monitoring bureaucratic performance. The Canadian House of Commons had an Association of Women Parliamentarians in the 1988-93 Parliament, but this group largely limited itself to improving the legislative environment for women, rather than influencing public policy issues. The most notable cross-party group is the U.S. Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues, which does address public policy issues in that very decentralized legislature.


22 Young, "Fulfilling the Mandate of Difference" 98.


Overall, while legislative committees are not subject to pressure from the world of public administration, they are rarely capable of building strong links with movements or fully reflecting their views. This is again because of the role of political parties, which place considerable pressure on committee and individual committee members to reflect party positions. In the United States system of government, because legislatures are separate from the executive, committees can be much more influential and able to compel greater government cooperation. But actual examples of committees on aboriginal or women's issues are rare. For example, the United States Congress has never had a standing full committee for women's issues in either house, although individual politicians can and do wield substantial influence on such issues through other committee placements.

Unlike these other institutions, special policy agencies are widely found in Westminster governments, and are reasonably similar across jurisdictions, with some variation in structures and foci. They thus lend themselves well to comparative study. But more importantly, special policy agencies straddle the worlds of public administration and social movements more than any of these other structures. They therefore provide the best opportunities to compare and contrast the struggles between the two worlds, and the ambivalence and contradictions of government-movement links and relationships. Consequently, although I refer to these other structures throughout this study, my focus is clearly on special policy agencies and their attempts to grapple with the conflicting demands placed upon them by the two worlds.
What Do Special Policy Agencies Look Like?

Having established what special policy agencies are not, we now look at what forms they do take. Agencies can be clearly classified into three types - policy units within central agencies; separate policy secretariats; and policy units attached to line departments. Highly distinct from one another, each type has different effects upon agencies' development and activities. Whether these effects are desirable depends strongly on whether agencies are viewed from the world of public administration or the world of social movements.

Policy units within central agencies

Particularly when they are created by sympathetic political leaders and governing parties, special policy agencies commonly take initial shape as small policy units attached to powerful central agencies. This allows them close access to key decision-makers, policy processes, cabinet documents and a vast array of other information. In the world of public administration, this is ideal since it places the agency near the top of the hierarchy, and gives the agency clout and authority when dealing with other departments and units.

However, this closeness also allows political and bureaucratic leaders to closely monitor and control agency activities and agendas, a threatening development in the world of social movements. Furthermore, the sensitive and elite atmosphere of central agencies places immense pressure on agency staff to conform to the bureaucratic environment. It creates an image of aloofness from movement activists and
organizations, but ironically also from regular line departments, which often complain of the arrogance of central agencies.

*Separate policy secretariats*

For several reasons, the first model is rarely permanent. Governments commonly enlarge the units into separate ministry-level secretariats, with full-time ministers and increased resources. They may do so in order to increase the visibility and prominence of the agency and hence to credit the governing party, and/or to increase its policy capacity. Conversely, agency reorganizations may also be part of an attempt by unsympathetic politicians and bureaucrats to strip the unit of influence without eliminating it. Movement concerns may be allayed once agencies are moved away from central agency hothouses, where they are under the close supervision of the most senior political and bureaucratic staff. But public servants are more likely to resist such a move, as it may decrease the agency’s influence and clout, even if its staff and budget are increased.

Becoming a separate ministry means less access to the centres of bureaucratic power, and may entail reporting to a weak or junior member of cabinet.

*Policy units attached to line departments*

Alternatively, governments may attach the unit to a large line department in a “big brother/sister” relationship under a single minister. As the term suggests, this has both positive and negative aspects. The unit may be able to draw upon the greater resources of the department and the minister’s clout is increased by the large portfolio. The unit also
may have greater access to internal department processes and have opportunities to influence them.\textsuperscript{25}  

On the other hand, this relationship can be very controlling. Under an unsympathetic minister or department head, the unit may simply become one voice among many within the large department, or its agenda may be confined solely to issues which complement the overall department agenda. As well, while having a powerful and influential minister has its obvious advantages, an agency must compete with many other units for the minister’s time and attention (as noted in Chapter Two’s discussion of horizontal ministries).

In addition to the other structures mentioned earlier, these three types of special policy agency structures are commonly supplemented by other institutional arrangements, particularly the appointment of ministers and special political advisors and the creation of interdepartmental committees. Like policy agencies, these are highly visible and formal initiatives, but they can be remarkably hollow and without apparent substance. The appointment of ministers and special advisors is quickly noted by the media and movements; they can add a significant degree of legitimacy and profile to the issue, or act as symbolic smokescreens hiding the lack of policy activity or influence. The striking of committees is less public but can send powerful messages within the bureaucracy. Once again, however, the message goes out only if committees are comprised of committed

\textsuperscript{25} For example, in 1990 Ontario NDP minister C.J. “Bud” Wildman specifically requested the two portfolios of Native Affairs and Natural Resources in order to advance the aboriginal agenda within the traditionally resistant Ministry of Natural Resources.
individuals who wield significant resources and influence. We will return often to these themes in subsequent chapters.

**Literature on Special Policy Agencies**

While scholars have examined special policy agencies in a variety of contexts, few have compared agencies across different policy areas. Feminist scholars have produced considerable work on women's policy agencies, with two systematic, comparative studies across different jurisdictions -- Marian Sawer's *Sisters in Suits* and Dorothy McBride Stetson and Amy Mazur's *Comparative State Feminism*.\(^{26}\) Furthermore, the Australian "femocrat" literature has explored many of the conflicts between the feminist movement and the bureaucratic world, focusing particularly on the experiences of individuals. But most researchers in feminist and other policy areas have usually approached special policy agencies as part of the overall policy community -- in a given jurisdiction\(^{27}\); under a particular government\(^{28}\); or their role in a specific issue or

\(^{26}\) Marian Sawer, *Sisters in Suits*; Stetson and Mazur, eds. *Comparative State Feminism*.

\(^{27}\) See for example Cheryl Collier, "Judging Women's Political Success in the 1990s" in Graham White, ed. *Government and Politics of Ontario* (5th Edition) (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997). Other provincial studies are listed in later notes.

Only a handful of studies look at the agencies as institutions in and of themselves, analyzing their history and overall performance. Furthermore, most studies tend to be firmly anchored in one of the two colliding worlds. Researchers either ask: is the agency an effective bureaucratic player or, conversely, is it fighting to achieve social movement goals? Agencies are evaluated by their ability to satisfy one of the two worlds, and tested according to the normative values of one side or the other. Agencies tend not to do well on such tests, and end up appearing ambiguous and seemingly irrelevant to both sides. Few studies have investigated policy agencies as discrete organizations in and of themselves, but with reference to a much larger policy context.

The most ambitious work relevant to my own is Stetson and Mazur’s *Comparative State Feminism*, an edited set of studies of national women’s policy machinery in fourteen countries. The editors’ definition of “women’s policy machinery” encompasses a variety of state structures beyond special policy agencies. Thus, while the individual chapters are nuanced and detailed, it is difficult to compare

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32 The book has chapters on Canada and Australia, but these focus only on the national governments. See Linda Geller-Schwartz, “An Array of Agencies: Feminism and State Institutions in Canada” and Marian Sawer, “‘Femocrats in Glass Towers?’ The Office of the Status of Women in Canada” in Stetson and Mazur, eds, *Comparative State Feminism*. 
concepts and findings since both the actual structures and authors’ foci vary. However, Stetson and Mazur construct a basic typology for evaluating these structures. They assess agencies’ influence within the state ("policy influence") and accessibility to movements and activists ("policy access"), finding various combinations. These categories allow them to classify different countries and structures, and to offer some tentative conclusions on how trade-offs between policy influence and policy access affect policy outputs and feminists’ relationships with the state.

The impact on individuals of the colliding values of public administration and feminist movements has been documented in the literature on Australian "femocrats." The term "femocrat" has both positive and pejorative connotations, with no single agreed definition. But the two most accepted meanings are "women appointed to work in 'women’s affairs’ and women’s units in the state apparatus"33 and "senior public servants who owe their positions to pressure from the organized women’s movement".34 In general, femocrats are assumed to possess some background or linkages to the feminist movement, and much of this literature has been produced by former public servants and self-identified "femocrats."35

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35 Hester Eisenstein refers to her personal experiences in Inside Agitators as well as Gender Shock: Practicing Feminism on Two Continents (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991) and other writings. Other academic writers with "femocrat" backgrounds include Ann Summers ("Mandarins or Missionaries: Women in the Federal Bureaucracy" in Norma Grieve and Ailsa Burns, eds., Australian Women: New Feminist Perspectives [Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1986]), Marian Sawyer (Sisters In Suits, and Meredith Edwards (Margaret Levi and Meredith Edwards, "The Dilemmas of Femocratic Reform" in Katzenstein and Skjeie, eds., Going Public.)
As mentioned, the femocrat literature explores many of the conflicts between social movement and public administration norms by exploring the effects on individuals. For example, femocrats note the pressure to conform to bureaucratic norms in such personal ways as professional dress ("dress for success" is a commonly derided term in the literature). They also feel the constraints of the masculine environment and the pressure to adapt their vocabularies and jokes if they wished to gain acceptance and access to promote their policy goals. On the other hand, the largely white, urban middle-class origins and university education of most femocrats make them vulnerable to criticisms, again at a personal level, that they cannot identify with other strands of the feminist movement.

Hence femocrats are said to face a "mandarin or missionary" dilemma in their personal identities and everyday behaviour. Are they public servants or feminists first? Should they use their positions to advance the feminist agenda, regardless of governing ideologies or the opinions of senior public servants? Are they ultimately accountable to the public service hierarchy, or to the women's movement? Yeatman argues that "[f]emocrats are viewed [by other feminists] as owing their positions to movement pressure but as giving their ultimate loyalties to the employing government body." Similarly, Eisenstein says that if femocrats "won the confidence of their [public service] colleagues by playing by the bureaucratic rules...they would lose the trust of the women's

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36 See Eisenstein, *Inside Agitators*, particularly Chapter 6, "Mandarins or Missionaries? Accountability to the Women's Movement."


movement." As Eisenstein records in her interviews with femocrats, different individuals reconciled the dilemma in different ways. One common reaction, also found in interviews for this study, was to adopt public accountability to the bureaucracy, but private accountability to the women's movement - possibly by leaking information and documents.

One criticism of the femocrat literature is that it tends to overlook organizations and particular units, particularly on a comparative level. Most studies revolve around the experiences of individuals or single units or take a theoretical approach with limited empirical discussion. The major exception is Marian Sawer's *Sisters in Suits*, published in 1990, which looks in detail at feminist involvement in both Commonwealth and state bureaucracies, and includes detailed discussion of policy agencies at both the national and state level.

There is no such systematic study of Canadian women's policy agencies, although there are several excellent collections on feminist-state relations which discuss policy agencies. At the time of writing there are also a number of ongoing research projects

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40 See Draper, "Women's Policy"; Chappell, "Women's Policy"; and Barbara Sullivan, "Women and the Goss Government".


42 Sawer, *Sisters in Suits*.

on provincial women's machinery (encompassing more than just policy agencies)\textsuperscript{44} and on the B.C. Ministry of Women's Equality.\textsuperscript{45} Although Canada lacks a single comprehensive study comparable to Marian Sawer's, several researchers have compiled substantial bodies of work on women's state machinery. Sue Findlay's multiple works and particularly her seminal paper "Facing the State: The Politics of the Women's Movement Reconsidered"\textsuperscript{46} have supplied a strong neo-marxist analysis of Canadian women's state structures, while Sandra Burt has conducted extensive and ongoing studies of national women's policy machinery and the women's policy community.\textsuperscript{47}

The literature on aboriginal policy machinery in either country is less systematic than that on women's policy, with even fewer studies of specific policy agencies. The most extensive research is found in the work of the (Canadian) Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) which sponsored individual monograph studies of aboriginal policy in each province. However, each author or set of authors wrote in isolation and took noticeably different approaches to the subject, leading to widely varying discussions of provincial aboriginal policy structures. As well, there is no attempt by the RCAP to

\textsuperscript{44} Some preliminary findings from this study, coordinated by Pauline Rankin and based on her doctoral research, are reported in "Canadian Experiments with State Feminism: A Comparative Analysis of Provincial Status-of-Women Machinery" a paper presented at the Canadian Political Science Association 1997 annual meetings. See also Kimberly Speers, "Alberta Women and the Provincial State".

\textsuperscript{45} Katherine Teghtsoonian, "Gendering Policy Analysis: Women's Policy Offices and the 'Gender Lens' Strategy in British Columbia and New Zealand" a paper presented at the Canadian Political Science Association 1997 annual meetings.

compare and analyze structures across jurisdictions. Other comparative studies from the 1980s are available, such as Boldt and Long's *Governments in Conflict*? or Abele and Graham's "High Politics is Not Enough," although each focuses on a selection of provinces and is now relatively outdated. Australian research is similarly sparse at the sub-national level except for Annie Holden's work on Queensland. One of the most useful and recent comparative studies of state structures is a volume nominally devoted to differences in citizenship regimes.

Discussions of special policy agencies in other jurisdictions and for other movements is even more sparse. The New Zealand Ministry of Women's Affairs has attracted some scholarly attention, but little has been published. Interesting but isolated work exists on government structures working with other movements such as people with disabilities and in policy areas of particular importance to certain movements, such as

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51 Galligan and Chesterman, *Citizens Without Rights*.


AIDS. These studies illustrate the same conflicts and competing expectations between public servants and activists that I am exploring. While these structures are program-oriented and not special policy agencies as I define them, their experiences are often similar to those of policy agencies.

To conclude, most studies of special policy agencies either discuss them as part of a much larger overview of policy areas, or assess them according to the norms and values of one of the two worlds. Most authors examine and evaluate agencies from a larger perspective, and have usually found significant failings or problems with agencies. In particular, they often find agencies ambiguous, lacking clear directions or consistent behaviour, and tend to find agencies largely irrelevant to the policy area and its processes. While my own study relies extensively on these works by others, I attempt to understand agencies as organizations in and of themselves, rather than as part of an overall policy area or state apparatus. In doing so, we see how they straddle and attempt to link the different expectations and views of the two worlds.

Why Are Special Policy Agencies Created?

What prompted the development of special policy agencies? It is difficult to isolate the specific reasons behind the creation of an individual agency, since historical records and participants’ memories may be insufficient or conflicting. As well, the actual

creation of an agency may be less significant than subsequent changes in its structures, mandate or resources.

However, we can distinguish four factors that appear to have influenced the creation or substantial upgrading of agencies: (1) the election of progressive/social democratic parties; (2) specific pressures by movements; (3) government reactions to crises and other seminal events; and (4) the influence of federalism. While their importance cannot be measured definitively, they represent the most common circumstances behind the birth and growth of agencies.

The election of progressive and social democratic parties

Many policy agencies were created following the election of social democratic governments that identified closely with the aspirations and goals of social movements. The clearest examples involve the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and women’s policy agencies. The Australian federal Women’s Interests Section, the predecessor of the present Office of the Status of Women, originated in early 1973 under the direction of the newly elected Labor government of Gough Whitlam. The election of ALP governments in both New South Wales (1977) and Western Australia (1983) also led to the immediate creation of those states’ first women’s policy machinery. While the Victorian Premier’s Department created a women’s unit in 1977 under a Liberal government, the unit was substantially strengthened and upgraded to the Women’s Policy Coordinating Unit by Labor when it was elected in 1982. Across the Tasman Sea, the New Zealand Labor Party also oversaw the creation of a Ministry of Women’s Affairs.

55 See Sawyer, Sisters in Suits.
soon after its election in 1984. And Britain’s first substantial women’s policy agency, the
Women’s Unit in the Cabinet Office, was established in 1997 by Tony Blair’s “New
Labour” government.

Links between the Australian Labor Party and the creation of state aboriginal
policy agencies are less evident. However, the 1989 creation of the Commonwealth-level
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) was a central goal of the
ALP government. Since its election in 1996, the Liberal/National coalition government
has been noticeably ambivalent and often hostile to this unique entity, which is neither a
regular department nor a special policy agency.56

Links between parties and the creation of aboriginal and women’s policy agencies
are also found in Canada, but not as clearly as with the Australian Labor Party. The
Ontario Women’s Directorate was created by William Davis’s centrist, brokerage-style
Progressive Conservative government; it was significantly strengthened by the Liberal
minority government of 1985-87, and then expanded again under a New Democratic
majority government in 1990. Similarly, the Ontario Native Affairs Directorate was
created in 1987 by the Liberals and upgraded to a Secretariat under the NDP in 1990.
The election in 1991 of NDP governments in Saskatchewan and British Columbia were
immediately followed by new portfolios for both women’s and aboriginal affairs
(although the B.C. Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was preceded by the smaller and less
activist Ministry of Native Affairs). The NDP may have also had some influence over
women’s policy machinery at the national level. While the Canadian Status of Women
Coordinator was appointed in 1971 by a Liberal majority government, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women and Women’s Program in the Secretary of State Department were created during the 1972-74 period of Liberal minority government, supported by the New Democrats.

Labour-oriented parties in power without strong social movement linkages are less likely to create special policy agencies. While there are no clear cases of this in Australia, there are several non-Australian examples. The 1972-75 British Columbia NDP government under David Barrett provided breakthroughs for the labour movement and large increases in social assistance and services, but did not create any women’s or aboriginal policy machinery. The male-dominated Barrett administration approached problems and issues from a class rather than gender or race basis, and resisted pressure to create structures and pursue policies based on the latter. Similarly, although the British Labour Party established the Equal Opportunity Commission in the mid-1970s, it did not establish any substantial women’s policy machinery during its 1974-1979 governments under Harold Wilson and James Callaghan, neither of whom had strong links to social movements.

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56 ATSIC is a complex experiment combining the old Department of Aboriginal Affairs with elected councils of aboriginal representatives. However, ultimate authority for money and policies remains in the hands of the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, and as a program-oriented department it does not qualify as a special policy agency.


Pressure From Movements

A second factor influencing policy agencies' creation is direct pressure from movement activists and organizations. The Women’s Electoral Lobby (WEL), a leading Australian liberal feminist group, is credited by Marian Sawer with pushing Labor governments in the 1970s, particularly federally and in New South Wales, to establish women’s policy units.60 WEL also supplied many of the early staff for these units, and many career public servants continue to hold WEL membership. WEL state branches also lobbied state governments to create women’s policy agencies.61

In Canada, pressure by the National Action Committee on the Status of Women was an important factor in the establishment of Canadian federal machinery. NAC pressed in particular for the implementation of policy machinery as recommended by the 1970 Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada. However, despite its close ties to the Liberal party during much of the Trudeau era, NAC was never as linked to government machinery as its Australian counterpart. NAC focused its efforts at the national level, but there were few if any provincial counterparts available to pressure provincial governments (although the now-defunct Ontario Committee on the Status of Women lobbied in the 1970s for the establishment of the Ontario Council on the Status of Women, along with the later Ontario Women’s Directorate). The lack of a strong provincial lobbying effort may reflect the dominance of English-Canadian nationalists in NAC, who tended to believe in the primacy of the federal government.

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60 Sawer, *Sisters in Suits.*
61 Sawer, *Sisters in Suits.*
Obviously the activities of aboriginal nations, through the initiation of land and self-government claims, have prompted much of the development of aboriginal affairs machinery. However, aboriginal groups and organizations have never or rarely been specifically linked to the creation and maintenance of government machinery. Because aboriginal peoples consider the transfer and recognition of self-governing responsibilities as their primary goal, they do not contradict this by calling for more non-aboriginal structures to govern aboriginals. While there may be informal pressures and private discussions, aboriginal organizations do not take a public interest in the design of most non-aboriginal structures, particularly at the provincial level.

**Government Reactions to Crises and Seminal Events**

Some policy agencies, particularly in aboriginal affairs, are created to help governments respond to "crises" or seminal events. Unlike the previous point, in which movements specifically press for the creation of policy agencies, here governments act on their own to create increased policy capacity and activities due to various external events. This explains initiatives in which movements have not specifically pressed for the creation of policy agencies, and governments express strong ideological opposition to basic movement claims. For example, the creation by the right-wing Social Credit government of the B.C. Native Affairs Secretariat in 1987 was due to the overwhelming realization that the absence of any negotiation initiatives with aboriginals greatly threatened future investment in the provincial resource economy.62 One-time events,

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such as landmark reports and inquiries, have also influenced the creation of agencies by otherwise lukewarm governments. Commissions and inquiries into aboriginal deaths in custody and the "stolen generation" of adopted children have spurred the development and enhancement of Australian state aboriginal policy agencies, although this is not easily pinpointed in specific acts.

Federalism

A fourth impetus that cannot be overlooked in the Australian and Canadian experience is federalism. Apart from the three above factors, there is some evidence that agencies may be created -- and certainly have been affected -- by developments in other jurisdictions. Federalism's role in creating sub-national aboriginal affairs machinery is particularly clear -- provinces and states have a strong desire to coordinate their own programs with each other and with national initiatives, and to protect their own interests in negotiations between federal governments and aboriginal nations. Alberta, Saskatchewan and New Brunswick all currently house their aboriginal policy units within their ministries of intergovernmental affairs, illustrating the agencies' close connection to federal developments.

Like most policy sectors in a federal country, the creation of machinery in one sub-national jurisdiction may have rippling effects, leading to similar initiatives elsewhere. It is reasonable to assume, but difficult to prove, that progress in other states and provinces may influence governments' decision to create and enhance agencies. The most sustained and influential network is that of Australian women's agencies, which have held regular intergovernmental meetings since 1976. While there is no evidence
that other states felt the need to create agencies solely in response to other states’ initiatives, these meetings have had a definite “leapfrog effect” (in the words of one public servant interviewed) on subsequent innovations. Most notably, the ideas and expertise behind “women’s budgets” (see Chapter Six) spread from the Commonwealth level to individual states through these intergovernmental meetings. While Canadian provinces hold similar meetings, there is little evidence available to suggest they have led to the creation of new structures or to a significant exchange of ideas and practices.

**What do Special Policy Agencies Do?**

A second comparative question about special policy agencies is what they actually do. What are their mandates and chief activities? What do they focus upon? How do they approach these tasks? Although subsequent chapters discuss these questions in detail, a brief overview is helpful at this point.

**Mandates**

Since they are created for different reasons, it is not surprising that agencies have different mandates - that is, a defined purpose or mission set by the government in power. It is not always easy to pinpoint an agency mandate at a specific time, since their written mandates are often vague and open to multiple interpretations. One agency head told me:

> When I came into the job, I named off what I thought my priority areas were. What became obvious immediately was that this was not the job that [my superiors] saw...they saw it as coordinating policy, and I thought the problem was there wasn’t any policy to coordinate.
Agencies are more likely often guided by more informal, unwritten understandings of their purposes and goals, as transmitted by elected officials, political staff and senior public servants. These informal mandates may change considerably over time, primarily due to changes in governing parties and ministers, but also as issues and movement demands evolve.

Some social democratic governments have given agencies a clear mission to advocate a movement’s demands within government. But even here, it is rare for this mandate to be explicitly present in the agency’s written documents. The clearest example found for this study is the British Columbia Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs’ mandate in the early 1990s. As mentioned in Chapter One, the Ministry’s Aboriginal Relations Division was explicitly designated to “act as advocates for aboriginal people within government.”

But more commonly, agencies are simply given vague formal mandates to “advance the status of women” or “promote the economic and social development of Aboriginal communities.” As the quotation from the previous page suggests, the interpretation of such phrases is left open - including the crucial distinction between social movements and their larger societal groups. Hence agencies are to work on “women’s issues” rather than “feminist issues,” and to consult with “women” rather than the “women’s movement.” The definition of relevant issues, the setting of priorities, and the scope and parameters of agency activities all depend on the party in power, the

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65 Government of Victoria, Department of Human Services. Departmental Plan, 1997-99, 34
minister responsible, and the inclinations of political staff, senior public servants, and agency staff themselves.

Activities

I have already emphasized the policy aspect of agencies; that is, they do not have significant operational responsibilities like the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission. Agencies primarily engage in policy analysis and development, either alone or with other government units and/or movement activists and groups. Agencies draft option papers and proposals, and analyze other units' papers and proposals. Agency staff participate extensively in interdepartmental committees within government. In these meetings, the agency is generally one among equals – it cannot compel other public servants to do very much. Consequently, in interviews agency staff again and again used phrases such as "linking," "bridging gaps" and "exchanging information" to describe their relationships with other government units - as opposed to giving directions or orders.

Relationships with external activists are generally less structured and more sporadic, fluctuating particularly according to the party in power and the movement (as we will see in later chapters, women's groups and aboriginal groups generally both seek and acquire different types of relationships with agencies). As well, it is more difficult to catalogue or assess agencies' external relationships, since interviews often yielded conflicting information. Some agency heads and senior staff felt that they had relatively good and productive relationships with movement organizations and activists, but this was disputed - either by activists themselves or, more interestingly, by other public
servants. For example, the minister and the agency head might schedule annual meetings with movement organizations to review major issues and concerns; but the organizations often preferred more flexibility to meet as issues arose. In some cases, agencies circulated working papers and draft proposals to activists and organizations for their opinions and advice - but activists sometimes complained that they had insufficient time or resources, or that this was a political exercise with no sincere interest in the movement’s views. Agencies sometimes have small grant budgets for funding organizations or (increasingly) one-time projects, but most grant programs are housed in other departments. Overall then, the types of relations between agencies and movements vary considerably in different jurisdictions and over time.

What policy areas do agencies concentrate on? While this obviously changes over time and in different jurisdictions and political climates, some issues are nearly universal for all agencies in a given movement area. Domestic violence is a key policy area for women’s agencies at the sub-national level in both Australia and Canada. Pay and employment equity are also common areas of activity. Some agencies, such as Status of Women Canada and the B.C. Ministry of Women’s Equality, have tried a different route by developing gender analysis guides for all government policy analysts.66 In all jurisdictions, women’s agencies often struggle to expand the definition of “women’s issues,” first to the effects on women of issues such as welfare cuts and housing shortages, and ultimately to broad macro issues such as deficit reduction policies, trade agreements and similar areas.

The policy areas of aboriginal agencies differ more between Australia and Canada. The chief activity of Canadian provincial agencies is nearly always treaty negotiations for land-claims and self-government; in contrast, no Australian policy agency appears to be engaged in large-scale treaty work. Instead, negotiations are normally housed in Native Title Units in the Departments of Premier and Cabinet, or in Attorney-General ministries. However, agencies in both countries are active in similarly broad sets of issues, including health care, housing, social and community services, community social and economic development, policing and justice, fishing and hunting, gambling, etc. While the exact programs and policy positions obviously vary, aboriginal policy agencies are generally mandated to work on the same issues and areas regardless of jurisdiction, reflecting the common problems and legacies faced by indigenous peoples worldwide.

By their nature, policy agencies have few programs that deliver services; those operations that do exist are fairly peripheral to the overall agency agenda, with some exceptions. Most notably, the B.C. Ministry of Women’s Equality was responsible for child care programs in the province from 1991 until 1996, when these were moved to the new Ministry of Children and Families. Generally the largest area of program activity for special policy agencies involves the above-mentioned grants to movement organizations and activists, but budgets and criteria vary widely over time and across jurisdictions. Agencies also carry out occasional or ongoing public education programs, such as anti-violence campaigns.

Australian aboriginal agencies do have substantial responsibilities for archeological and heritage issues affecting aboriginals - overseeing excavations and
maintaining registries of sites and experts. However, in interviews for this study, this was presented as a very minor aspect of the agency. In fact, one agency head told me he considered it tiresome and very peripheral to the agency's main focus. In Canada, archaeological issues are normally the responsibility of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs or provincial citizenship and heritage ministries, unless they spark confrontations or crises over land use (such as the 1990 Oka crisis).

Agency personnel appear to have mixed feelings about their emphasis on policy without operational responsibilities. As we will see in later chapters, agencies may gain respect in the public administration world by not "stealing" programs and competing for resources with other departments. Yet having the resources and status of a major service delivery agency might enhance the agency's overall clout and prestige within government.

**Conflicting Expectations and Consequent Ambiguity**

In part because of their often unclear mandates and varied activities, special policy agencies rarely have clear or widely accepted criteria by which to evaluate themselves. This lack of clear criteria is normal for boundary-spanning organizations, because such units are not easily measured by simple and objective standards that focus on productivity - the maximizing of outputs with minimal inputs.

Since it is often impossible to assess such outputs and inputs, boundary-spanning organizations are more commonly measured by more subjective variables such as legitimacy or their "fit" with other organizations or units. James Thompson writes that "assessment standards at...high-contingency boundaries are frequently in terms of
organizational rationality rather than efficiency.” That is, units at the edge of organizational boundaries are evaluated by how others see them, rather than by meeting defined and objective performance goals.

In the case of boundary-spanning units, Thompson suggests that these “assessment standards” are likely to revolve around “confidence expressed in them by coordinate units.” Thus units such as special policy agencies are measured and assessed by whether others have confidence in them. But because agency relationships and expected outputs are often not very clear, this “confidence” tends to revolve around more intangible, subjective criteria, and agencies often find it difficult to cultivate. As one public servant put it:

...you’ve got a hugely interested constituency, very, very pro and very anti-. You’ve got very large differences of opinion; and I don’t just mean from one end of the spectrum to the other; I mean people at the same end of the spectrum are going to have very different ideas of how to proceed on a particular issue. You’ve got, to a very large degree, political masters and mistresses who don’t trust you, who are wary of the explicit advocacy role you’ve got. You’ve probably got a bureaucracy where the same thing could be said.

Because agencies often have unclear mandates and vague responsibilities, their staff are highly aware of their ambiguous status, and often very cautious and pragmatic in their activities.

Furthermore, the varied activities and changing priorities of agencies means they must always grapple with new challenges, from different directions. Thompson writes that “to the extent that boundary-spanning jobs occur at points where the task

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68 Thompson, Organizations in Action, 95
environment is heterogeneous and shifting...such jobs require the exercise of discretion to meet contingencies...”69 In other words, units like special policy agencies that work in complex and changing issue areas, must remain flexible and adaptable. This is often manifested through ambiguity, and so most agency staff interviewed for this study emphasized that they worked in an ambiguous setting. Even staff who strongly identified with one world over the other talked of how the conflicting challenges and the lack of clear and permanent mandates created personal dilemmas and struggles for them and/or their co-workers. One former agency head described her position as “meat in the sandwich.”

Regardless of the level of their personal struggles and conflicts, most agency staff stressed that they had to be exceptionally flexible and pragmatic in their work. As one manager put it: “[t]he name of the game we’re in is influencing government. So we use different strategies to advance the status of women.” A former chief executive said:

I think a lot of the work that we did most effectively was purely by bluff, because nobody really knew how much clout you really had. Every now and then we would come in and kind of gazump somebody...for weeks and weeks we’d let appointments go past that were sort of inappropriate, but then when we got one that we really had strong ground to stand against, [the agency would try to stop it...]There was this little bit of a surprise element that people wouldn’t necessarily think of [our agency] but remember that someone caught it from them.

Some agency staff seemed to enjoy the special challenges and ambiguities of working in special policy agencies. One agency head said, “It is hard, because you’re dealing in a grey area, but that’s one of the reasons I really enjoy the job.”

69 Thompson, Organizations in Action, 111.
As these quotations suggest, agencies operate in unclear or contradictory settings, and staff stress flexibility and adaptation to cope with these conflicts. This harkens back to Meyer and Rowan’s argument that organizations emulate “myths and ceremonies” in order to survive (even if such emulation is at the expense of day-to-day efficiency). However, while those authors emphasize how organizations conform to their institutional environment (i.e., their sponsors) at the expense of their task environment (i.e., their clientele or customers), Thompson argues that boundary-spanning units must pay attention to both.

In Chapter Two, we discussed how women’s advisory councils and horizontal ministries were unable to overcome the pressures of the feminist movements and public administration, respectively. How then can special policy agencies possibly hope to meet and balance the concerns of both worlds?

Certainly agencies face a greater challenge than the other structures, because they must cope simultaneously with pressures from both their public administration colleagues and their social movement “clientele.” But, as I suggested in Chapter One, it may be that these collisions and contradictions actually assist agencies, by forcing them to remain ambiguous and flexible, ready for contingencies on all sides. This creates permanent tensions with both worlds, but also ensures that agencies cannot relax in their positions as “meat in the sandwich.” They must be attentive to both worlds. Thus, in the chapters that follow, I explore how agencies cope with and balance the pressures from public administration and social movements, and suggest possible ways in which ambiguity allows them to create uneasy but useful links between the two worlds.
Conclusion

This chapter has given an overview of special policy agencies: what they are; why they were created; how they are situated amidst other state structures and policy machinery; and their development in Canada and Australia. The following chapter returns to the themes of the two colliding worlds of public administration and social movements, and considers how each places competing horizontal and vertical pressures respectively on agencies.
Chapter Four -- Political Change and the Ontario Women's Directorate

Because they work in contentious issue areas, policy agencies are highly sensitive to shifts in governing ideologies. This is particularly clear in the case of the Ontario Women's Directorate (OWD), which in its sixteen year history has operated under three governing parties which between them have produced five distinct ideological regimes. In this chapter I explore both the immediate and the cumulative impact of political changes - in the sense of changes in government - on the OWD. Not only did changes in governing ideologies lead directly to changes in the Directorate, but the accumulated history of changes chipped away at the OWD's credibility with both the worlds of public administration and women's movements. By analyzing these shifts in some detail, this chapter demonstrates how dynamics of political change affect the evolution and behaviour of policy agencies.

The scope and number of government turnovers in Ontario from 1985 to 1995 is unparalleled in the Westminster systems of Canada, Australia, Great Britain and New Zealand.¹ The Ontario Women's Directorate is thus an exceptional case study. While many agencies have dealt with repeated changes between two governing parties, no other women's policy agency has had to contend with three governing parties following, as we will see, at least four distinctly different ideological approaches to women's issues.

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¹ As I explain below, Ontario is unique among these jurisdictions in this period for having three governing parties each succeed each other, with the original party regaining power in 1995 with a distinctly different ideological approach from its previous incarnation. Further complications include the short-lived premiership of Frank Miller in 1985 and a 1985-87 Liberal minority government supported by the New Democratic Party in an unusual political accord.
The OWD experience illustrates, within a very short period, the many tensions and contradictions that accumulate in special policy agencies, and how agencies like the Directorate evolve and adapt to their ambiguous and tenuous position. While the Women’ Directorate was meant to be a temporary entity firmly within the public administration world, ideological and agenda shifts forced it later to seek greater contacts and standing in the women’s movement, and still later to go back and again try to emulate the public administration world. These changes exacerbated the existing tensions between the colliding values of public administration and the feminist movement.

Just as certain political parties may be more likely to create special policy agencies (see Chapter Three), changes in government often, but not always, lead to changes in policy agencies’ agendas and orientations. For example, the election of a social democratic party may lead special policy agencies to seek closer ties with movements by hiring staff from them and holding more extensive consultations with a wide range of activists and organizations. Examples of this include Victoria after the 1982 election of the Labor Party, and the Australian Commonwealth government (to a lesser extent) after the 1983 Labor victory. On the other hand, the election of a strongly neo-conservative government can lead agencies to orient themselves firmly toward the public administration, reducing significant consultation activity and external hiring. Examples include New South Wales after the 1988 victory by the Coalition and Victoria after the Liberals regained power in 1992.

Sometimes, the effects of changes in government are relatively minor. This is particularly evident when there are less clear-cut ideological differences between political
parties. For example, the Canadian federal transition from the Progressive Conservatives to the Liberals in 1993 has had mixed and somewhat unclear effects on women's policy machinery. The Liberal government has promoted the use of "gender policy analysis" (i.e., consideration of different impacts on men and women - see Chapter Two) across government, through Status of Women Canada (SWC). SWC has also been given relatively stable funding after years of steady cuts. However, the gender policy plan has been criticized for not presenting any real or substantial challenge to existing policy analysis processes, and SWC appears to have limited connections or linkages to the broader women's movement, particularly the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. And as discussed, the Liberals eliminated the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women in 1995.

In contrast, Ontario exhibits fundamental changes in both government and the values and activities of special policy agencies – particularly the Ontario Women's Directorate. (The Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat will be described in the next chapter.) The degree of political change in Ontario has laid bare, more than anywhere else, the fundamental problem of the colliding worlds of public administration and social movements. Accordingly, it is particularly useful to study the Ontario Women's Directorate in depth, to understand how it worked to change and readapt in response to political changes.

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2 Sandra Burt, "The Status of Women: Learning to Live Without the State" in Andrew F. Johnson and Andrew Stritch, eds., Canadian Public Policy: Globalization and Political Parties (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1997).

The Political Landscape

Prior to 1985, Ontario had one of the most established and stable governing parties in the world. Not only had the Progressive Conservative party been continuously reelected since 1943, while weathering three leadership transitions, but the provincial political culture seemed remarkably resilient and predictable. Few could disagree with John Wilson’s 1980 statement that “[t]he conclusion seems inescapable...In Ontario we don’t believe in change for the sake of change; we prefer order, stability and continuity.” And as long as the Conservatives can provide that...they can go on at Queen’s Park forever.”

While Ontario underwent tremendous economic and social change during this period, with a huge expansion of the provincial public sector and the rise of social movements and other new forms of political activity, its government remained remarkably stable and seemingly capable of evolving to meet new contingencies and challenges.

The Ontario Women’s Directorate was created in the context of this exceptional stability. It was constructed very deliberately as an entity within the public administration world, operating within the fixed boundaries of Ontario politics and government.

Since 1985, however, Ontario electoral politics have been remarkably unstable and unpredictable. Governing parties have been swept in and then promptly swept back out, while public opinion appears more volatile and polarized than in the past. Since 1985, Ontario has had three separate governing parties, four major regimes, five premiers

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and eight ministries. Only one party, the Progressive Conservatives (PCs) under Mike Harris, has held consecutive majority governments, and its platform since 1995 has been one of major structural and policy upheavals, with a willingness to confront rather than negotiate with opponents, particularly unions, municipalities and social movements.

There are few pillars of stability in Ontario politics; senior bureaucrats and politicians both come and go, and social movements have become more mobilized against governments and parties of all stripes.

The transition of power from the Progressive Conservatives to the Liberal Party in 1985 marked the beginning of this instability, although it was not evident at the time. Reelected with only a bare plurality in the legislative assembly, the Conservatives were pushed from office by an accord between the Liberals and New Democrats. After their landslide majority election in 1987, the Liberals seemed set to begin a new governing dynasty, and Ontario politics appeared to again display the values of “order, stability and continuity” described by Wilson. An assumption of stability thus surrounded the Ontario Women’s Directorate during its formative years in the early and mid-1980s. This encouraged the OWD to identify strongly with the structures and dynamics of the Ontario government and the public administration world, despite other evidence that Ontario political culture and politics were becoming more volatile and unpredictable.

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5 Ministries (i.e., governments and cabinets formed at the invitation of the Lieutenant-Governor) have been formed since 1985 by Premiers Davis, Miller (twice, both very short-lived), Peterson (twice), Rae and Harris (twice).
Directorate and the entire government were thoroughly unprepared for the unexpected majority victory of the New Democrats in 1990. Then, after a half-decade of turmoil and transition, the balance was again upset when the Progressive Conservative party unexpectedly swept back into power in 1995.9

Change was not limited to party labels. Sharp ideological differences were evident both between and within parties, which pushed and pulled the Directorate in various directions. In 1985 the so-called “bland” pragmatism of the centrist Davis administration was replaced (after the short interregnum of Frank Miller) with the distinctly activist, progressive agenda of David Peterson’s minority Liberal government, propped up by the social democratic NDP. After 1987 the Liberals, no longer dependent on the New Democrats, moved back toward the centre and become noticeably more cautious as they settled in for an expected long run in power. But in 1990 the New Democrats were elected to a majority government, much to their own surprise. The party’s total lack of preparation ensured constant policy struggles between moderate and radical factions under leader Bob Rae.10 At the end of the NDP term in 1995, the Progressive Conservatives were elected with a strong neo-conservative agenda under leader Mike Harris, and the party implemented a sweeping range of policy changes and program cuts.11

9 The centrist Liberals were widely expected to replace the NDP in 1995, and had a wide lead in the polls until two weeks before election day.


11 See John Ibbitson, Promised Land: Inside the Mike Harris Revolution (Toronto: Prentice Hall, 1997)
Ideological change in Ontario politics meant substantial change in the Ontario Women’s Directorate. What had been a stable bureaucratic institution within a stable political setting became a constantly changing unit without continuity or corporate memory. Governments encouraged the Directorate to focus and build links either within the public administration world or with feminist movements; successive governments then forced the Directorate to restructure and switch to the other world. Focusing on one world meant breaking links with the other, and so the OWD gradually but steadily lost credibility with both sides. By the end of the 1990s, the Women’s Directorate was again strongly emulating the values and norms of the public administration world. The OWD ensured its continuing survival as an organization by displaying allegiance to the “myths and ceremonies” of public administration, but it is not clear whether this provided more influence or credibility within the bureaucracy under the Harris government. Furthermore, the OWD appears to have few links or legitimacy with feminist activists and organizations, leaving it with limited utility and questionable value to either world.

*The Women’s Movement in Ontario*

Like the province as a whole, the Ontario women’s movement is very heterogeneous and resists easy characterization. This section discusses two of its particularly significant aspects - (1) its diversity and porousness and (2) the absence of

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significant institutional connections between movements and the Ontario government and political system.

Diversity

The diversity of the Ontario women's movement should not be either over- or understated. Other Canadian provinces exhibit similar diversities in ideologies, ethnicity and other important movement strands. But Ontario's large and diverse population and its distinctive regions allow a flourishing of clusters and smaller sub-movements, to a greater degree than smaller and less populous provinces.

One critical aspect of Ontario women's groups since the early 1980s has been the transformative effect of women immigrants and women of colour. Again, these are similar to forces in other Canadian and non-Canadian societies. However, the high levels of immigration of persons of colour, particularly to the Toronto area, has challenged the established women's movement at the level of priorities, policies, organizational structures and leadership. The concentration of national media in Toronto also makes it a centre of national feminist organizing and debate, further fueling diverse approaches to issues and goals. This diverse movement spills over into national, local and international terrains, and is cross-cut by other attachments of equal or even greater importance to individual feminists - particularly racial, sexual and class identities.

The result is an exceptionally porous movement or set of movements; feminists commonly have simultaneous national, provincial and local foci, and may strongly identify simultaneously with other movements. Unlike the case in some other provinces, Ontario women's groups have been unable to sustain even a weak provincial counterpart
comparable to the National Action Committee on the Status of Women; the most notable attempt was the Ontario Committee on the Status of Women (1983-87). Instead the bulk of Ontario women’s groups are politically active and visible at the sectoral level, such as the Ontario Child Care Coalition and Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses. While this allows for greater recognition of different voices, it also places heavy demands on activists’ limited time and financial resources, preventing the development of more focused and full-time organizations.

*Institutional Connections*

The Ontario women’s movement has never been significantly connected to the Ontario government and political system, unlike the situation at the federal level during the 1970s and early 1980s. This situation can be attributed partly to the lack of strong provincial organizations, the historic tendency of Ontarians to identify more with national rather than provincial politics, and a widespread feminist preference outside Quebec for focusing on the federal government. As well, Ontario women’s activists generally did not and do not have significant partisan backgrounds. In contrast, presidents of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women from 1972-1984 were noticeably linked to political parties.13 (One notable Ontario exception was Judy Rebick, who was active in both the Ontario NDP and the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics and went

13 See Jill Vickers, Pauline Rankin and Christine Appelle, *Politics As If Women Mattered: A Political Analysis of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993). Presidents with partisan backgrounds were Laura Sabia (1971-74, PC); Grace Hartman (1974-75, NDP); Lorna Marsden (1975-77, Liberal); Kay Macpherson (1977-79, NDP); Lynn McDonald (1979-81, NDP); and Doris Anderson (1982-84, Liberal) - excluding only Jean Horn (1981-82). In 1987 NAC declared party membership incompatible with membership on the NAC executive and Rebick severed her NDP ties.
The Ontario NDP has historically been the most open to feminist participation, setting quotas for female representation on party committees\(^{14}\) and candidate lists, and producing favourable party resolutions and positions. But this openness to individual women and feminist issues has not been accompanied by many formal organizational links, alliances or secondments. Instead, linkages are largely at the individual and informal level via activists such as Judy Rebick, or Marion Boyd, a former women's shelter organizer who was elected as an MPP and held several cabinet positions in the Rae government. Curiously, there is more evidence of connections between provincial parties and national groups; for example, in the 1980s the Ontario NDP Women's Committee was a member of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC).\(^{15}\)

Connections between the women's movement and the Ontario bureaucracy have generally been functional and service-oriented -- such as the links between women's shelters and the Ministry of Community and Social Services -- rather than explicitly feminist or concerned with policy analysis and development. Apart from the existence of the OWD policy agency, explained below, this functional bias can be explained in several other ways. The long period of centre-right Conservative rule did not make the state an attractive ally for feminist concerns, while the Ontario three-party system and recent volatility in governing parties make it tactically unwise for movements to affiliate too...

closely with a single opposition political party (assuming activists are willing to subject themselves to the discipline and hierarchy of parties at all). Neither has the Ontario government developed funding agencies similar to the federal Secretary of State’s Women’s Program, separate from the OWD-equivalent Status of Women Canada. As well when governments during the 1970s were more likely to seek institutional connections, liberal feminists -- the most likely stream to pursue such connections -- were overwhelmingly focused at the federal level and placed less direct emphasis on provincial-level linkages.

Key Issues

The key public policy issues for Ontario feminists in the era under study were similar to the concerns of feminists in other Western societies. As in other jurisdictions “women’s issues” in Ontario were generally restricted in public discourse to areas that primarily affect women -- such as pay equity, domestic violence or child care -- rather than to areas where women and men were affected differently. For example, gender-based policy analysis of fiscal policies and trade agreements or studies of the differential impact on men and women of welfare reform policies have been few and far between. When such work did occur (mainly under the Rae NDP government) it played a less than significant role in decision making.

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The most visible women's issues have concerned pay equity, employment equity (which also covered other groups) and violence against women. A number of pay equity bills were introduced in the mid-1980s and 1990s under the Peterson and Rae governments; the Harris government later watered down some aspects of the NDP bills. In 1994, after years of debate and policy development, the Rae government introduced a voluntary employment equity program that was eliminated by the Harris government in 1995. The struggle against violence has been a continual, if uneven, focus of governments, with few major legislative initiatives or high-profile programs. Attempts to expand child care have seen piecemeal victories and many setbacks. Other movement struggles have involved securing access to abortions and abortion clinics, and pursuing same-sex rights and anti-racism initiatives.

The Ontario Women's Directorate

Having briefly set the political context and the key characteristics of the Ontario women's movement, we now turn to the Ontario Women's Directorate.

Creating the Machinery

As we saw in Chapter Three, the Canadian government created a range of women's policy machinery in the early 1970s, following the recommendations of the 1971 Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. But the OWD does not

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17 Canadian struggles over abortion primarily focused over its removal from the federal Criminal Code, which the Supreme Court of Canada did by default in 1988 when it found the relevant statutes unconstitutional.
date from this era. In 1974 Ontario formed an advisory council, the Ontario Council on the Status of Women, but didn’t create a policy unit or ministry until 1983.

Why the delay in Ontario? An obvious explanation is resistance and apathy by the centre-right Davis government. Another reason may be the lack of a strong provincial pressure group, in contrast to the federal efforts of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. Furthermore, the ad hoc, pragmatic nature of the Ontario government mitigated against such a bold move. The provincially-appointed Status of Women council provided a minimal level of political cover, and could be relied upon to conduct general consultations, make basic policy suggestions and sponsor public education campaigns on such issues as non-traditional career paths for girls. Other areas could be left to line ministries. These included the Women’s Bureau in the Ministry of Labour, which dealt with workplace, hiring and equal pay for equal work issues,¹⁸ and the Women Crown Employees Office which addressed public sector and employment equity issues. Pressure from opposition parties during the 1975-1981 Conservative minority government might have prompted the creation of a women’s policy agency, but neither party called strongly for such a unit. The provincial women’s council had urged the creation of a government secretariat to oversee women's policy, and in particular the appointment of a minister responsible for women's issues.¹⁹ But, like most of its other suggestions, this one was not acted upon.

The decision to create an Ontario Women’s Directorate in 1983 appears not to have been a substantial policy departure. A senior decision maker from the Davis government told me in 1998: “You know, frankly I can’t remember why we did it [created the OWD]. It certainly wasn’t a big decision, I can tell you that. It was just a political move.” Unlike most special policy agencies, none of the four causal variables identified in Chapter Three (sympathetic parties, movement pressures, crises and incidents or federal developments) appeared particularly significant. Instead, the ultimate decision appears to have been primarily symbolic rather than substantial, as the quotation suggests. However, we can identify several disparate political and bureaucratic forces that likely led to the decision.

In the early 1980s, a number of senior female public servants created an informal group to discuss the need for greater attention to and coordination of women's policy, and directly lobbied ministers and senior public servants for a women's policy agency. In 1982, Premier Davis’s former press secretary, Sally Barnes, was appointed as head of the Ontario Council on the Status of Women. While this move severely damaged the Council’s status as an independent body, Barnes became a vocal proponent of a new policy unit. Within the Premier’s Office, concern was growing about maintaining support among female voters, and apparently some of the middle-aged men in cabinet and Davis’s informal advisory group were influenced by the educational and career experiences of their daughters. One senior figure involved in the creation of the OWD

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20 Information on the OWD’s creation is taken from personal interviews with several senior bureaucratic and political participants. Journalist Claire Hoy provides his own deeply critical version of events in Bill Davis: A Biography (Toronto: Methuen, 1985).

21 Information from interviews with two former OWD assistant deputy ministers.
(not the one previously quoted) gave an example of his change of thinking: “My daughter came home one day and said she wanted to take industrial arts but the school wouldn’t let her... At first I said, ‘Of course not!’ but then I thought about it. ‘Why not? She should do whatever she wants.’” This led him to think about women’s opportunities more carefully in his government work.  

The confluence of these varied and sometimes banal forces eventually led to the establishment of an Ontario Women’s Directorate and the appointment of Deputy Premier Robert Welch as Minister Responsible for Women’s Issues in June 1983. The Directorate combined the Ministry of Labour’s Women’s Bureau and the Women Crown Employees Office and added additional policy and research capacity. The decision to create a Directorate was thus not a major policy decision, and so the OWD lacked a powerful mandate or sense of direction. Perhaps because of this lack of high-level interest, the public servants overseeing its creation appear to have thought carefully about the OWD’s design and operation. In particular, considerable thought was given to the ineffectiveness of other policy coordinating bodies, most notably the “superministries” created in the 1970s (see Chapter Two). Thus the senior women who headed the original Directorate, in conjunction with other sympathetic senior bureaucrats, reflected carefully on the horizontal pressures explored in the previous chapter. (However, they spent far less time worrying about the vertical pressures from women’s groups and activists. As we will see, the Directorate was largely disassociated from women’s groups and activists in these early years.) Their focus on internal processes within the public administration world was also a product of the ongoing political

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22 See also discussion in Hoy of the evolution of Bill Davis’s attitude toward feminism.
stability. The summer of 1983 marked the fortieth anniversary of the Conservative reign, with no end in sight; consequently, the crucial issue was navigating within the exceptionally stable world of the Ontario bureaucracy.

Consistent with Meyer and Rowan’s thesis (see Chapter One), the OWD strongly reflected its institutional environment. The priority of connecting sufficiently with the cabinet-political nexus and the surrounding bureaucracy is illustrated in four main ways: the choice of ministers, the melding with the existing public service, a focus on tangible and “do-able” issues, and respect for ministry boundaries. While these choices were not always conscious and were ultimately decided at the senior political level, the OWD designers and administrators had clear views and plans for each of these areas.

Ministerial Power

The experience of horizontal ministries demonstrated that it is not sufficient to appoint a senior minister to give a new portfolio automatic weight; moreover, junior ministers are happy to leave behind the portfolio to be promoted to more prestigious positions. Appointing a part-time senior minister who sat on key cabinet committees and brought the resources and prominence of a major ministry could prove far more valuable. Similarly, a part-time deputy minister could be very advantageous. The first Ontario Minister Responsible for Women’s Issues, Robert Welch, was also Deputy Premier and Minister of Energy and had fifteen years of experience in six different cabinet portfolios. The Directorate was housed within the Office of the Premier and Deputy Premier, a hybrid organization headed by E.E. Stewart, the Cabinet Secretary and a very senior personal advisor to the Premier. While neither Welch nor Stewart was at all committed
to a feminist policy agenda, they were not anti-feminist either, and generally did not oppose the OWD's pursuit of new policy objectives. Instead, they provided invaluable conduits into the cabinet and senior bureaucracy for the Directorate to focus its efforts. The OWD's close connections to the centre made it more difficult for departments to engage in "non-decision-making."  

**Staff**

It was assumed by the senior bureaucrats that the OWD would be staffed by public servants with prior experience and career aspirations in the Ontario public service. More explicitly, Directorate elites decided to recruit staff through secondments from other ministries, primarily on the basis of transferable analytical skills. Thus public servants were hired as lawyers, economists, etc. - rather than "women's issues" specialists. This approach would presumably provide OWD policy analysts with the necessary credibility and links to navigate through the Ontario bureaucracy. Furthermore, as seconded staff they were not expected to remain at the OWD for more than two or three years, after which they would return to their previous ministries and serve as future OWD contacts and "ambassadors."

**Priorities**

The OWD was intended to focus narrowly on a limited set of priority issues, and to operate with a limited lifespan. It had a discrete agenda of issues of interest to

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government leaders; progress could be clearly measured; and - most importantly - the
government would gain political credit for its actions. According to two senior public
servants, the OWD was designed with a five-year plan in mind. By then it was expected
to have developed substantial initiatives for province-wide pay equity, employment
equity within the public service, prevention of violence against women and
encouragement of non-traditional career paths for girls. But there was no long-term
vision or agenda for the Directorate, and in retrospect it was highly questionable whether
such major issues could be tackled in such a short time frame.

Ministry Boundaries

Finally, the policy agency was to remain a policy agency, removed from actual
program operations and respectful of ministry boundaries. The OWD was to participate
in the initial formulation, development and coordination of general policies and program
parameters; subsequent design and implementation was to be left to the appropriate line
departments. This had two perceived benefits. First, it would promote cooperation by
assuring departments that their budgets, responsibilities and reporting relationships would
be unaffected. Secondly, giving departments greater control and ownership would assist
long-term integration and monitoring. The OWD could not expect to get programs up and
running without help; in the words of one former ADM, "if the government wasn't going
to incorporate these programs into the line departments, it wasn't going to happen at all."
Working in the Public Administration World

The first two years of the OWD were relatively uncontroversial. The Directorate worked on pay equity and domestic violence initiatives, but without a major legislative or white paper proposal to draw public attention. Much of its work involved generating and collecting data and consulting major (male) employers about alternative methods of implementing pay equity and voluntary employment equity. As the governing Conservatives became preoccupied with a leadership race after Bill Davis announced his resignation in October 1984, the OWD developed modest policy proposals to be presumably taken up by the new leader and ministry.

But 1985 turned out differently, since a Liberal minority government arrived at Queen’s Park. This was a tremendous boost for the Directorate, since pay equity became a key priority for the new government under pressure from its NDP accord partners.24 The Directorate was thus able to accelerate its policy agenda and raise its profile, all safely in the context of its institutional environment. The new Liberal Minister Responsible for Women’s Issues, Attorney General Ian Scott, was a senior minister committed to (liberal) feminist goals.

The popularity of the Liberals suggested that Ontario politics were still basically stable, and hence the Directorate’s focus remained on working within the bureaucracy. Since it was securely sponsored in cabinet and governing party circles, the Directorate

24 In the May 1985 Ontario general election, the Progressive Conservatives won 52 seats, the Liberals obtained 48, and the New Democrats carried the balance of 25 seats. The two larger parties both sought NDP support in order to form a government supported by the legislature. The Liberals and New Democrats eventually signed an accord in which the NDP promised to support the Liberals in the House for two years, in return for a number of policy initiatives and reforms.
could concentrate on emulating the norms of the public administration world. Close linkages with the diverse women’s movement were of less concern.

The OWD focused on relations within the bureaucracy - leading coordinating efforts, and avoiding direct conflict with line ministries. Its three heads in this era, Glenna Carr, Elaine Todres and Naomi Alboim were all experienced Ontario public servants subsequently appointed to deputy minister positions after their Directorate stints. Lower-level staff also continued to be drawn largely from the existing public service ranks; there was little effort to hire policy analysts and advisors directly from women’s groups or academia. The few activists hired were placed in peripheral movement liaison roles, rather than in the core functions of policy and program development.

In addition to these close personnel links with the public administration world, the Women’s Directorate followed an agenda designed to minimize horizontal conflicts. It continued to focus tightly on a limited agenda of “doable” priorities, consistent with the original five-year plan envisioned by its designers. The OWD was given lead responsibility for developing pay equity policy for the public sector and large private employers, and took the lead in domestic violence prevention and public sector employment equity. These were sizable issues which, under pressure from its New Democratic accord partners, the Liberal minority government valued. Other issues such as child care were given lower priority both because of the lack of political support, and the already full OWD agenda.

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Furthermore, in its operations the OWD avoided encroaching excessively on other ministries’ grounds, and thus avoided some of the more savage “turf wars” that had plagued earlier horizontal agencies. The Directorate operated on the conscious assumption that, as more than one respondent put it, “line ministries would take initiative and ownership of programs” and the OWD would stay behind the scenes as a “catalyst.” For example, the Pay Equity Commission overseeing pay equity programs was not an OWD agency, but instead reported to the Minister of Labour.

**Agenda and Priority Shifts**

Overall, the Women’s Directorate was an influential player in the Ontario government in the mid-1980s. As Table 4-1 shows, the Directorate enjoyed only modest staff and financial resources from 1985-87, compared to later years, suggesting that size was not necessarily a contributing factor to the Directorate’s success. In fact, much of the OWD’s influence was due to external factors beyond its control - particularly the benefit of a senior and committed minister, Ian Scott, and the prominence of pay equity on the government policy agenda. In this climate of warm support, the Directorate focused primarily on policy development within government and coping with the consequent *horizontal* pressures inherent in coordinating policy across different ministries. Little direct attention was paid to relations with movement activists and organizations, other than developing contacts with upper-middle class networks of businesswomen and professionals such as lawyers. In turn, while it is difficult to measure or characterize the opinions of such a broad movement, it appears that most
activists and organizations were skeptical of the OWD’s comprehension of the broad range of opinions and priorities in the women’s movement.

However, this horizontal emphasis within government began to shift in the late 1980s for two reasons. First, the NDP/Liberal accord expired, and the Liberals were reelected to a landslide majority in September 1987. Second, much of the original OWD agenda had been completed, particularly the first stages of pay equity. The new Liberal government began to chart a more centrist course in which women’s issues were no longer at the forefront, leaving the OWD directionless and vulnerable to subsequent changes.

Despite a significant increase in staff and budgets, OWD status and clout appears to have declined in the late 1980s. In 1987 Gregory Sorbara was appointed to the dual posts of Minister Responsible for Women’s Issues and Minister of Labour, under the assumption that this ministerial coordination would help to coordinate pay equity issues. This was consistent with the horizontal focus of the Directorate and its usual avoidance of “turf wars” within the bureaucracy. But Sorbara (formerly Minister of Colleges and Universities) was at best a middle-ranking minister with little interest in women’s issues, and considered his appointment a lateral transfer rather than the promotion he coveted. Furthermore, Sorbara was even more sensitive than the OWD staff about transgressing ministry boundaries, and was uncomfortable with pressuring cabinet colleagues on issues outside pay equity. (He told me on the record in an interview that “it was not my style to natter at my colleagues.”) The OWD thus lacked the senior champion it needed to overcome horizontal obstacles and smooth interdepartmental relations. This was
identified by several respondents as a substantial problem that hampered the Directorate’s relations with other government units.

As well, the agenda had been depleted. As its designers had planned, the OWD had kept busy for a certain period working on its initial agenda (pay equity among large employers, employment equity in the public sector, and anti-domestic violence programs) -- policies supported by the political environment of the mid-1980s. Subsequent issues, notably the expansion of pay equity to all employers, increased child care programs, and employment equity in the private sector, were unpalatable challenges for the cabinet, the Minister and perhaps many of the public servants in the Directorate itself. Influencing broad “mainstream” areas such as fiscal and economic policy were even less likely. The issues on which the Directorate was now encouraged to focus its efforts, such as promoting non-traditional career paths, were simple and programmatic rather than policy and legislation-oriented, and consumed little policy effort. The Directorate also became more active in grants in the late 1980s, as Table 4-1 indicates. Ironically, this gave it a larger budget and more staff to administer the grants (as well as to run publicity programs and other services), with OWD numbers increasing from 42 full-time equivalents in 1986-87 to 68 by 1989-90. But increased size did not mean increased policy influence.

Thus the late 1980s was an ambivalent period in Directorate history, as the OWD lacked a long-term vision and clear political support. Since Directorate staff were overwhelmingly from the public administration world, they did not feel comfortable pushing the envelope and moving behind liberal feminist issues to more radical objectives and interpretations. Neither were they willing to challenge the political status quo of the moderate Peterson government. The caution of the times was expressed by
one OWD staffer, a liberal feminist, from this era: "These things don't happen every two years. The women's movement had reached a certain point and some issues were ripe [in the early 1980s]. The issues were formed and public opinion was supportive. Maybe we were lucky that the issues coalesced at one time." By "issues," she primarily meant pay equity - she was not, for example, in favour of a major private sector employment equity program.

**OWD Relations with the World of Women's Movements**

Their overwhelming horizontal focus on working within the public administration world led OWD staff to place a lower priority on extensive, time-consuming vertical liaison with the world of women's movements. The common assumption within the OWD in the mid-1980s was that the Directorate was naturally working for women's interests by developing policies and effectively navigating them through the bureaucracy. The Directorate considered conformity with its institutional environment to be of greater priority than links to societal actors, since without internal government support the OWD could not implement such policy goals as pay equity legislation and public sector employment equity programs.

The task of consultation was largely left to the Ontario Council on the Status of Women (renamed the Ontario Advisory Council on Women's Issues in 1985) - a type of structure whose limitations were explored in Chapter Two. In developing pay equity proposals and other policies, the OWD did meet and consult regularly with female professionals and businesswomen, primarily for advice on top-down methods of implementing equity policies in private firms. OWD officials and the Minister met with
different women’s groups, but generally on an annual, perfunctory basis rather than as issues arose.

Women’s groups in general had little input into the actual processes of policy development or program design and delivery. Indeed, as mentioned above, much OWD “consultation” activity in the mid-1980s actually consisted of meeting (male) employers’ groups and corporate leaders to promote and explain pay and employment equity proposals. Feminist activists and groups criticized this “corporate” focus and derided OWD staff and their outside professional counterparts as “the Lipman’s crowd” after a fashionable women’s wear retailer. These activists accused the OWD of downplaying and even deliberately ignoring other issues such as child care, same-sex rights, anti-racism efforts, private sector employment equity, and particularly economic issues such as the effect of women on trade agreements, tax policies and social spending cuts.

OWD public servants were sensitive to these criticisms, but had different views on how to react. A few argued that the OWD needed to orient itself more toward the feminist movement, both to build a more solid and permanent political base than could be found in the shifting nexus of the cabinet and senior bureaucracy, and to ensure that its work did reflect the concerns of Ontario women. But most appeared to believe that the criticisms were misplaced and that they ignored the realities of policy making, which required focus, prioritizing and “playing by the rules.” Most OWD staffers interviewed for this study maintain they had few other options; the lack of “peak” associations and the


diversity of opinion created a complex policy community which required extensive
efforts to consult and mobilize, with unknown results. Time was a crucial obstacle — “if
you find out something is going to cabinet tomorrow morning, there isn’t a lot of time to
call in people and have meetings about it,” said one policy analyst.

But the price of emphasizing horizontal over vertical relationships became evident
as the original policy agenda was depleted and the OWD dropped in prominence
(although not its staff complement or budget) under the second Liberal government. The
Directorate lacked a political base, and the lack of clear direction and leadership
suggested the underlying lack of a common policy paradigm or shared normative values
and assumptions with the world of the women’s movement. As long as the OWD
focused on its narrow and achievable agenda, its differences with the feminist movements
appeared to be secondary differences over priorities and tactics, and not divergent core
values. But the exhaustion of the agenda and drop in political support after 1987 forced a
more fundamental rethinking of strategies, and revealed deeply differing approaches to
“women’s” issues and public policy within and surrounding the Directorate.

The liberal focus on “gender” policy as individual equality and opportunity issues
competed with collective orientations that emphasized women as an oppressed segment
of society.28 Divisions and differences grew over liberal, socialist and radical approaches
to women and public policy, and over the interrelation of race, sexual orientation,
disabilities and other identities with feminist perspectives. Not only did state and societal
actors have differing visions of the values that the Directorate should follow and emulate,

28 This problem has also been identified in Status of Women Canada – see Grace, "Sending Mixed
Messages."
but their differences led some feminist activists to question the OWD's core commitment to the advancement of the status of women. Thus, instead of finding common "deep core values" with most of the feminist movement, the Directorate found itself trapped between the expectations and norms of the two colliding worlds.

Attempts to Build Links with the Women's Movement

The unexpected 1990 election of the NDP was a mixed blessing for the Women's Directorate. The women's issues portfolio was given to Anne Swarbrick, a newly elected and full-time minister with extensive background in women's issues and organizing. OWD budget and staff levels were increased - although not as significantly as in 1987-88 (see Table 4-1). The New Democrats were committed to a broad agenda including publicly funded child care and full pay and employment equity in the private sector; the first Rae cabinet was notable both for the unprecedented number of female ministers, and the clout and ability of many of these women.29 But the NDP was completely unprepared for power30 and these issues competed for priority with other goals including public auto insurance and labour law reforms. The public service found it difficult to adjust to the tempo and activist stance of the new government, and the NDP in turn considered the bureaucracy to be resistant to change and too eager for the restoration of Liberal or Progressive Conservative rule. Thus, while New Democrats emphasized building stronger vertical links with the women's movement, the OWD faced even

29 Eleven of the original 26 members of the NDP cabinet were women. While some were later dropped from cabinet (along with many men in this very inexperienced government), a strong core of women such as Frances Lankin and Marion Boyd remained very influential in cabinet and the bureaucracy.

30 See Bob Rae, From Protest to Power..
greater horizontal challenges than before in pursuing its agenda through chaotic bureaucratic channels that were not always trusted by the governing party. Furthermore, the Directorate’s exposure to the women’s movement meant it became caught up in a tumultuous policy community involving conflicting and varied strands of feminism.

Rather than continuing to rely on interdepartmental secondments, the Directorate hired new personnel directly from women’s groups. Many OWD staffers came from new groups representing racial and other diverse identities. Consequently, while the OWD during the Rae years was much better connected to women’s groups than previously, it lost many of its public service links and connections to the bureaucracy. The new staff generally did not aspire to long careers in the public service, and many grew increasingly impatient with what they saw as the hierarchical, ponderous and seemingly hidebound environment of the bureaucracy. At the same time they grappled with criticisms and concerns from their own movements about the dangers of immersion in state processes.

The OWD became devoted more to consultation and participation strategies and the distribution of grants to women’s groups and projects. Policy analysts produced and distributed public documents such as a feminist critique of the NAFTA agreement and a guide to inclusive language in schools. The Directorate’s focus widened considerably but remained without clear priorities - policy analysts worked on justice and education policy, workplace equity, economic and social policy development, employment equity and anti-domestic violence initiatives. There was little clear overall direction or a sense of priorities for women’s policy.

Agenda drift was accompanied by internal disagreements, not merely over priorities and program plans but also over fundamental issues and cross-cutting identities
in feminism, particularly race and ethnicity. Before 1990 the OWD staff had been overwhelmingly of white European descent - a pattern condition reinforced by the strategy of recruiting from within the permanent bureaucracy. While new hiring initiatives created a more diverse workforce, many feminists argued that the historically homogeneous demographic base of OWD staff had contributed to a narrow focus on individualistic concepts of feminism, and an ignorance of larger collective aspects. Strong criticisms came from black feminists, as well as aboriginal, immigrant, lesbian and disabled women; these disagreements and criticisms erupted within the Directorate itself. Staff members report considerable turmoil and internal conflict within the OWD after 1990, closely reflecting similar problems during the same period in the National Action Committee on the Status of Women and elsewhere. The Women’s Directorate became, in the words of one mid-level staff member, “a dysfunctional organization” where staff were divided by “a hierarchy of oppression.” Disagreements became stark and personalized, with accusations of ignorance and racism frequently dividing OWD staff.

Caught up in the tumultuous world of women’s movements, the Directorate became detached from the public administration world. Although many OWD staff continued to display the behavioural values of the bureaucracy, they lacked the clout required to achieve very much. One senior figure from the Rae government said of OWD staff: “You always saw them hanging around. They wore their power suits; they came to all the receptions. But they didn’t have any power; no one really listened to them.”

31 See Vickers et al, Politics as if Women Mattered.
The Directorate’s new activist agenda, along with its internal turmoil, distanced the agency from economic-policy ministries such as Finance or Economic Development and Trade; the preferred focus of liberal feminist work to improve individual economic and professional opportunities for women. No longer a “safe” organization that conformed to the institutional environment of the bureaucracy, the OWD was avoided and bypassed by most economic ministries.

The Directorate was also considered to be ineffective by feminist activists. OWD efforts to build links with feminist movements were met with ambivalence and trepidation; many groups feared co-optation and were not particularly interested in tying themselves too closely to the public service, regardless of the governing party. One senior OWD official from the NDP period suggested groups felt “that if it’s a unit in government, it isn’t really in touch with real issues...[and so] we didn’t involve groups very much in policy development because they didn’t want to get involved.” Tensions were particularly evident as the Canadian feminist movement grappled in the early 1990s with the downsizing of the state, new economic and trade regimes, and its own openness to diverse racial and sexual identities. Suspicion of the compromising power of state institutions increased as the NDP government, facing many of the same issues, discarded its original policy platform in favour of deficit reduction strategies; this shift, which included nullifying collective agreements with public sector workers, enraged the party’s labour allies. For many social movements, the NDP years were a time of disillusionment and frustration, when state structures such as the OWD demonstrated their inherent
limitations as “representatives” of extraparliamentary interests. The changing nature of the NDP regime is evident in the OWD’s budget, which actually began to decline in 1993 (see Table 4-1) after large increases in 1991 and 1992.

The election of a social democratic government might have been expected to give the Directorate both horizontal clout in the public administration world and strong vertical links in the social movement world. Instead, the two worlds collided within the OWD and it ended up having credibility with neither.

Return to the Public Administration Environment

In 1995 the Progressive Conservatives returned to power with an explicit neo-conservative ideology under Premier Mike Harris, a highly centralized administrative structure and little interest in status of women issues. The Women’s Directorate was transformed after 1995 into an unmistakable public administration entity with a mandate to “manage” women’s issues, rather than provide an entryway into government for movements and their demands.

The managerial regime was imposed quickly and firmly. The OWD assistant deputy minister was replaced suddenly, and the Deputy Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs assumed overall responsibility for the portfolio. Previously, OWD heads only

32 On this subject see Schreader, “The State-Funded Women’s Movement: A Case of Two Political Agendas” in Roxana Ng, Gillian Walker and Jacob Muller, eds., Community Organizing and the Canadian State (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1990). While this piece predates the NDP years, the themes and concerns were widely evident in women’s groups during the Rae government as well.

33 See Ehring and Roberts, Giving Away A Miracle.
nominally reported to the deputy minister of their minister’s other portfolio, but in 1995 the nominal relationship became a substantial one. According to several interviews, the new deputy minister was explicitly charged with “cleaning things up” and returning the OWD to the bureaucratic fold. The Directorate was significantly downsized and restructured in 1995 and 1996, leading to a considerable exodus of staff, both voluntarily and involuntarily.

Corporate management practices (explored in detail in Chapter Six) became the norm in the Directorate. One person involved in the Harris-era restructuring said the plan was to make the Directorate a very tightly focused policy analysis unit; she expressed frustration at broad visions which did not conform to this narrow core vision: “For example, I don’t know why the hell they’re still involved in grants.” Like other Ontario ministries, the Directorate produced its first business plan in 1996. Like subsequent annual plans, this document restricted Directorate activity to two areas: “community safety,” meaning coordination of policies for domestic violence and other safety issues of concern to women; and “women’s economic development,” or encouraging entrepreneurship and small business growth. These two areas are consistent with Harris government priorities such as law and order and private-sector economic growth. Policy analysts do not work on projects or areas outside these issues, nor do they take a broad

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34 The circumstances of ADM Mayann Francis’s departure in the summer of 1995 are very unclear. Other persons interviewed made it clear that she had been fired soon after the Conservatives took power, but no further details were shared with me. Ms. Francis informed me in writing in December 1997 that she was “unable” to speak to me on this subject.

35 When interviewed, some current OWD staff said this was no different than previous reporting relationships, but no other persons interviewed could remember a substantial reporting relationship between the OWD ADM and a deputy minister, with the possible exception of E.E. Stewart (1983-85).

approach in their analyses (for example, they do not explore links between domestic violence and welfare cuts). Actual programs such as small-business loans for women are housed in line ministries, although the Directorate remains responsible for several million dollars (usually about half its entire budget) of grants every year.

The Directorate has not disappeared. The 1995-96 cuts were deep, but not as drastic as some may have anticipated; the budget fell from $21.1 million in 1994-95 to $17.6 million in 1995-96, and to $17.0 in 1996-97 (Table 4-1). In 1997 the Directorate budget began to increase again, and by 1998-99 it was back up to the 1995 level (but still below the peak of 1993). However, these figures are not necessarily good indicators of the Directorate’s status. Its policy influence certainly fell more drastically than its budget, and its spending levels may reflect transfers from other government ministries such as Community and Social Services, whose grant programs and operations were cut significantly.

Consistent with the new managerial ideal of “steering, not rowing,”37 the Directorate considers itself to be a “catalyst” rather than an administrator of programs and initiatives. For example, from 1989 until 1995, the Directorate sponsored government-paid television advertisements against domestic violence. Under the Harris government, the OWD instead drew a group of private sector broadcasters and advertisers to create and fund a series of new ads. The Directorate also attempts to bring together networks of women entrepreneurs and similar groups, sponsoring meetings and

encouraging mentor relationships. However, it is difficult to assess the scale or impact of these activities apart from the modest claims of Directorate staff.

As it conformed to the bureaucratic environment, the OWD’s linkages with feminist movements almost entirely disappeared. Indeed, the Directorate does not appear to interact with any organized groups apart from those involved in its grant programs and professional networks. This is not an exclusive OWD phenomenon; the Harris government has minimal liaison with any organized interests other than those supportive of its agenda. Open-ended forums, consultations and other opportunities for input are rarely significant or influential. In 1996, the Ontario Advisory Council on Women’s Issues was shut down, along with twenty-one other advisory boards and commissions. As was the case with the announced closing of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women in 1995, the OACWI’s activities were said to be duplicating those of the Women’s Directorate. However, the Directorate does not host formal consultation bodies, nor does it fund the production of independent research reports. Instead the government has turned to private management consultants who have limited experience in OWD and OACWI areas. In December 1996, an external consultant’s study of domestic violence programs drew heavy criticism from feminist groups for its suggestion that women’s time in shelters be limited; that they return to their partners and other highly controversial “efficiencies.”

Feminist activists contacted for this study reported very little contact with the Harris-era OWD; few believed their views were solicited or welcomed in policy development. One provincial organization reported that its funding from the Directorate

38 Globe and Mail, December 17, 1996
and other ministries had been cut so significantly that it no longer had any resources to conduct research or produce policy suggestions - neither of which were welcome in any event. Activists felt there was little point in lobbying the Directorate, since the OWD apparently had very little influence. They preferred the historical Ontario feminist approach of lobbying individual ministries directly in each program area.

The OWD’s political support and clout since 1995 have clearly been limited. To some degree this is a government-wide phenomenon, since even major ministries and cabinet ministers have weak influence in the very centralized and downsized Harris government.\(^{39}\) But it seems clear that the Directorate’s prestige and power is particularly low. Diane Cunningham, Minister Responsible for Women’s Issues (and Intergovernmental Affairs) from 1995-1999, had by all accounts limited power and influence in cabinet and party circles, in part because she lacked the prestige of a line ministry assignment. In 1999 a new minister, Helen Johns, was appointed to a combined portfolio of Women’s Issues, Seniors’ Affairs and Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. A backbencher in the 1995-99 Harris government, Johns was relatively unknown both to the public and the bureaucracy, and the grab-bag nature of her portfolio suggests the OWD continues to command little cabinet prestige.

The lack of OWD interaction with feminist groups means public administrators no longer consider the Directorate to be “captured” by feminist interests. Neither is the OWD viewed as unacceptably radical, since it appears to closely emulate the normative values of public administration - particularly discretion, caution and “upward” accountability to the political level. As mentioned above, the agency has two substantive

\(^{39}\) This point is made repeatedly in John Ibitson, *Promised Land.*
branches - one for “women’s economic independence” and one for domestic violence policy. The first branch is overwhelmingly service-oriented; it produces publications, such as “Advancing Women’s Economic Independence: Ontario’s Success Story” and “Fast Forward: A Resource about Women and Entrepreneurship in Canada,” that emphasize women succeeding in business and as business-owners. There is little discussion of more systemic factors or issues and few prescriptions for government action, reflecting the approach and position of the governing party. The domestic violence branch is more policy-oriented, but does not appear to grapple with related policy areas such as social housing or the reform of the provincial social assistance regime.

Interesting evidence of the Harris-era orientation of the Women’s Directorate can be found in its job advertisements. External hiring freezes and new recruitment criteria have ensured that most OWD staff would again be career public servants. Appendix 4-1 features two Women’s Directorate jobs advertised in January 1999, one for an aide to the assistant deputy minister, and one for a policy analyst. Knowledge of and familiarity with “women’s issues” and the “women’s movement” are not very prominent in either ad; instead, the emphasis is on skills and practices common to all government offices. This harkens back to the original plan of the 1983 designers to recruit within the public service, in order to build and maintain credibility with the public administration world.

Overall, the Ontario Women’s Directorate since 1995 appears to be returning fully to the public administration fold. Its values and norms emulate those of public

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administration and have little in common with those of feminist movements, consistent with the desires of the current government. The OWD has thus returned to the obscurity and limited external credibility it possessed in the late 1980s. While the Directorate remains relatively powerless, it clearly emulates its institutional environment of the Ontario Public Service, at the expense of relations with the environment of the women's movement itself.

Emulating public administration "myths and ceremonies" has allowed the Directorate to survive despite having little or no credibility, or links, with societal groups. In return, activists and women's organizations appear not to seek linkages with the Directorate, since there does not appear to be much of a core paradigm to link the two. The continual upheavals and shifts in focus since 1985 laid bare the contradictions between the two worlds, and limit the amount of goodwill or past successes on which the Directorate can build future ties with women's groups.

Conclusion

This account of the evolution of the Ontario Women’s Directorate demonstrates how changes in governing parties affect an agency’s relations with the two worlds of public administration and social movements, tilting it in one or the other direction. It also illustrates the effects of this turbulence, showing how the OWD appears to have been left with little credibility or support among its external constituency by the late 1990s.

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41 Meyer and Rowan, "Institutionalized Organizations," 1.
The Women's Directorate, however, is an exceptional case. No other major Westminster system has experienced such repeated political change as has Ontario, where fundamentally different governing ideologies have followed one another since the mid-1980s. It might be argued that the OWD is not just exceptional, but an aberration. Normally, special policy agencies do not have to cope with such rapid and repeated changes, and thus can display more continuity and maintain better links with both worlds.

This may be so. But by illustrating the fundamental problems and colliding sets of values with which all special policy agencies must cope to varying degrees, we have shown that the Ontario Women's Directorate is not an aberration, but a typical example of an agency struggling to survive and play a meaningful role between the colliding worlds of public administration and social movements. The only real difference is that political changes have made its struggles unusually visible, and so it was unable to hide these problems and oscillated between the two worlds. These patterns of behaviour give us a close look at the contradictory pulls of the two worlds; as we study the experience of other special policy agencies, the fundamental problems and conflicts discussed in this chapter will appear again and again.
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* In 1993, at the time of the "Social Contract," the Government of Ontario stopped reporting employment levels by ministries in its Civil Service Commission reports (1997 telephone interview with Management Board Secretariat staffer). Consequently no data on staffing are available until 1997-98 when staff levels began to be published in Ministry business plans.

Sources: Government of Ontario *Public Accounts* (various years); Government of Ontario *Civil Service Commission Reports* (various years); Ontario Women's Directorate *Business Plans* (various years)
Appendix 4-1 - Ontario Women's Directorate job advertisement, 1999

8prof55
POLICY ANALYST
Economic Issues
(PEC 19 - AMAPCEO)
(Schedule 6)
$53,800 - 65,900
(restricted)

Bring your policy and program development skills to a challenging position in the Ontario Women's Directorate. Reporting to the manager, social and economic policy, you will research, analyse and evaluate economic trends/issues and provide advice/recommendations to the minister/senior staff. Location: Toronto.

Qualifications: demonstrated knowledge/skills in policy/program development; awareness of economic/labour market trends, data and issues affecting women; proven research, analysis and evaluation skills; strong project-management, organization, interpersonal, negotiation and communication skills; PC proficiency.

Area of search: restricted to applicants working or living within 40 km of 900 Bay St., Toronto.

Apply by 5 p.m., Jan. 29 to: File WD-20, Annchristin Anderson, Human Resources Services Branch, Management Board Secretariat, 8th Fl., Ferguson Block, 77 Wellesley St. W., Toronto, ON M7A 1N3. Fax: (416) 327-3892.
Appendix 4-2 - Ontario Women's Directorate job advertisement, 1999

22adm20
POLICY & ISSUES CO-ORDINATOR
(AGA-18, excluded)
(Schedule 6)
$49,400 - 58,600
(restricted)

The Ontario Women's Directorate needs an individual to provide executive support to the assistant deputy minister (ADM). You will: co-ordinate high profile issues analysis/management; manage corporate linkages/protocol; support the ADM’s role on provincial committees; ensure materials distributed by the director follow strategic communications directions; develop/implement/manage administrative systems and co-ordinate preparing responses to house notes, briefing books, ministerial correspondence to optimize information flow.

Location: Toronto.

Qualifications: demonstrated expertise providing senior level support in a high profile environment; knowledge of protocols/practices of an executive office; proven issues analysis/co-ordination skills; understanding of government approval processes; knowledge of women's issues affecting government/ministry; skills to develop administrative systems; superior organization, analytical, research and problem-solving skills; excellent interpersonal, communication skills; ability to work independently with limited direction.

Area of search: restricted to applicants working or living within 40 km of 900 Bay St., Toronto.

Apply by 5 p.m., Feb. 5 to: File WD-22, Annchristin Anderson, Human Resources Services Branch, Management Board Secretariat, 8th Fl., Ferguson Block, 77 Wellesley St. W., Toronto, ON M7A 1N3. Fax: (416) 327-3892.
Chapter Five -- Aboriginal Policy Agencies in Ontario and British Columbia

This chapter examines the British Columbia Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) and the Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat (ONAS), and shows how the expectations of the two worlds are transmitted and replicated by different groups of public servants even in the absence of explicit movement demands. Like the OWD and other women's policy agencies, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and Native Affairs Secretariat work in very politicized policy areas, making them highly vulnerable to shifts in governing ideologies. But unlike the vague mandates typically found in women's policy agencies, aboriginal policy agencies tend to have clearer but contradictory responsibilities. Both the MAA and ONAS have two general functions: (1) the negotiation of formal land claims and self-government agreements with aboriginal groups and First Nations, and (2) the internal coordination of government policies and programs affecting aboriginals. These two roles often clash, since they place agencies in both adversarial and advocacy positions vis-a-vis aboriginals. The end result is both role conflict (colliding demands) and role ambiguity (unclear expectations and criteria for success).

What makes these agencies particularly interesting is that the two roles require them to interact with two very different groups of public servants. One group is centred in the various government units responsible for crisis management and negotiation between aboriginal and non-aboriginal groups (for example, over access to natural resources). These public servants identify primarily with the traditional norms of public administration, such as “neutrality,” career-building and close accountability to the
direction of senior bureaucrats and elected officials. But another group, located more in health and social service areas which develop programs specifically for aboriginal peoples, tend to see their job as working and lobbying on behalf of aboriginal peoples. Unlike the first group of career builders, many have never worked on anything but aboriginal issues throughout their public service careers. Consequently, they often have a greater sense of accountability to aboriginal peoples rather than to the bureaucratic hierarchy. The staff of aboriginal policy agencies are drawn from both these groups, and since agencies have dual mandates for both external negotiations and internal program coordination, they interact extensively with both groups. This places contradictory demands and expectations on aboriginal policy agencies, and gives agencies a permanent identity of ambivalence and ambiguity, regardless of changes in government and governing ideologies.

What is really striking about this situation is that the relationships between aboriginal policy agencies and aboriginals themselves are not as ambivalent as those typically found in women’s policy agencies. While I will explore some of the differences between the traditional organizational and decision-making values of aboriginal peoples and those of modern Western public administration, these conflicts are not the key problem in defining the role of aboriginal policy agencies. Unlike many feminist activists (and scholars), aboriginals generally do not claim ownership of aboriginal policy agencies, or evaluate agencies’ record of “representing” their interests within government. Aboriginals rarely or never expect agencies to act on an ongoing basis as their advocates within government, largely because a great many aboriginals do not recognize the sovereignty of non-aboriginal governments over them or consider
themselves clients of these governments. Thus, while aboriginals and policy agencies may have considerable contact over a range of issues, and their relationships are often tense and complex, there are few major collisions of expectations between public servants and aboriginal activists. Each has a reasonably clear view and understanding of the other.

Instead, the real collisions for agencies are within government. The two worlds are largely replicated within the public service -- even in the absence of explicit movement demands. One group of public servants pressures agencies to emulate public administration "neutrality" norms, while the other wants agencies to orient themselves more explicitly toward the needs and demands of aboriginal peoples. This reveals a new dimension of the colliding worlds of public administration and social movements, demonstrating just how inherent is the ambiguity and role confusion of special policy agencies. Unlike the Ontario Women's Directorate, which focuses on the boundary between the bureaucracy and societal groups, the key boundary-spanning activity for these aboriginal policy agencies is between the different groups of public servants. Agencies interact with both, and the resulting conflicts and ambiguity are further illustrations of the powerful tensions between the two colliding worlds.

_Provincial - Aboriginal Relations in Canada_

This chapter focuses on Canadian experiences, while the following chapter will take a closer look at Australian aboriginal policy agencies. As briefly noted in Chapter Three, the important difference between the two is that Canadian policy agencies usually oversee land claim negotiations, while all Australian state governments have separate
“native title” units that deal exclusively with land claim policies and negotiations. Hence, while Australian aboriginal policy agencies are not immune to the conflicts discussed in this chapter, the issue of colliding and contradictory mandates is not as striking or profound as in Canada.

Having made this distinction, we can turn to the difficult task of characterizing the diverse and complex relationships between Canadian governments and aboriginal nations. Within Ontario and BC alone, there are dozens of aboriginal nations in hundreds of communities and reserves. Their political relationships with the Canadian state range from the strident sovereignty of the Mohawk nation to the relatively stable and settled municipal-style autonomy of the Sechelt on the Pacific coast.

The nature of provincial-aboriginal relations is blurred because of the ambiguity of the Canadian constitution. The Constitution Act, 1867, gives jurisdiction over “Indians and land reserved for Indians” affairs to the federal government, but provincial predominance in areas such as natural resources, health, social services and the administration of justice gives provinces multiple roles in aboriginal affairs. Consequently, as we saw in Chapter Three, most Canadian provinces have created some sort of aboriginal affairs machinery to develop and coordinate policies. However, the functions of these units (along with their size and powers) vary considerably across provinces. To a large degree this is explained by variances in the treaty status and population of aboriginals across provinces, as well as the attitudes of governing parties and individuals.

Until the 1970s provinces had relatively little involvement in aboriginal policy, viewing aboriginal issues largely as issues of individual welfare, and restricting
interactions to non-status and/or off-reserve persons. However, the strengthening of aboriginal collective identities and increased militancy among many aboriginals, growing non-aboriginal support in the 1970s and 1980s for aboriginal rights, and the effect of court decisions and land claims on provincial natural resources, have greatly increased provincial interest in aboriginal affairs. Hence, while several Canadian provinces do not have any significant women’s policy machinery, every Canadian province except Prince Edward Island has a designated unit or branch that addresses aboriginal issues.

While most aboriginal policy agencies appear to have been created by provincial governments primarily in response to aboriginal land, resource and self-government claims, this does not mean that governments support or recognize such claims. Rather, as discussed in Chapter Three, agencies may have been created because the issue cannot be ignored. Aboriginal policy agencies may negotiate with aboriginals on behalf of the province, or merely monitor negotiations between the federal government and aboriginals, attempting to protect provincial interests.

Most provincial aboriginal policy agencies have a very low profile, in part because they are usually part of a larger department or ministry such as intergovernmental affairs. While a number of researchers have taken interest in the legal and constitutional issues surrounding provincial-aboriginal interactions,¹ few have directly examined the institutional frameworks in which these take place. Federal

¹ Until the release of the research reports of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in 1996, the two major collections of provincial-aboriginal research were Anthony Long and Menno Boldt, eds., Governments in Conflict: Aboriginal Nations and Canadian Provinces (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988) and David C. Hawkes, ed., Aboriginal Peoples and Government Responsibility (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1989). The RCAP reports include detailed studies of each province, but these reports vary in their approaches and emphases. Their chief interests are the evolution of land claim and self-government negotiations and individual programs and services; discussion of internal provincial bureaucratic structures is generally of less interest.
structures such as the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs have received occasional scholarly attention over the years, but discussions of provincial policy machinery are normally subsumed within larger discussions of constitutional and land claim developments.  

Yet some agencies are clearly more than just negotiation units. The largest provincial agencies, such as those in Ontario and BC, clearly and explicitly hold dual mandates -- external negotiations with First Nations, and the internal coordination of all government policies affecting aboriginals. Like the Ontario Women's Directorate, the interpretation and expectations surrounding these mandates can shift considerably under different governments. But unlike the Directorate and other women's policy agencies, aboriginal policy agencies tend to have ongoing, permanent roles and responsibilities despite changes in governments and governing ideologies. The role of women's policy agencies is generally an ad hoc, exhortatory one - introducing and developing new ideas. In contrast, many aboriginal policy agency activities, particularly those within government, remain relatively consistent over time even when government positions on aboriginal issues change dramatically. They remain negotiators even though their negotiating positions may shift, and they continue to operate a number of coordination mechanisms despite shifts in policies and available resources. This creates the conditions  

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under which two groups of public servants place ongoing and colliding pressures on agencies.

**The Two Policy Communities**

To understand these two different groups of public servants, it is useful to turn to some of the policy community concepts mentioned earlier. As discussed in Chapter One, policy network and community models normally do not seem to reveal much of interest about relationships between social movements and the state, in part because of the inherent diversity and decentralization of movements. Policy community analysis is normally applied to a particular public policy sector such as forestry or banking. But considering "aboriginal affairs" as a sectoral issue like these is not a fruitful exercise, because the range of issues is too vast, the aboriginal community is far too diverse, and federal-provincial divisions are too complex to identify a single discrete set of actors and discern and classify their patterns of interactions.

But if aboriginal people are raised to the macro-level of analysis as sovereign nations, rather than being approached as a single sectoral issue like banking, we can then focus on their different sectoral interactions with particular federal and provincial departments. In other words, rather than lumping all aboriginal issues together we must look at specific policy areas affecting aboriginals - such as fishing and hunting, housing, etc. This produces reasonably clear policy communities with distinct networks of actors.

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4 As briefly mentioned in Chapter One, there is no universal terminology to describe these concepts. I define a "policy community" as the general set of interested actors in a specific policy area, and "policy network" as the key players that actually interact with each other to produce policy change. See for example Michael M. Atkinson and William D. Coleman, *The State and Industrial Policy in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 1989); William D. Coleman and Grace Skogstad, eds., *Policy Communities and Public Policy in Canada: A Structural Approach* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1990).
issues and discourses. It is these different policy communities in which we find the two
different groups of public servants mentioned above. I suggest that provincial-aboriginal
interactions comprise two major policy communities: a social policy community, and an
economic/resource policy community.

   Many social policy ministries have well-developed, distinct programs for
aboriginals that generally respect First Nations autonomy and cultural distinctions. These
government actors are in relative agreement both with each other and with aboriginal
organizations over the objective of addressing the social and health problems and
educational challenges faced by aboriginal peoples. They will likely differ considerably
in approaches and priorities, but the basic goals and their urgency are widely recognized.
These units tend to work closely with aboriginal groups and communities, and their
activities focus on developing programs and securing resources for these programs. And,
since the chief policy instruments are financial, struggles between the units and
aboriginals are primarily over identifying priorities and allocating resources, rather than
over basic objectives which could generate strong disagreement.

   Economic and resource policy ministries, however, are more likely to approach
aboriginal issues on a more pluralist basis -- balancing aboriginal demands and concerns
with those of non-aboriginals, often under media and public attention. Resource
ministries seek solutions to the allocation of scarce and limited resources to different and
diverse groups and interests, within legal and treaty frameworks and political and public
opinion contexts. Aboriginals are only one of many groups posing demands, and
consequently, these ministries interact with a broad range of actors besides aboriginals
including resource developers, environmentalists, municipal governments, property
owners, organized labour, recreational businesses, etc. These ministries' policy instruments are often regulatory or legal, and are more likely to result in zero-sum decisions with public "winners" and "losers."

These different groups of public servants tend to interact with different types of aboriginal organizations. In general, economic and resource policy units tend to interact with leaders of aboriginal nations and communities recognized by the federal Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. In contrast, organizations representing or working with off-reserve aboriginals and persons without Indian status, particularly in large urban areas, are more likely to interact with provincial (and municipal) social policy departments. They have little direct contact with the resource ministries and are part of the social policy community, whereas aboriginal political leaders tend to focus their social policy efforts through and with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

Using the structural typology developed by Atkinson and Coleman and Coleman and Skogstad, I argue that the policy networks in the social policy community are clientele pluralist, while those in the economic/resource area are pressure pluralist. Clientele pluralist networks are characterized by closer relationships between relatively organized societal actors and a concentrated, relatively autonomous set of state officials, both of which share similar broad objectives. Governments delegate some authority and resources to societal groups, which are considered better equipped with the requisite knowledge and expertise, and sufficiently organized, to oversee programs and participate in policy development.

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5 Atkinson and Coleman, The State and Industrial Policy in Canada and Coleman and Skogstad, eds., Policy Communities and Public Policy.
In contrast, pressure pluralist networks feature greater competition and disagreement over objectives, between both a more dispersed set of public servants and a variety of societal actors. Relationships between governments and societal actors are characterized by advocacy more than participation, with little devolution of state resources or authority. This describes the relationship between the above economic/resource ministries and their relations with a wide range of groups and organizations, of which aboriginals form only part.

These distinctions are of course simplified - in particular, it is impossible to generalize about the diversity of aboriginal organizations - and these policy network models do not always neatly describe the real world. Social policy ministries do have various interactions with aboriginal nations and treaty groups, and may resist devolving power or allowing aboriginal groups to participate significantly in policy and program development. Economic and resource ministries may transfer some power and authority to aboriginal groups. And some major areas do not fit easily into either policy community, most notably justice and policing, which display both patterns of interaction. But overall, there are two reasonably distinct policy communities in provincial aboriginal policy making - one engaged more in pluralist struggle between aboriginal and non-aboriginal demands, and one with more defined and shared-goal relationships with aboriginal organizations.

The BC and Ontario aboriginal policy agencies interact with both these two policy communities, and each community places different pressures and expectations on them. Both the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and the Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat are called upon to play important but contradictory roles, because of their dual mandates for
both external negotiations and internal coordination. In the pluralist policy networks of the resource policy community, agencies are called upon to fill a managing or negotiating role, displaying the accepted roles and values of public administration. Their job may be to conduct negotiations, oversee crisis situations, provide support and advice to other government units in their negotiations with aboriginals, or mediate between disputing aboriginal and non-aboriginal interests (or even between different aboriginal groups) by "managing" the issue and protecting or promoting key government interests. But in the clientele pluralist networks of the social policy community, policy agencies may be expected to protect and promote aboriginal interests and perspectives through their coordination function, as social policy staff often do. These demands obviously put agencies in a situation of role conflict.

It might be argued that, since aboriginal peoples rarely or never see aboriginal policy agencies as their "advocates" within government, there would be fewer colliding expectations surrounding the Ministry and the Secretariat. But the two different groups of public servants replicate and perpetuate the collisions between the two worlds, by placing conflicting and contradictory expectations on the agencies. Because public servants work in different types of policy communities, they draw agencies toward different roles, outlooks and working assumptions. Social policy ministries look to agencies to provide coordination and additional capacity in developing and coordinating programs across government. But economic and resource ministries see agencies primarily as external negotiators with aboriginal interests, or call upon agencies to support their own negotiation activities. These expectations often collide, leading yet again to inherent ambivalence and contradictions in these special policy agencies.
The Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat and the BC Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs

In both BC and Ontario, the first designated structures for aboriginal affairs were created to address aboriginal land claims rather than the general coordination of provincial aboriginal policies. The Ontario Office of Indian Land Claims was created in 1976 and the BC Native Affairs Secretariat followed a decade later in 1987. (The Ontario Office was renamed the Office of Indian Resource Policy in 1978.) These units focused on land negotiations with aboriginal peoples, and were largely separate from any programs and services for aboriginals. The increasing importance of land claims led to other steps of symbolic and political importance, including the appointment of ministers responsible for native affairs in 1976 (Ontario) and 1988 (BC). The BC machinery lagged behind the Ontario structures by a decade due to successive Social Credit governments' intransigence and refusal to enter negotiations with natives in what was ironically a more pressing situation, since almost no treaties had ever been signed in BC.

The Ontario Progressive Conservative government under William Davis was not necessarily more interested in resolving claims, but the issue was of lower profile in

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7 Very little of British Columbian land was ceded in historic treaties between colonial or Canadian authorities and aboriginal peoples. While the legitimacy of historic treaties is highly contested, they provide guidance and legal frameworks for subsequent interpretation and negotiations.
Ontario. The Davis government was thus willing to take small steps in close conjunction with the evolution of federal government approaches and public opinion.

The later inclusion of coordinating activity also differs between the provinces. In Ontario, the Office of Native Affairs Policy was created in 1985 by the new Liberal government to coordinate provincial government policies affecting aboriginals. This was part of a general flowering of other special policy agencies for disabled persons and seniors; the Ontario Women's Directorate's resources were also increased and advisory councils for aboriginals, francophones, disabled persons, and multicultural interests were set up. This Office of Native Affairs Policy, renamed the Ontario Native Affairs Directorate (ONAD) in 1987, remained separate from the land claims machinery until 1988, when the old Office of Indian Resource Policy was transferred from the Ministry of Natural Resources and combined with ONAD. When the NDP took power in 1990, the Directorate was renamed the Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat (ONAS) and its budget expanded considerably (see Table 5-1), although much of this increase was through grant budgets rather than operating resources for the agency itself.

Meanwhile, in BC the Native Affairs Secretariat became the Ministry of Native Affairs in 1988, and was expanded and renamed the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs in 1991 by the NDP government of Mike Harcourt. A non-treaty unit such as the 1985-1988 Ontario Office of Native Affairs Policy never evolved separately from the negotiation machinery in BC. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs grew rapidly in the early 1990s, with staff increasing from 62 in the 1991-92 fiscal year to 142 by 1994-95 and its budget expanding from $10 million in 1991-92 to $29 million in 1994-95 (in both years, approximately 40% of this money was for grants and not operating funds).
In both provinces, these changing structures reflected two separate trends -- increasing government recognition of aboriginal land claims and inherent self-government rights, as well as a desire to ensure greater intragovernmental coherence, more consultation and wider participation of aboriginals in policies and programs affecting them. These were accompanied by the growth of the two separate policy communities mentioned above - one focused around treaties and resource rights, and the other more concerned with social policy development and coordination. Of course, some of the APAs' horizontal coordination work stemmed from claim negotiations, since interministerial coordination was required to ensure ministries' interests were represented and treaty obligations and responsibilities were subsequently implemented across government. Similarly, many social policies and programs involved complex “vertical” negotiations between aboriginal nations and provincial governments. But overall there were two separate trends at work in aboriginal policy agencies; one emphasized their roles as external negotiators and managers, and another stressed their job as internal coordinators and advocates.

**Internal Structures and Mandates**

The dual purpose of these agencies is illustrated by their internal structures and written mandates. In the early 1990s the (BC) Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs housed three main divisions: Treaty Negotiations; Policy, Planning and Research; and Aboriginal Relations. While Policy, Planning and Research was responsible for developing provincial treaty mandates (instructions to negotiating teams), actual negotiations were carried out by the Treaty Negotiations Division. Policy, Planning and Research was
primarily focused within government, providing “policy advice and support on aboriginal issues” to the rest of the provincial government. Meanwhile, the Aboriginal Relations Division “manage[d] the day-to-day relationship with aboriginal peoples...act[ing] as advocates for aboriginal people within government and function[ing] as the province’s ambassadors to First Nations” (emphasis added). This mandate, mentioned earlier in Chapter One, is a rare example of government explicitly designating a policy agency to serve functions that, if not completely contradictory, are certainly at odds. One division negotiated with aboriginals, and another advocated for aboriginals within government. (This mandate has been rewritten several times since 1995 and no longer includes the word “advocate.”)

The Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat developed a similar array of functions, although it has never featured such contradictory language in its mandates. When the NDP took power in 1990 ONAS housed four core units: Justice and Social Policy, Economic and Resource Development Policy, Community Negotiations, and Federal/Provincial Relations. As negotiations progressed and staff expanded, it had four sizable branches by 1992 -- Policy Coordination, Corporate Policy Development, Negotiations Support and Community Relations, and Legal Services. These were later subsumed into two divisions with assistant deputy minister-level heads: Corporate Policy and Planning, and Land Claims and Self Government Negotiations. These organizational changes demonstrate the dual emphasis on treaty and non-treaty activities

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10 Source: Spring 1990 and 1990-91 Ontario Government Telephone Directories.
and the creation of institutional capacity for both. Unlike its BC counterpart, ONAS was
never explicitly empowered to be the representative or advocate for aboriginal interests
within government; instead, it acted vaguely "as an advocate for the resolution of Native
Affairs issues within the government"\(^\text{12}\) (emphasis added). But in both provinces the
policy agencies were strongly engaged, particularly under NDP governments, as
advocates for aboriginal issues and perspectives within government. And, as I argue
below, the dual mandates of "managing" vertical negotiations and "representation"
through horizontal activities still remained even under the subsequent and less
sympathetic governments of the mid- and late 1990s.

The 1990s Political Context

As with the Ontario Women's Directorate, changes in governments and governing
ideologies certainly affect aboriginal policy agencies' priorities, resources and clout. In
aboriginal policy, provincial political leaders typically adopt strongly the perspective and
discourse of one of the two communities, making "aboriginal issues" either something to
be managed and controlled in an environment of pluralist networks, or something to
advocate and champion in a series of clientele-type networks. This leads to shifting
interpretations of the two roles discussed above. However, it does not lead to
transformations on the scale of the Ontario Women's Directorate, for reasons argued
below.

\(^{12}\) This phrase is taken from ONAS's mission statement as found in estimates statements and government
directories from 1988 until the fall of 1995. While it has disappeared from documents under the Harris
government, it was still a common phrase used by ONAS staff in 1997 and 1998 interviews.
In the early 1990s, the NDP premiers Bob Rae of Ontario and Mike Harcourt of BC placed a stronger priority on treaty processes than had their predecessors. Both leaders accelerated the creation of negotiating structures and the progress of land claim and self-government talks, recognizing inherent aboriginal rights to self-government. But the provinces have taken different paths since the mid-1990s, when the Progressive Conservatives took power in Ontario and Glen Clark succeeded Mike Harcourt as NDP leader and BC premier. In Ontario treaty negotiations slowed or stopped entirely under Harris's Progressive Conservative government, while in BC the Clark NDP government continued to pursue extensive negotiations and signed the Nisga’a treaty in the face of considerable criticism from opposition parties and external groups. Both agencies underwent significant budget cuts in 1996 (see Tables 5-1 and 5-2), although the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs received a considerable increase in the 1998-99 fiscal year.

It is difficult to assess the exact effect of parties and governing ideologies on the evolution of aboriginal policy machinery, because of the differing prominence of aboriginal affairs in BC and Ontario. In British Columbia, aboriginal land claims continue to grow in importance and controversy because there are almost no treaties to provide a basic framework and understanding between aboriginals and non-aboriginals. This uncertainty means that unresolved claims are regularly blamed for their effect on investment decisions, land values and economic development in a province heavily dependent on natural resources, while resolved claims such as the Nisga’a treaty have attracted heavy opposition in the legislative assembly and the popular media.

Developments in the mid- and late 1990s include a high-profile blockade and stand-off at 100 Mile House; the 1997 Delgamuuk case in which the Supreme Court of Canada ruled
that land claims were valid if aboriginals could demonstrate historic occupancy of the
territory; and disputes over increased rents on prime Vancouver real estate by the
Musqueam band, which had previously been unable to set market rates. These events
have attracted considerable media attention and are regular topics of on-line radio
discussion and other popular media.

Because of the high profile of aboriginal issues in British Columbia, BC
provincial bureaucrats reported in 1997 and 1998 interviews for this study that aboriginal
policy decisions and communications were increasingly moving from the Ministry to the
Cabinet and Policy Communications Secretariat, whose head, Tom Gunton, was one of
Premier Clark's most senior advisors. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was
streamlined in the mid-1990s, losing its entire Policy, Planning and Research Branch, and
was staffed with more career public servants and directed to concentrate more on the
treaty process, in close conjunction with central authorities. This reduced its role as an
advocate of aboriginal demands, and represents a clear tilt toward the normative values
and behaviour of the public administration world and the pluralist approach to aboriginal
affairs.

Land claims in Ontario have a lower profile, particularly in southern Ontario.
Claims and self-government negotiations were not a significant issue in the 1999
provincial election. Little popular attention has been paid to the continuing lawsuit
against Premier Harris and other senior government officials arising from the 1995
Ipperwash blockade and police shooting of aboriginal activist Dudley George.\textsuperscript{13} In contrast to the closely overseen BC Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, ONAS staff reported in interviews that their chief difficulty in the Ontario government after 1995 was getting through the “clogged arteries” (as one respondent put it) of cabinet and the central agencies.

However, the Secretariat has undergone significant changes since the Progressive Conservatives came to power. It has shrunk in size and undergone several reorganizations since 1995; its executive head has been downgraded from deputy to assistant deputy minister status, and it now follows an "Aboriginal Policy Framework" which emphasizes economic development and places a low priority on land claims and self-government negotiations.\textsuperscript{14} As in BC, aboriginal policy is something to be “managed” in a pluralist fashion, following the norms and practices of the public administration world – but unlike BC, with far less commitment to resolving land claims and negotiating self-government agreements.

However, unlike the Ontario Women’s Directorate, aboriginal policy agencies have been relatively consistent in their basic functions and areas of interest. Personnel are shifted, activities rise and fall in priority and public servants receive new instructions, but both agencies have had the same basic responsibilities or areas of interest throughout the 1990s – negotiating treaties, and overseeing the coordination of cross-government

\textsuperscript{13} In the 1995 Ipperwash blockade crisis, aboriginal activist Dudley George was shot by provincial police, leading to charges of manslaughter against the police and a lawsuit by the George family against Premier Mike Harris personally. The Premier, along with other senior officials, was accused of interfering in the police handling of the crisis. Ipperwash remains a very sensitive political and legal issue at the time of the research for this study and Ontario public servants declined to comment in any way on the matter, which remained before the courts at the time of writing.

policies and programs. While the "advocacy" mandate has been curtailed in both provinces in favour of more pluralist, interest-balancing approaches, the agencies continue to have dual roles as external negotiators and internal coordinators. Thus, unlike the vague roles and shifting policy interests of the OWD, the functions of aboriginal policy agencies have remained relatively similar over time despite drastic shifts in the policy choices and directions.

Relations with Aboriginals

Aboriginal peoples are generally sceptical of aboriginal policy agencies, and resist any suggestion that agencies are ministries "for" aboriginals. This is for two reasons. First and foremost, many aboriginal nations consider their relations with non-aboriginal governments to be on a government-to-government basis, and resist being seen as mere users or "clients" of non-aboriginal governments. Second, aboriginal groups are clearly wary of agencies' dual role as both external negotiators and internal policy coordinators supposedly working on behalf of aboriginals. They see the two roles as conflicting, regardless of changes in government.

Aboriginal policy agencies provide partial or complete funding for a number of aboriginal groups and organizations, both for treaty and non-treaty activities. Receiving funds from non-aboriginal governments is always a point of contention within aboriginal communities, as it suggests a patron-client relationship and acceptance of provincial sovereignty over aboriginal peoples. As one activist said, "It's compromising if you

\[\text{\textsuperscript{15}}\text{ Tables 5-1 and 5-2 show the large proportion of each agency's budget devoted to grants and transfers to aboriginal groups.}\]
accept the terms and conditions...they say there’s none, but there’s no flexibility [either].”

But aboriginal groups have few other resources from which to draw, and hence depend heavily on provincial (and federal) funding. In general, groups do not appear to see APAs as a better or worse channel of provincial funding; their concerns are with accepting government funding at all, rather than the individual ministry structures through which it is processed.

Aboriginal organizations and activists can be loosely categorized into two groups that correspond to the two policy communities outlined earlier. Band councils, treaty groups and similar bodies that represent entire aboriginal nations tend to identify themselves as “political” organizations, as opposed to “service” organizations that deliver programs at the street and community level. The “political” organizations focus on land claims, the creation of self-government frameworks and interim development agreements, and some (most notably the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, representing about a quarter of BC “status Indians”) do not even formally recognize provincial treaty processes. Nations that do interact at the provincial level tend to deal more with economic and resource ministries and one part of aboriginal policy agencies -- their negotiation functions. Since they approach all negotiations on a government-to-government basis, “political” organizations are somewhat less interested in issues of intragovernmental coordination - the other mandate of aboriginal policy agencies. Social policy and programs are more issues for federal-level negotiations with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (although there are many exceptions to the latter), and aboriginal nations are careful to avoid any implication that they negotiate with “ministries” rather than the Crown itself. Thus for strategic reasons they view aboriginal
policy agencies as the negotiating arm representing the entire provincial government, and do not take a direct interest in the coordination of aboriginal policies between different ministries. Of course these organizations clearly understand and closely follow changes and shifts within government, but they avoid formal recognition of inter-ministry differences.

"Service" organizations (a name given to them by the "political" organizations) are more likely to be involved in various policy and program processes with individual social policy ministries, and are more willing to play off different ministries against each other in a search for programs and funding. Since they are more concerned with specific and immediate programs and often work with both status and non-status aboriginals, maintaining jurisdictional distance is less important than designing broad, holistic and effective initiatives across department boundaries. Thus they are more interested in the policy coordination function of policy agencies than their negotiating arms.

These divisions should not be overstated – "political" organizations are willing to bend jurisdictional authority if it will help address pressing problems, and "service" organizations remain firmly committed to principles of aboriginal sovereignty. However, their different functions and tasks create a clearer division of relationships with aboriginal policy agencies, as well as with other government units.

A gender division can also be discerned at times between these two types of groups. "Political" organizations tend to be dominated by men, in part because of the masculine leadership and decision-making structures imposed by the Indian Act. Aboriginal women activists are somewhat more prevalent in "service" organizations, many of which are aimed primarily or exclusively at aboriginal women and children.
However, it is hard to discern whether this significantly affects the different organizations' ways of approaching and interacting with the provincial state.

Evidence suggests fewer misunderstandings or conflicting expectations develop between aboriginal organizations and aboriginal policy agencies than between feminist organizations and women's policy agencies. Sometimes this may be because there is no relationship at all. At least some aboriginal "service" organizations have little or no interaction with aboriginal policy agencies, and deal exclusively with health or social services ministries. One director of a major urban service organization in Toronto told me: "I don't even know what they [ONAS] do." All her dealings were with provincial and municipal health and social services departments. But other aboriginal activists took a very pragmatic view of agencies; they did not have great expectations for agencies, but did see them as sources of funding and occasionally useful for specific projects and issues. Permeating "ministry cultures" and "educating" public servants was identified by aboriginals in both provinces as a useful role that was performed to some degree by APAs. One Ontario aboriginal activist said:

Some [line] ministries are easier to deal with than others, and some ministries are totally unresponsive. If we're not able to get movement we go to ONAS...In the past [under the Rae government], when a coordination issue arose, it would go to ONAS staff. They could take it to the next level and have some sort of response.

This view of aboriginal policy agencies as sometimes functionally useful should not be confused with seeing agencies as wholly reliable advocates for aboriginal peoples, either under the NDP or other governments. As one BC aboriginal leader reported, "the province tries to downplay First Nations into an interest group...this has always been their tack;" this interviewee believed that the danger of cooptation and undermining aboriginal
claims to sovereignty was increased by working too closely with the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs.

Thus unlike many feminist groups which have learned the hard way, aboriginals have never had much faith or hope in making special policy agencies reflect their world’s norms and characteristics. Aboriginals strongly support the inclusion of aboriginal values and practices in program development and delivery as found, for example, in Ontario’s Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy.\textsuperscript{16} However, aboriginals did not have much to say in interviews about how aboriginal policy agencies conducted their business, and whether agencies should emulate widely held aboriginal procedural values such as extensive discussion, consensus-decision making, etc. Since they view agencies as negotiating adversaries or as secondary resources - and never as their “representatives” within government - aboriginals primarily measure and evaluate agencies by their actual outputs and pragmatic value to aboriginals, rather than their internal processes or other more symbolic aspects.

In short, while there are certainly tensions between aboriginals and aboriginal policy agencies, by themselves they are not as stark as some of the other “colliding worlds” described in this study. Conflicts appear to follow from larger tensions between aboriginal peoples and the Canadian state, and from the contradictory assignments of policy agencies to act as both external negotiators and internal coordinators.

\textsuperscript{16} See Wayne Warry, \textit{Unfinished Dreams}. 
Relations with Other Public Service Actors

Like other special policy agencies, aboriginal units cultivate horizontal relationships with other government departments to develop and coordinate policies and programs. Although these relationships are nominally between equals, they depend heavily on clout, personal contacts and priorities. It is not always easy for aboriginal policy agencies to build such links, because they must contend with two different groups of public servants. Furthermore, elements of both these groups or policy communities are found within agencies (to varying degrees over time), leading to tensions both between the agency and the policy communities, and tensions within the agencies themselves. In each province, agencies are at the centre of a dense network of government units working in aboriginal affairs. Since at least the early 1990s, both British Columbia and Ontario have had an overall interdepartmental committee with representatives from every government ministry working in aboriginal issues, along with aboriginal policy agency staff. These committees, which usually meet monthly, are not decision-making bodies and have no particular powers or responsibilities. Instead, participants identified their chief functions as information exchange and building personal contacts. Other more ad-hoc committees from two or more ministries, usually at the level of individual policy analysts and program officers, conduct the bulk of policy work; in recent years, greater emphasis has been placed on these temporary “project teams” and considerably less on creating formal and permanent committees. Over the years, both governments have also had occasional committees of deputy ministers and/or assistant deputy ministers with significant aboriginal policy and program responsibilities. (From 1985 to 1987, Ontario had a cabinet committee on aboriginal affairs, although this
was only one of an array of specialized committees that flowered in the mid-1980s and disappeared once the cabinet agenda became hopelessly clogged.) Policy agencies act as equals -- not authorities -- in these structures, and agencies see their chief role as providing advice and information. Thus in interviews for this study, policy agency staff characterized their coordination work as “reviewing proposals,” “identifying gaps” and “providing advice to line ministries around sectoral issues, from a corporate policy perspective.”

Policy agencies find it difficult, however, to build links with the entire range of public servants working in aboriginal affairs because of the clear differences in the two policy communities. Resource policy ministries and social policy ministries place different demands and expectations on aboriginal policy agencies, since their policy communities organize around differing norms and networks. In interviews for this study, public servants gave conflicting evaluations of agencies, and expressed different views and expectations for agencies. Although the small number precludes definite conclusions, these differences appear to be related to the respondents’ own unit and its place in either the resource or social policy community.17

To explore these variations, we can first examine differences in career backgrounds. The economic and resource ministry staff interviewed tended to be career public servants (i.e., with five or more years of public service employment, almost always only at the provincial level, and with aspirations to continue in public service) and identified most of their immediate co-workers or staff in similar terms. Most had spent

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17 For questions about staff background, non-APA public servants were asked to describe their own career background and those of their present or recent co-workers/staff, if known. This gave a total picture of about twenty people.
time in several different ministries, usually as policy analysts and general managers. Their educational backgrounds varied but were generally in the liberal arts or sciences. When asked why they had taken their present positions, they gave such reasons as career mobility, lateral shifts due to government downsizing, and the interesting and challenging nature of aboriginal issues. Overall, then, these staff tended to have backgrounds suited to approaching aboriginal issues in a more pressure pluralist relationship — where aboriginal demands must be balanced with the perspectives of other government and non-aboriginal actors.

Social ministry staff often told distinctly different stories. They and their colleagues or staff were more likely to have made recent lateral transitions to the public service from other jobs and often had not worked outside their own ministry or outside aboriginal policy areas. Others who had worked elsewhere in government had only worked in areas related to social movements, such as women’s issues or employment equity. One recently appointed manager of a social policy unit, who had held a variety of public service positions, said “I have a lot of people here who have never worked in another ministry. In fact, they were quite shocked to find out that I had had so many jobs.” A number of social policy staff had degrees in anthropology or other aboriginal-related disciplines and had previously worked in aboriginal-related organizations outside government. Some were aboriginal themselves and worked alongside aboriginal co-workers. When asked why they had taken their present positions, people in this group were much more likely than their economic policy counterparts to talk about their interest in aboriginal issues and the opportunities to advance aboriginal interests within government. The manager quoted above went on to say: “these are people that are
incredibly dedicated to their constituency [i.e., aboriginal people], more so sometimes than they are to their employer [the provincial government]. I say that in a fond way - very dedicated to their constituents.” Another public servant told me: “I’m in this business to do something -- to do what I can to rectify what my country has done.” In short, these staff were more likely to approach aboriginal issues in an advocacy fashion, emphasizing greater aboriginal participation and generally shared goals.

Again, one cannot generalize too much from a small sample, but these different backgrounds do suggest two different sets of actors. One group sees aboriginal issues more as a standard public service management issue, while the other views its role as advocating for aboriginal interests.

These differences also came out in more general questions about relationships with aboriginal policy agencies. Some ministry staff, particularly in resource ministries, characterized the policy agencies as intrusive and overbearing. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and ONAS were accused of “meddling” and having “no idea of the larger picture” in individual line ministries. Criticisms often focused on policy agencies’ location in capital cities, “south of Highway 7” (in Ontario) or “stuck in Victoria.” The most common accusation was an inability to understand the wide range of aboriginal and non-aboriginal actors and the complexity of the policy communities. In other words, the agencies allegedly did not understand or appreciate the pluralist range of actors and goals. One public servant working in economic policy said there were “..a lot of people who work in the area of aboriginal affairs [both in the aboriginal policy agency and in social policy ministries] who I would avoid like the plague, because they don’t know how to work with people. I know my ministry - I took the time to learn about my ministry and
took my time to learn about people in the ministry.” Even some agency staff acknowledged that they were viewed by other ministries as troublesome and uninformed. One individual said “other ministries consider us to be a pain in the ass” [i.e., too focused on aboriginal demands] and another agreed that “there’s a sense that we’re know-nothings.” These patterns were identified as ongoing, regardless of the government in power.

But other staff told the opposite story. Some aboriginal program specialists in social policy ministries accused aboriginal policy agencies of being “lazy,” and “far too disengaged” from what they saw as urgent aboriginal issues and challenges. One individual spoke of “the aloofness that permeates [the policy agency]” and its “conservative corporate culture,” and another said that “there’s just no passion for the issues” within the agency. Here the allegations were that policy agencies were too committed to process over results and were sluggish and unresponsive on issues of great concern to aboriginal communities and individuals. Again, this was not limited to present circumstances and governments but was considered to be an ongoing structural problem.

This is not to say opinion of policy agencies is completely polarized, but that there are certainly differing perspectives on the same organization, linked to differences in policy communities. One Ontario public servant from a social policy ministry, critical of ONAS as too “bureaucratic,” was asked if this was because the views of the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) and its non-aboriginal clients had to be addressed and incorporated into aboriginal policy-making. The response: “They’ve had ten years to do that...surely they would have figured out how to handle them [MNR] by now.” For this
person, the proper mission of ONAS was clear and unambiguous: to fight for the advancement of aboriginal interests, to act in a more clientele than pressure pluralist fashion, and to identify with the priorities and values of aboriginals, rather than the nominally “neutral” perspective of public administration.

Other public servants recognized the different viewpoints; another social policy specialist in Ontario expressed some dissatisfaction with ONAS but continued: “ONAS is always in the balance, working in the middle” between different ministries. This individual described the contradictory task of aboriginal policy agencies: “They have the unenviable task of trying to be helpful for aboriginals, but also maintaining a cohesive, corporate policy.” This summarizes the contradictions and problems faced by policy agencies as they sit between two colliding worlds. Are they ultimately public servants who act as “neutral” stewards, or are they to promote actively the priorities and values of aboriginals? The challenge of this position for both Canadian and other aboriginal policy agencies was illustrated by an Australian public servant, who told me that in his agency, “[y]ou walk a tightrope. And pretty quickly you realize how thin the tightrope is. And if you don’t, or can’t handle it, you don’t last very long working in aboriginal affairs.”

The tensions between the two groups are also found in aboriginal policy agencies themselves. Several BC respondents criticized the apparent dominance of “outsiders” in the new Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs in the early 1990s -- people who were not longtime BC public servants but had backgrounds in aboriginal issues or NDP administrations in other provinces and Yukon. These people were not seen as emulating standard public service values such as non-partisanship, a dispassionate approach to issues, and respect for tradition and other departments’ turf. Whether or not these
impressions are correct, the situation was clearly different in the 1996-1999 Clark government, when agency appointments shifted back toward more traditional public service patterns. A new deputy minister and assistant deputy minister responsible for all non-negotiation activities were appointed in 1996 and 1997 respectively. Both were longtime public servants drawn from resource ministries, and their appointments were identified by several respondents as very deliberately designed to build bridges with the resource ministries. One senior Ministry person went so far as to say:

...we've been a dumping ground for people who didn’t work out in something else, or who was a friend of a friend...Over the long term we have to correct how we are perceived by other ministries. One way is to hire more staff from resource-based ministries, people more in tune with other ministries’ values.

“Other ministries” meant resource and economic ministries, and this public servant clearly felt that Ministry staff did not conform to standard public administration values. Interpretations of the strength of this trend differ; because of its still considerable size and the prominence of the aboriginal agenda in BC, the Ministry does attract and hire a fairly diverse set of people, and sets aside several positions for aboriginal applicants, who generally come from outside the public service. Since the entire Ministry is less than a decade old, it is difficult to identify long term trends. However, in the late 1990s there appeared to be a strong push to return to more traditional public administration values, and to place less emphasis on backgrounds in aboriginal issues.

In Ontario accusations of “political” hiring were common during the NDP years, particularly when Minister Bud Wildman’s former executive assistant became Deputy
Minister of ONAS. But in general, ONAS staff have tended to be career members of the Ontario public service - and tend to display and support the traditional normative values of public servants. Interestingly, since aboriginal affairs have always been comparatively low on the Ontario political agenda -- even at the height of the NDP years -- ONAS has never been a particularly desirable place for ambitious bureaucrats. This is the view of ONAS staff themselves; one said, “you’d have to be crazy to come work here...it’s not on the career path to anywhere.” ONAS staff tended to identify their reasons for staying as a continuing interest in the challenges of the aboriginal portfolio -- rather than either career mobility or a single-minded determination to achieve gains for aboriginal peoples.

Unlike the British Columbia Ministry, ONAS staff were less likely to be accused of insensitivity to resource ministries, but were more likely to be criticized by social policy specialists (and aboriginals themselves) as too managerial and process-oriented. ONAS staff themselves indicated that they were managers more than advocates for aboriginal issues. One ONAS public servant told me “we’re basically in the business of risk management;” one common refrain from several people was that they were not advocates for aboriginal causes, but rather “advocates for the resolution of aboriginal issues and demands” -- the phrase from ONAS’s 1988-1995 mission statement (see above).

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18 The ONAS permanent head position, which has undergone several name changes, has moved up and down from assistant deputy minister status to deputy minister under the NDP, and now back to assistant deputy minister level. Since ONAS has been administratively connected to the Ministry of the Attorney General since 1995, the ONAS head is titled “Assistant Deputy Attorney General”.
In short, aboriginal policy agencies sit between two very different sets of government actors, each engaged in a separate policy community with distinct networks and issues. The resource/economic ministries tend to evaluate policy agencies according to public administration norms, such as neutrality and respect for department boundaries. Social policy ministries are more likely to argue that agencies should be more sensitive and oriented toward the promotion of aboriginal interests. Thus we again see collisions between the two worlds of public administration and social movements, even though aboriginals themselves do not see agencies as their "advocates" within government.

Conclusion

Aboriginal policy agencies again illustrate the collisions between the norms and expectations of the two colliding worlds of public administration and social movements. But unlike the Ontario Women's Directorate and other women's policy agencies, which are caught between the expectations of women's groups and those of public servants, the conflicts here are primarily among public servants themselves.

These contradictions and the organizational ambivalence of aboriginal policy agencies reflect the larger ambivalence and deep uncertainty that characterize relations between aboriginal nations and non-aboriginal governments in Canada (and Australia). Unlike women's policy agencies, aboriginal policy agencies have relatively clear and ongoing responsibilities that reflect the continuing importance for provincial governments of land claims and self-government negotiations, as well as the growing range of programs and services devoted to aboriginal needs. These responsibilities place them in a permanent context of two different sets of public servants - those who see their
role as mediating between a range of aboriginal and non-aboriginal interests, and those who feel a responsibility to work primarily or exclusively on behalf of aboriginals. However, because these tensions are more with other public servants rather than with aboriginals themselves, they are less likely to spill outside of government circles as happened with the Ontario Women's Directorate.
Table 5-1  **Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Total Expenditures ($)</th>
<th>Grants and Transfers ($) (within Expenditure total)</th>
<th>Staff (FTE)</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>1986-87</td>
<td>1 464 205</td>
<td>600 391</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>1987-88</td>
<td>1 977 003</td>
<td>847 718</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>1988-89</td>
<td>3 126 567</td>
<td>1 072 787</td>
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<tr>
<td>1989-90</td>
<td>6 075 202</td>
<td>3 671 381</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
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<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-92</td>
<td>16 509 576</td>
<td>10 894 277</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992-93</td>
<td>16 305 917</td>
<td>10 430 620</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-94</td>
<td>14 051 625</td>
<td>7 334 916</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994-95</td>
<td>16 598 475</td>
<td>6 835 068</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-96</td>
<td>15 637 936</td>
<td>4 520 241</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-97</td>
<td>17 111 473(^1)</td>
<td>10 252 945(^1)</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td>9 983 977</td>
<td>3 804 134</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-99 (est.)</td>
<td>9 400 000</td>
<td>3 569 900</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*According to a senior Management Board Secretariat staffer (1997 telephone interview), the Government of Ontario stopped reporting employment levels by ministries in its Civil Service Commission reports. Consequently no data on staffing are available until 1997-98 when staff levels were given in all Ministry business plans.

\(^1\) In 1996-97 an unusually large grant of $6 million was made to one native organization.

Sources: Government of Ontario Public Accounts (various years); Government of Ontario Civil Service Commission Reports (various years); Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat Business Plans (various years)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Total Expenditures ($)</th>
<th>Grants and Transfers ($) (within Expenditure total)</th>
<th>Staff (FTE)</th>
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<td>2,051,124</td>
<td>456,746</td>
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<td>1990-91</td>
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<td>1991-92</td>
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<td>1998-99</td>
<td>28,686,000</td>
<td>10,031,000</td>
<td>152</td>
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</table>

Sources: Government of B.C. Public Accounts; Government of B.C. Estimates; Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs Business Plans
Chapter Six - Special Policy Agencies Under New Public Management

This chapter investigates the effect of the "new public management" (NPM) on special policy agencies, looking particularly at women's and aboriginal policy agencies in the Australian states of Victoria and Western Australia. It suggests that new public management reflects a new set of normative values that do not fit entirely within the existing worlds of public administration or social movements. New public management practices, such as business planning or internal performance measurement, follow a narrow, functional view of agencies that does not take into account their inherently ambiguous, boundary-spanning roles. Although I suggest that some NPM ideas and techniques may be potentially useful for agencies, the overall effect of new public management is a further exacerbation of the conflicts and tensions between public administration and social movements.

The chapter begins with a brief discussion of new public management and its core ideas and values. Following an overview of the two states and the differences between Canadian and Australian feminist movements and aboriginal peoples, we turn to the agencies under study, and look at how they have been affected by five major practices of new public management.

The New Public Management

What exactly is the "new public management"? The term generally refers to the increased emphasis in the late 1980s and 1990s on importing private sector management
practices into public administration, although "any summary [of new public
management] will miss some nuances and give a false sense of coherence." However it
is defined, NPM clearly challenges conventional bureaucratic practices. According to its
proponents, new public management shifts public servants’ focus from following rules
and established processes to responding to the demands of both elected officials and
citizens, through greater efficiency and reduced costs. Opponents argue that NPM
undermines essential public service norms such as control, anonymity and accountability.

It is not always clear what is actually "new" about new public management. Its
ideas and practices have evolved and accumulated since at least the 1960s, building on
earlier ideas such as program- and zero-based budgeting. Many Canadian commentators
have pointed out that the common NPM mantra “let the managers manage” can be found
in the 1962 report by the Royal Commission on Government Organization (the Glassco
Commission). Neither it is entirely clear how new public management differs from right-
wing attacks on the autonomy and capacity of the state. New public management
reforms are closely identified with neo-conservative regimes such as the Thatcher
government. Social democratic governments that have adopted NPM practices, such as
in Britain, New Zealand and Australia, have had their progressive credentials widely
questioned. Hence there is a close association between new public management and neo-
conservatism, but as I argue below, the two are not entirely synonymous.

The initial focus of new public management in the 1980s was on the routine, service delivery aspects of government such as issuing passports or collecting garbage. NPM-spurred reforms focused on improving performance at lower cost, and focused on both changes in practices, such as identifying “core businesses” and placing managers on individual performance contracts, and structural changes, ranging from decentralized budgeting and public-private partnerships to outright privatization.20

More recently, NPM-associated practices such as the development of business plans, performance measurements and individual performance contracts have become normal even in public sector agencies that do not deliver routine services. NPM has spread from what James Q. Wilson calls “production” oriented agencies that perform routine functions to “craft” and “coping” activities that engage in highly creative work under changing circumstances and pressures.21 Thus new public management is not just found in service areas where demands and targets are reasonably easy to identify and measure, but in areas where outcomes are highly contentious and can be assessed by widely differing criteria. This includes special policy agencies.

The pace and scope of actual NPM changes across countries varied significantly during the 1980s and 1990s. Among Westminster systems of government, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand were all quicker than Canada (both federal and provincial government) to radically restructure their public services along new public

20 Leslie Seidle, Rethinking the Delivery of Public Services to Citizens (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1995).

management lines. Hence it is worthwhile to look outside Canada to understand better the scope and effects of new public management on special policy agencies.

Australian governments, at both the commonwealth and state levels, were early and enthusiastic practitioners of new public management. As in New Zealand, new public management emerged in Australia in the 1980s under national Labor governments as part of the “economic rationalist” agendas of public sector cuts, liberalized trade, deregulation and other reforms. But New Zealand management reforms were shaped and driven to a large degree by abstract economic designs taken from transaction cost theory, principle-agent theory and public choice theory. In contrast, Australian reforms responded more to immediate political demands and, like the United Kingdom (and Canada and the United States), a general but unfocused enthusiasm for “business-type managerialism.” While developments at the state level were more uneven, by the late 1980s all Australian national and sub-national governments had broadly accepted and implemented new public management practices.

See for example Donald Savoie, *Thatcher, Reagan, Mulroney: In Search of a New Bureaucracy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994).


Christopher Hood, “A Public Management for all Seasons?”


The Values of New Public Management

Is new public management part of the traditional world of public administration? Most scholars of new public management argue that NPM is more than just a set of minor adjustments, and that its ideas and values challenge traditional public administration norms and assumptions. Kenneth Kemaghan writes that “certain traditional values clash with some of the new or emerging values accompanying recent public service reforms, especially those associated with the new public management” while Mark Considine argues that new public management ideas are in competition “with the practical rules and procedures of bureaucratic action” and emphasize “the importance of shifting the public sector away from its traditional bureaucratic methodologies towards a structure and method of operation resembling that of the private sector.” The consequences of these value shifts go well beyond day-to-day administration. Peter Aucoin states that “changes in public management are not merely changes to administrative processes and practices; they are also changes to governance themselves” while Jenson and Phillips argue that these structural and managerial changes “form a major effort by the state to reconfigure [the] postwar citizenship regime.”

But it is difficult to list the values and assumptions of the new public management world even in general terms. Most studies of new public management suggest that NPM


is more a bundle of related ideas rather than a coherent intellectual vision. New public management features a number of contradictions, such as a simultaneous emphasis on “downward” and “upward” accountability, or the dual need for greater autonomy and yet more systematic coordination, that leave unclear exactly what NPM is and what it is not.

However, most writers do suggest that the key themes and assumptions of new public management inevitably revolve around productivity. For example, Christopher Pollitt notes that a number of “specific beliefs routinely found in managerialist analyses” assume that social progress is achieved through “continuing increases in economically defined productivity.” Martin Painter provides a very good encapsulation that underlines the differences between the values of new public management and those of traditional public administration. He says that new public management:

...is an understandable reaction against bureaucratic formalism and proceduralism. It embodies an “output” emphasis and defines and attempts to measure management performance on the basis of outputs, wherever possible in quantifiable terms. Rather than rewarding public servants for rule conformity, error avoidance and attention to detail, it rewards them for achieving output targets and punishes them for underperformance. It conceives of public sector activity as a productive process and strives for higher productivity (above all else) through improved efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

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33 Mark Considine has made one of the boldest attempts to outline NPM theoretical principles in Considine, “The Corporate Management Framework”.

34 B. Guy Peters and Donald J. Savoie, Managing Incoherence: The Coordination and Empowerment Conundrum (Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Management Development, 1995)


36 Painter, “Public Management: Fad or Fallacy?”, 1
While there may not be agreement about its exact components, new public management does seem distinctly different from traditional public administration values described in Chapter Two. In particular, new public management emphasizes accountability for ends rather than accountability for means. Thus Donald Savoie writes that "unlike the traditional public administration language that conjures up images of rules, regulations and lethargic decision-making processes, the very word 'management' implies a decisiveness, a dynamic mindset and a bias for action."\(^{38}\)

Superficially, the ideas and values of new public management appear more similar to the values and beliefs of social movements than to those of traditional public administration outlined in Chapter Two. NPM focuses on accountability and decentralization, emphasizing more direct accountability to elected officials rather than just the next bureaucratic level, and also a decentralized orientation to the demands and concerns of users and citizens. These principles and ideas sound familiar. Consider for example this argument from a movement scholar and activist:

Three issues are central to democratizing the administration of public services: (a) how to shift power from officials to elected politicians on the one hand and to users on the other; (b) how to shift the emphasis of regulation in public services from cost accounting to improving services for people; and (c) how to change the internal structure of the state, as well as the relations between manual, clerical and professional workers.\(^{39}\)

These words about accountability, service quality and empowerment and the criticisms of rule-based, hierarchical public administration norms could as easily come from a new

\(^{37}\) See also Kernaghan, "Shaking the Foundation: New versus Traditional Public Service Values".

\(^{38}\) Donald J. Savoie "What is Wrong with the New Public Management?" *Canadian Public Administration* 38:1 (Spring 1995), 113.

\(^{39}\) Robin Murray, "Transforming the 'Fordist' State" in Gregory Albo, David Langille, and Leo Panitch, eds., *A Different Kind of State? Popular Power and Democratic Administration* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1993), 54
public management enthusiast. NPM places a new emphasis on meeting the actual needs of citizens, emphasizes results rather than adherence to traditional procedures, and promotes flexibility rather than hierarchy or “turf” wars.

However, any stylistic coincidences are greatly outweighed by substantive differences. As mentioned above, new public management - in its many forms - focuses on productivity and the measurement of outputs, or ends. But this study has emphasized social movements’ concern with means, often as much as ends. As we saw in Chapter Two, movements value representation in the processes of government, and most activists and organizations seek participatory roles in policy-making and program design. New public management makes some allowances for this in its emphasis on “partnerships” and “alternative service delivery”, which often involves letting non-state actors do the “rowing” administrative work while government “steers” the basic direction of policies and programs.40

But movements are interested in helping to determine and shape policies and programs, not performing the routine administrative tasks. They want to steer, not row. Jenson and Phillips note that the NPM approach “is creating a hierarchy of groups, with those focussed exclusively on service delivery at the top, and those focussed on advocacy deemed irrelevant.” Consequently they are highly skeptical of new public management’s ability to reach out to social movements, arguing that “true partnerships involve power-sharing,” not short-term contractual arrangements.41 As well, Hester Eisenstein argues, new public management strongly favours economic and quantitative methodologies over


the more qualitative and interpretative approaches associated with social movements.\textsuperscript{42} Thus NPM represents "the importation of a new kind of expertise into the bureaucracy, which trump[s] previous kinds of hard-won expertise"\textsuperscript{43} - expertise either in the norms of traditional public administration or in familiarity with the nuanced complexities of social movements.

So new public management does not fit neatly in either the world of (traditional) public administration or that of social movements. It is questionable whether we can call new public management a "world" of its own, since it lacks a coherent intellectual tradition and most of its precepts and practices are less than two decades old. This makes it difficult to construct a list of even general norms and characteristics, as I did in Chapter Two for the worlds of social movements and public administration.

But NPM does have enough coherence and unity to challenge many of the normative values and accepted characteristics of both public administration and social movements. Thus this chapter explores five established tenets or practices of new public management, and examines their effects on special policy agencies' relations with the two colliding worlds. These five (business planning, performance measurement, transferable "managerial" skills, contractual relationships and external policy contracting) are all practical examples of new public management's bias toward productivity and outputs. By looking at their application in special policy agencies, we can see that NPM creates more tensions and contradictions in agencies.

\textsuperscript{42} Eisenstein, \textit{Inside Agitators}, 193.
\textsuperscript{43} Eisenstein, \textit{Inside Agitators}, 193.
O.P. Dwivedi and Iain Gow argue that "the greatest charge against managerialism [i.e., new public management] is its reductionism and lack of imagination. It tries to reduce a complex phenomenon to a single model drawn from business." New public management imposes a narrow, functional understanding on organizations. But we have seen that special policy agencies have few defined or consistent functions over time, and are better understood as flexible and adaptable boundary-spanners between the two colliding worlds. Agencies often operate in a state of ambiguity, attempting to reconcile divergent demands and assumptions. But new public management strips away this ambiguity along with agencies’ informal and symbolic roles as links between the two colliding worlds. Thus new public management contributes further to the tensions and ambivalence between these worlds.

To explore the effects of new public management on special policy agencies, we will look at the women’s and aboriginal policy agencies of the Australian states of Victoria and Western Australia. Having made a brief review of new public management as a set of values and assumptions, the next part of the chapter introduces these agencies and their context. We will first take a brief overview of the two states, and then discuss some of the key differences between the Australian women’s movement and Australian aboriginal groups and their Canadian counterparts, before turning to the history and current experiences of the agencies themselves.

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Victoria and Western Australia

Geographically, Victoria is the second smallest state in Australia, while Western Australia (WA) is the largest. However, Victoria has approximately five million people, while the WA population is about 1.1 million. In both states the population is heavily concentrated in the capital cities, Melbourne (70% of the Victoria population) and Perth (80% of the WA population), but Victoria is very much a manufacturing and service economy, while WA remains highly dependent on natural resources.

As the table below shows, both states have similar recent political histories, with strong Labor governments in the 1980s and Liberal/National Coalition governments in the 1990s. The Liberal party ruled Victoria for twenty-seven years from 1955 to 1982, when Labor was elected under Premier John Cain. Cain was replaced as Labor leader by Joan Kirner in 1990, who lost the 1992 election to Liberal Jeff Kennett. Kennett’s Liberals were reelected in 1996 but unexpectedly defeated in September 1999 by the Labor party under Steve Bracks, who now holds a slim minority government.

Western Australia also saw a long period of Liberal/Coalition dominance from 1959 to 1983, except for a three-year Labor government from 1971 to 1974. In 1983 Labor was elected to power under Brian Burke. Two short-lived Labor leaders succeeded Burke in the early 1990s, before the Coalition under Richard Court returned to government in 1993. The Court government was reelected in 1997.

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45 Australia has three major political parties - the Labour, Liberal and National parties. The Liberal and National parties normally form coalitions in government and Parliament, and usually do not compete with each other in elections for individual seats. In both Victoria and Western Australia the Liberals are the larger party and the Premier has always been Liberal.
Table 6.1 Parties in Power, Victoria and Western Australia, 1960-2000

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These states were chosen for this study for several reasons. First, their similar political histories allow us to examine and compare experiences under Labor in the 1980s and the Coalition in the 1990s. This history is also similar to Ontario’s experience under relatively progressive governments from 1985 to 1995, and a strong conservative regime since 1995. As well, these jurisdictions and particularly Western Australia have been relatively understudied compared to the two other large states of New South Wales and Queensland.46

The two states differ somewhat in that Victoria has been at the forefront of new public management reforms under both Labor and Liberal governments. The 1982-1992 Labor government was particularly noteworthy for its emphasis on accountability of

senior executives to ministers, and business or corporate planning.\textsuperscript{47} The Kennett Liberal government was also a strong believer in "managerialism."\textsuperscript{48} Western Australian reforms have not been as dramatic or trendsetting, but are generally comparable with developments across the country, and still significantly outpaced changes in Canada in the 1980s and 1990s.\textsuperscript{49}

Another distinction is the aboriginal population of each state and political visibility of aboriginal issues. Native title (i.e., land claims) is a very high-profile issue in Western Australia but is a relatively minor issue in Victoria. The Western Australian aboriginal population is 60 000 - 5\% of the state population - whereas only about 20 000 aboriginals live in Victoria, a mere 0.5\% of the population. In both states approximately half the aboriginal population lives in the metropolitan area. But while Western Australia has numerous isolated communities (similar to Canadian Indian reserves) which are almost entirely aboriginal, Victorian aboriginals outside Melbourne generally live in mixed-race small towns. Finally, the Western Australian economy relies heavily on land-intensive resource industries such as mining and sheep herding, while Victoria is a more advanced manufacturing/service economy in which land rights and ownership debates take a lower profile and disputes are less linked to the overall state economy.

But despite the above differences, my research suggests fairly similar experiences and few great contrasts in women's and aboriginal policy agencies. The application of new public management practices is similar enough in both states that the effects on

\textsuperscript{47} Halligan and Power, \textit{Political Management}.

special policy agencies (although not necessarily other areas) are relatively the same. Most differences in structures and approaches appeared to be attributable to particular individuals or isolated incidents, not differences in the states’ characteristics. Furthermore, my findings and information appear broadly similar to experiences in other jurisdictions.\(^5^0\) Thus, the following discussion largely considers the two states together because their experiences under new public management are very similar.

**Differences Between Australian and Canadian Movements**

While their struggles and general demands are relatively similar, important differences are apparent between the Canadian and Australian women’s and aboriginal movements. In general, Australian women’s groups appear more likely to interact with governments than their Canadian counterparts. On the other hand, aboriginals are considerably less organized in Australia than in Canada.

Australian women have been more focused than Canadians at building closer links with government at both political and bureaucratic levels, although this has not necessarily led to greater influence and policy successes. Marian Sawyer writes:

> The Australian women’s movement over the last two decades [1970s and 1980s] has had a closer relationship with the state, and the heartbreak involved, than women’s movements in other western democracies. Recent


Australian writing has described this relationship as a distinguishing characteristic of Australian feminist practice.\textsuperscript{51} Most authors are in broad agreement with Sawer' assertion. Anna Yeatman suggests that feminist interaction with the state was "largely through the conjunction of this movement with the predominance of reform-oriented Labor governments at the Commonwealth level (1972-75; 1983-87)" and South Australia (1970-77) and New South Wales (1976-86).\textsuperscript{52} However, the growth of the "economic rationalist" agenda in the late 1980s and 1990s drove governments and women's activists apart. Thus Australian feminists may not be as focused on the state as much as in earlier years.

Whether or not things changed in the 1990s, we can still find clear contrasts by comparing the major national woman's group in each country. Canada's National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) and the Australian Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL) were both created in the early 1970s with an explicitly political agenda and focus, and are the highest-profile feminist organizations in each country. But while NAC has always been a federated umbrella body comprised of various member groups, the WEL is comprised of individual members. As well, NAC has no real provincial counterparts (other than the Fédération des Femmes du Québec), while each Australian state has its own WEL branch. While both organizations were closely associated with political parties and bureaucracies in the 1970s, WEL continued to have much closer ties and connections with the state into the 1980s. For example, Marian Sawer reports that in 1985 over a quarter of all state and federal women MPs were current or past members of


\textsuperscript{52} Anna Yeatman, "Women and the State" in Kate Pritchard Hughes, ed., \textit{Contemporary Australian Feminism} (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1994), 180.
WEL, and that in 1990 three of the four female cabinet ministers in Western Australia, including the premier Carmen Lawrence, had a WEL background. While no comparable Canadian statistics are available, NAC never appears to have reached a similar level of elite participation in Canada. More importantly for this study, a significant number of Australian “femocrats” had WEL connections (although this does not appear to be as true today as in the 1980s.) In contrast, few Canadian feminist public servants (as opposed to political appointees, including advisory council members) appear to have ever had connections with NAC or other feminist political groups.

Sawer argues that the WEL and other feminist groups had, at least in the 1970s and 1980s, “relative success...in effecting change in government policies and structures.” She argues that “the Australian women’s movement manifested a relatively pragmatic attitude towards the state, in line with Australian political traditions, and perhaps benefited from that lack of a feminist theory of the state which was of concern to some feminist academics.” WEL itself has always had a generally mainstream reputation in Australian feminism, while Canada’s NAC became increasingly radicalized in the 1980s, “with internal ideological wings and linguistic and regional conflicts.” While WEL’s influence fell in the 1990s under increasingly hostile national

54 See for example Hester Eisenstein, Inside Agitators. The statement on current WEL connections is based on research interviews, including one with a longtime state-level WEL coordinator in Western Australia.
57 Jill Vickers, Pauline Rankin and Christine Appelle, Politics As If Women Mattered: A Political Analysis of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 284.
and sub-national Liberal/Coalition governments, it was not as consumed by internal debates as NAC, and has not abandoned its generally pragmatic strategies of supporting individual political candidates and the day-to-day lobbying of government.

Hence, while assertions from the 1980s about the close links between Australian feminists and governments may no longer be as valid, we can still identify some clear contrasts and see a more pragmatic tradition and more organized national body in Australia.

A different set of contrasts is evident for aboriginal peoples. Aboriginal cultures and communities were destroyed and forgotten in Australia to a greater extent than in Canada, and the Australian state never created anything close to the complex colonial system of treaties, reserves, organized bands and "Indian status" found in Canada. This has had both positive and negative effects for present-day Australian aboriginal political organization. It allows for greater solidarity between aboriginals regardless of their ancestry and historical associations, and eliminates many of the tensions between "political" and "service" organizations described with reference to Ontario and BC. But the lack of established local bands and land bases has limited aboriginals' ability to build national organizations comparable to the Canadian Assembly of First Nations. The establishment of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission by the Australian government included the creation of local representative councils, elected by the self-identifying aboriginals of each ATSIC region. But these councils have limited legitimacy, both because they are non-aboriginal creations and because they have limited powers (their decisions can be vetoed by ATSIC managers, who are usually non-aboriginal). Indeed, as in Canada, much of the political and social organization of
aborigines in Australia is based on very complex family and community ties and respect for elders -- rather than on elected officials or other transparent hierarchies.

Despite their organizational differences, the goals and tactics of Canadian and Australian aboriginals are relatively similar, as are their complex relationships to non-aboriginal governments. Both have used the courts extensively to pursue land claims and resource rights, and on occasion have turned to blockades and other means to draw attention to their demands. Both have focused their efforts at the national level, and are hesitant to enter into formal relations with sub-national governments which they do not regard as the legitimate focus for their demands. On the other hand, Australian aborigines tend to argue for "self-determination" rather than "self-government," a difference which places less emphasis than in Canada on aboriginal political sovereignty and a "government-to-government" relationship with non-aboriginal states. But this distinction is at least partly due to the lack of Australian aboriginal band councils and political structures, compared to the deeply entrenched Canadian institutions, and should not be overemphasized. Both Australian and Canadian aboriginals seek the recognition of the same basic and inherent rights of land ownership, resource rights, and control over their own social, economic and political institutions and destinies.

Overall then we can see broad similarities, but also some important differences, between Canadian and Australian feminists and aboriginals. The most important distinctions are that at least one high profile feminist group in Australia, the WEL, has focused on placing feminists in both elected and bureaucratic positions within the state, and the less developed network of political organizations for aboriginals in Australia. But the general issues and policy demands, and the larger values and characteristics of
the movements, are much the same as in Canada. Consequently, we see the same collisions of values and expectations between the worlds of public administration and social movements.

The Agencies

The histories of the two Australian states’ women’s policy agencies are similar, reflecting their parallel electoral histories. In 1977 the Victorian Liberal government created a Women’s Policy Unit. However, this unit was quite weak until 1982, when Labor came to power and upgraded it to a Women’s Policy Coordinating Unit. Western Australia had no women’s policy agency until the 1983 Labor victory, after which an Office of Women’s Interests was created.

Under the Labor governments of the 1980s, both units were located within the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and the Premier served as Minister Responsible for Women’s Affairs. Following the Liberal/Coalition victories in 1992 and 1993, the women’s policy agencies were moved to the Department of Justice, given a separate minister (who held other portfolios as well), and renamed the (Victoria) Office of Women’s Affairs and (Western Australia) Women’s Policy Development Office.58

The aboriginal affairs agencies also have somewhat similar histories, but this is due more to national political developments. As mentioned in Chapter Three, until 1967 aboriginal affairs and programs were a state responsibility, and each state had its own program-delivering departments of aboriginal affairs. In 1967 the Commonwealth

58 In December 1999 the Women’s Policy Development Office was renamed the Women’s Policy Office. However, in this study I have retained the old name to minimize confusion.
Department of Aboriginal Affairs was created, and programs gradually moved from the state to federal levels, particularly after 1974 when the federal government announced it wished to consolidate responsibilities for aboriginal affairs at the federal level.\textsuperscript{59}

In Western Australia, the first administrative changes took place in 1972, when the longstanding Department of Native Welfare was abolished and replaced by the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority (AAPA). The AAPA originally housed most aboriginal programs, but these were gradually transferred to the federal level following an agreement signed in 1974. The AAPA continued to oversee policy development and coordination within the WA government, along with land administration.\textsuperscript{60} In 1995 the AAPA was turned into the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA), although this appears to be more a change in name than responsibilities. Like Canadian agencies, the DAA has few programs but is expected to coordinate aboriginal policy across government. However, unlike Canada, the Department is not directly involved in land claim negotiations, which are the responsibility of the Native Title Unit in the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

In Victoria, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs replaced the state Native Welfare Board in 1967, with few changes in responsibilities. However, in 1974 the Ministry was abolished, most of its program responsibilities transferred to the federal government, and state responsibility for aboriginal policy given to a line department, the Housing Commission. Aboriginal affairs has remained within the Housing portfolio ever since.

\textsuperscript{59} Scott Bennett, \textit{Aborigines and Political Power} (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1989)

The current agency, Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, created in the 1980s, is part of the Housing Branch within a giant Department of Human Services. A former chief executive told me there was “no logic whatsoever” about AAV’s location in the Housing portfolio. “It’s all about the division of spoils [between ministers and senior bureaucrats]...it doesn’t have to be in any particular place.”

Both the women’s and aboriginal policy agencies experienced significant political pressures under the Liberal/Coalition governments of the 1990s, similar to those facing the Ontario Women’s Directorate under the Harris Progressive Conservative government. The women’s policy agencies in particular report losses of power and resources, as they were shunted from their central agencies to the justice departments, and pressured to justify their existence and prove their loyalties to the government.

But overall, the effects of new public management ideas and practices on Australian agencies - the focus of this chapter - appear similar regardless of party in power. While Australian political parties do differ considerably on key issues such as native title, social spending and some aspects of women’s rights, they share similar commitments to the ideas of new public management. Eisenstein notes that “the tide of neo-liberalism,” of which new public management was an important aspect, arrived in Australia in the 1980s with the economic rationalist agenda of the federal Labor party. Chappell argues that the election of a Labor government in New South Wales in 1995, after seven years of Coalition rule, did not appear to affect significantly the pursuit of managerial strategies affecting women’s policy machinery.

61 See Halligan and Power, Political Management.
62 Louise Chappell, “State Restructuring.”
In my own interviews, public servants in both states generally indicated that the change from Labor to Coalition governments in the early 1990s, while obviously significant for policies and programs, generally left the application and pursuit of new public management ideas in place. No one interviewed felt that the change in governing parties had spurred a major change in administrative practices and values across the public service as a whole, like that seen in Ontario in 1995. Thus, while the following sections occasionally look at differences under Labor vs. Coalition governments, the application of new public management principles appears relatively independent of governing party

**New Public Management and the Australian Agencies**

The remainder of this chapter considers five significant “new public management” reforms or practices which have been implemented in Australian agencies. These five reforms are:

- Business planning
- Performance measurement
- Emphasis on transferable “managerial” skills
- "Market bureaucracy" (recovery of costs, contractual relationships)
- External policy and research contracting

Although we have seen that new public management lacks a firm canon of ideas and techniques, these five practices are among the most widely accepted NPM practices, and are all increasingly found in special policy agencies. (Two other leading “techniques” not examined are decentralized budgeting -- not particularly relevant for these small agencies -- and performance pay and contracts for senior executives, which
are difficult to study for privacy reasons.) Overall, the practices selected here represent the different facets of new public management active in Australia and elsewhere in the 1990s. In the following sections, I review the effects of these five practices on special policy agencies and their relationship with the women’s movement and aboriginals. By doing so, we will see that the cumulative effect of new public management values and practices is to create even greater collisions between the worlds of social movements and of public administration.

1. Business Planning

A key tenet of new public management is the formal identification of “core businesses” and setting priorities and targets within them. Like a private business, public sector units are encouraged to focus their efforts and organization on certain specialties, and develop clear parameters, outputs and stated “returns” or expectations for these priority areas. Peter Aucoin suggests such changes constitute a clear shift from traditional public administration’s emphasis on rules to new public management’s focus on productive results - “...public management is less likely to succumb to bureaucratic pathologies when policy objectives are given concrete operational meaning through defined plans, targets and performance measures.” Such formal exercises are commonly known as “business plans.”

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64 Peter Aucoin, The New Public Management, 183.
This strategy has obvious relevance in routine service areas, where ongoing activities and goals are reasonably clear. But business planning practices are now spreading to the “craft” and “coping” central agencies and policy units, including special policy agencies.\footnote{See Jon Pierre, “Public Consultation and Citizen Participation: The Dilemmas of Policy Advice” and John Hart “Central Agencies and Departments: Empowerment and Coordination” in B. Guy Peters and Donald J. Savoie, eds., \textit{Taking Stock: Assessing Public Sector Reforms} (Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Management Development, 1998).} This has led to confusion and debate about the applicability of business planning in more fluid and uncertain circumstances.

Business planning usually involves identifying and listing a limited set of "core businesses" and fitting each of the agency's activities within them. These core businesses represent the agency's ongoing priorities, as set by agency managers and approved by central agencies and ministers - with little or no input from external activists. While at least some agencies, such as the Victoria Office of Women's Affairs, have circulated draft plans and invited public input on them, there is little evidence of formal consultations such as specific invitations to organizations to comment on the planning documents. Instead, business planning is almost entirely an internal exercise among public servants.

Let us review some examples of business plans. In its 1998-2000 \textit{Two Year Action Plan for Women}, the Victoria's Office of Women's Affairs (OWA) identified four initiatives “to target areas of concern for women.” These are:

- creating an environment where women and families feel safe
- developing women's health and family support to promote well-being
- ensuring economic security for women through enhanced employment and education opportunities
- promoting women to decision-making and leadership positions.\footnote{Government of Victoria, Office of Women's Affairs, \textit{1998-2000 Two Year Action Plan for Women}, 7.}
Under each of these areas, the *Action Plan* lists a considerable range of policies and programs that will be initiated or continued by the Victoria government - largely by other departments. This latter point is crucial, the agency must rely on actions by others outside their control, and it is difficult to hold agency managers responsible when they cannot compel cooperation. Similarly, the Western Australian Women’s Policy Development Office (WPDO) also identifies four “priority areas” in its *Government Two-Year Plan for Women 1996-1998*: “increased economic independence for women, improved safety for women, increased participation in decision-making for women, and improved health status for women, especially Aboriginal women.”

These are then linked to plans and programs in other departments, with the WPDO helping to coordinate overall policy.

The Western Australian Department of Aboriginal Affairs has a similar set of general core businesses. In its 1997-98 annual report, it lists the following four “sub-programs” or areas of priority:

- Community Planning (Information and advice on community planning and local service agreements)
- Service Provision (Management support and service delivery to Aboriginal communities)
- Aboriginal Programs (Information and advice on program development and resource allocation)
- Public Policy (Policy advice to government and Aboriginal forums).

Unlike the women’s policy agencies, these core business areas are primarily linked to initiatives and areas within the Department’s responsibility. The plans are narrower and not as dependent on other departments and units for implementation and follow-through. Similarly, Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV) lists a dozen general areas of interest, and

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68 Government of Western Australia, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, *1997-98 Annual Report*.
only commits itself to actions within the agency which are not dependent on the cooperation of other departments.  

(AAV does not have as detailed a business plan as these other agencies, in part because it is located in a very large department and thus is included in the larger department planning exercises and documents.)

The women’s policy agency business plans are particularly detailed, with explicit proposals, commitments and goals across government, all of which are to be monitored and tracked by the policy agencies. But the reality behind them is somewhat different. In interviews for this study, public servants were frank about these and similar documents and their actual value and effects on agency work.

Many women’s policy agency staff said the job of defining their activities in a few “core businesses” was extremely difficult and ultimately a very arbitrary exercise. Agency staff stressed that their activities and priorities tended to adapt according to developments, and that it was difficult to identify ongoing, multi-year priorities with any sort of specificity. As one former Australian agency head told me, “I had a definite strategy but I operated opportunistically, and that didn’t fit the corporate model.” The formal business planning templates imposed on them failed to comprehend special policy agencies’ wide range of issues and activities.

A specific problem with the women’s policy agency plans above is that nearly all the promised actions and programs are housed in line departments (i.e., “The Education Department will...”). This lack of control over outcomes is of course an inherent problem for special policy agencies - they can promise to pursue initiatives, but cannot be fully

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responsible for ensuring their implementation. The chief executive of one agency told me that she and her agency had “no way of enforcing or even monitoring” the proposals and targets within it. A former women’s policy agency head called her plans “window dressing for the government...to make women’s groups warm and fuzzy” and suggested that responsibility for actually monitoring and implementing objectives was “…given to the lowest-level officer in the department.”

Staff in aboriginal policy agencies did appear somewhat more accepting of business planning. For example, one former aboriginal policy agency head said that he deliberately picked three main functions, and decided “…let’s do these and do them well, and provide really good advice to the government and Ministers.” However, this may be because aboriginal policy agencies have a somewhat clearer policy area and overall function, and spend less time justifying their basic existence. As suggested in earlier chapters, all governments appear to recognize the need for basic policy capacity to deal with aboriginal-related issues, particularly social conditions in aboriginal communities. This gives agencies at least some flexibility to set priorities within their “business plans.”

This is not to say that aboriginal policy staff were enthusiastic about business planning and its relation to aboriginals themselves. A Western Australian public servant complained that the current Department of Aboriginal Affairs plan did not comprehend the complexity of aboriginal policy and politics:

[Other client groups] aren’t going to come in and ram...through the glass window. With aboriginal communities, they’re quite different. They’re so many grey areas and there are so many times when you can find yourself in a situation of confrontation...there are many things that just aren’t that cut and dried. They’re grey and fuzzy and you have to be careful how you handle them.
In short, both women's and aboriginal policy staff strongly argued that business planning was wholly or somewhat inappropriate for their policy area. Not only did it place undue restrictions on their wide-ranging responsibilities, but it forced them into what they considered largely meaningless planning exercises in very volatile and shifting areas of political struggle.

As mentioned, the role of women's groups and aboriginal organizations in business planning is minimal. Not only do they have little input in the exercise, but the planning documents say very little about working directly with movement activists and organizations. Instead, business planning stresses government actions and achievements. Consequently, activists do not appear particularly interested in business planning. Those interviewed were generally unfamiliar with the specific documents and argued that they were inconsequential compared to the actual decisions and policy statements made by government. Hester Eisenstein notes the internal, intragovernmental focus of business planning, quoting Mary Draper, head of the Victoria Women's Policy Coordination Unit from 1983 to 1987:

...the corporate management style placed enormous emphasis on the preparation of planning documents. This meant that public servants tended to be rewarded on the basis of writing reports. 'The fact that the women's movement were actually achieving things didn't seem to actually account for anything because we didn't have a proper corporate management plan....[and the people who wrote such plans] never stay around long enough to have to actually implement anything.'

While some public servants did appear reasonably happy with their business plans, all eight former or current chief executives of Australian women's and aboriginal policy agencies interviewed for this study had serious reservations about the exercise and

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the difficulty of fitting their ambiguous, boundary-spanning organizations within a “business plan” framework. For example, one agency head complained that, since her agency was located within the Ministry of Justice, she had been constantly pressured to produce only goals and strategies that fit within the framework of the Justice portfolio:

Those who write business plans for whole departments as big as Justice want to put us in the framework of Justice, and that’s been a bit of an issue for the [agency] for quite a while. I’ve seen it in some of the written documentation, that they’ve tried to see women’s issues as “justice issues” - frame them as Justice issues, to try to make them fit the rest of the portfolio.

A former agency head agreed that business planning ignored the agency’s historic role of straddling different areas inside and outside government: “You’d be trying to show yourself to be part of the business planning and trying to get a slant on what the [agency] was doing that was in line with the rest of the Department... to make sure that you weren’t outside.” Because new public management focuses on outputs, it looks at organizations as discrete units and attempts to assess their productivity. But this ignores agencies’ roles as coordinators and links, forcing them to justify themselves as individual production machines and/or as components of their larger department.

However, we must remember that many other public servants are skeptical or openly cynical about business planning in government. A senior Victoria public servant, who was not associated with either a women’s or aboriginal policy agency, said:

Corporate business planning provides a reasonable framework within which to talk about these things and to keep yourself honest about what outputs you are producing, what outcomes want to achieve...[But] the timing is never very good. We’re always required to finish a business plan around about the time we’ve started to think hard again. So you end up with something which is a hybrid; and they’re externally imposed deadlines and they seem to change every year anyway, so you never quite get it right.
Business planning is seen by many public servants as a necessary evil at best, and many would undoubtedly share similar concerns as the special policy agency staff quoted above. As well, it should be emphasized again that at least some policy agency staff were generally supportive of business planning. But I suggest that business planning is particularly problematic for special policy agencies because of their limited control over actual programs and outcomes, their exceptionally-wide range of potential issues and responsibilities, and the very fluid societal clientele with which they must interact.

As discussed in Chapter Two, coordination agencies have always been strongly pressured by the public administration world to select certain priorities and focus on them. Business planning is an extension of this intra-governmental pressure to choose priorities, and hence builds on the existing tension between the worlds of public administration and social movements over setting priorities and choosing some areas over others. Whether new public management is a truly separate “world” of its own, it clearly creates further problems in the relationship between the two other worlds.

Business planning forces agencies to adapt to a formal process of priority-setting that appears unnecessary and inappropriate for women’s or aboriginal issues. It focuses agency managers inward, drawing their energies toward formal planning exercises which ignore the volatility of issues and shifting resources and staff. Overall, the formal and relatively inflexible nature of business planning reduces agencies’ ability to respond to shifts and developments at the boundary between public administration and social movements.
2. Performance Measurement

Performance measures for both organizations and individuals are another major feature of new public management and "have become firmly rooted in the culture of most public sector organizations, at least at the upper levels." Large scale service organizations, such as drivers' license offices, are now widely assessed with indicators such as waiting times, number of requests processed, number of complaints, etc. Employees are also assessed through individual performance agreements and contracts—again, often quantitatively, but also through one-time goals such as producing a specified program or document. As one public servant put it, performance measures and pay are "widely derided by everyone but part of the psyche" in current public administration.

Like business planning, performance measurement has now moved into "craft" and "coping" areas. But it is difficult to identify measures and track performance for policy units, because they do not really provide ongoing services. Consequently, policy agency performance tends to be measured through one-time accomplishments such as producing a report, quantitative measures such as number of reports produced and qualitative measures that rely on fairly arbitrary criteria. These are often widely derided by public servants themselves, and generally ignored by movement activists. However, some types of performance reporting, such as the women's budgets of the 1980s, suggest that other types of measures can be useful for movements as well as public servants. In this section we look first at current internal performance measures, and then discuss other types of external measures which appear to have greater validity and utility from the point of view of movements.
In 1998-99 the Victoria Office of Women’s Affairs reported on four performance measures:

**Victoria Office of Women’s Affairs 1999-2000 Performance Targets**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Performance Target</th>
<th>Actual Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy briefs/issues addressed</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministers’ satisfaction with quality and timeliness of services provided</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Women’s Council satisfaction with the quality and timeliness of services provided</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement of strategic project milestone targets</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</table>

We will discuss the utility of these measures in a moment. A more extensive set of performance indicators is found in Western Australia and the Women’s Policy Development Office. In WA, proposed performance indicators include a significant number of *external* measures of women’s participation and status in society, as well as internal department measures (no performance scores are yet available).  

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71 Pollitt, “Management Techniques for the Public Sector,” 215.

### WPDO PERFORMANCE INDICATORS - “How we will know if we are successful”

<table>
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<tr>
<th>EFFICIENCY INDICATORS</th>
<th>EFFECTIVENESS INDICATORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Measures of how well we have used our resources”</strong></td>
<td><strong>“Measures of impact on our stakeholders”</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timeliness</strong></td>
<td><strong>Customer satisfaction</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Percentage of target completion dates met on time</td>
<td>a. Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Ministerial requests completed by the due date</td>
<td>b. Range and responsiveness of Government services and resource allocation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost</strong></td>
<td>c. Involvement of women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Percentage of target completion dates met within budget</td>
<td>d. Contribution to advancing the status of women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Total cost per Ministerial request</td>
<td>e. Coordination of Domestic Violence Action Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Benchmarked net cost of services for advancing status of women program per female in the State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Benchmarked cost of domestic violence coordination per conviction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Benchmarked cost of domestic violence education per conviction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Let us review both sets of measures. In the Victoria measures, the first target simply covers the 220 different issues and concerns identified as within the Office’s scope - the Office managed to “address” them all by devoting some time, effort or attention to each one. In the second and third measure, not surprisingly, both the Minister and the advisory council appointed by the government are publicly pleased with the performance of this government agency. The last measure, “achievement of milestone targets,” indicates that the Office met the broad deadlines for its major projects. (Aboriginal Affairs Victoria has a similar set of policy-related measures, including

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“briefs and advice provided within agreed timelines,” with a target of 85%. I asked several current and former Victoria public servants about these measures: one senior public servant involved in drafting them said the measures were “useless,” and another agreed but said “there’s no other way of doing it.” A former OWA staffer said she had worked with similar measures and that “basically, there’s no other way of doing it. What we did from time to time for policy objectives was put ‘acceptance of policy paper’ or ‘ministerial council acceptance of policy paper.’”. But she did not consider these valuable or significant. The Western Australian measures are somewhat more meaningful but still quite vague. The creation and measurement of the (left-hand column) “Efficiency” measures was described by one senior manager as “total nonsense...it’s only there because the Auditor-General insisted on it.”

The problems of trying to develop performance measures was described by one public servant working in aboriginal affairs: “[e]very year we’re under the microscope...they bring in a non-aboriginal consultant to talk to the staff, develop performance indicators that we all have to work to, and provide the stats, which mean nothing. They [just want] to beancount - the number of heads, the number of hours.” As with the business planning exercises, most public servants had strong feelings that these measures were meaningless and not worth the time and effort put into developing them. One former agency head said her performance measures had been “bullshit...I can’t even remember them”. Another senior manager said, “you have to be a bit simplistic to show you’re doing a good job.” However, opinions were not completely negative. The public

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74 Government of Victoria, Department of Treasury and Finance, 1999-2000 Budget Estimates (Department of Human Services, Aboriginal Affairs section).
servant who dismissed her agency’s own measures as "total nonsense" also said she appreciated “the discipline of going through and asking how will we know when this is done” and the “outcome orientation” brought in by new public management’s focus on productivity.

Overall, performance measures illustrate the collision between new public management’s focus on “productivity” and the values and practices of social movements. Output-based measures like “benchmarked cost of domestic violence coordination and education per conviction” (in the lower left-hand corner of the WPDO chart) are particularly confusing. Not only is it questionable whether progress against domestic violence can be measured on a cost-benefit basis, but agency staff weren’t even sure if they wanted the figure to rise or fall (it was officially meant to go down). How can “convictions” be linked to “education” - what about the intangible and more far-reaching effects of raising awareness and changing attitudes and behaviour? As the WA public servant said, these were “only there because the Auditor-General insisted on it.” By forcing agencies to generate meaningless measures, the pursuit of these standards may detract from actual accomplishments -- as one aboriginal policy agency head put it: “What you see through non-indigenous eyes as an obvious failure is often not.” And, as Christopher Pollitt suggests, performance measures may encourage public servants to focus on “scoring well” rather than actually addressing the actual issues and demands at hand. Generally, as with business planning documents, most movement activists interviewed did not consider agencies’ performance measures to be particularly significant, compared to actual actions and decisions.

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75 Pollitt “Management Techniques for the Public Sector,” 215
But not all performance measures are focused on *internal* agency operations. In the second half of the WPDO chart, the "Effectiveness" indicators focus on external, societal outcomes such as "gap between male and female wages." This is also the approach of the Western Australia Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA), which does not publish any internal departmental measures like the above, but does report a wide range of "effectiveness indicators" that focus on socio-economic conditions in aboriginal communities. The DAA annual reports give data on unemployment rates, school participation, incomes, housing status and other indicators for both aboriginal and non-aboriginal residents for each region of the state, and also track aboriginal progress over time. These indicators might be of more interest to movement activists, in part because they imply that governments are responsible for improving them. On the other hand, external measures tend to be no-win situations for the agency. If societal conditions improve, a small mid-level unit of twenty to forty people can hardly claim exclusive credit. Yet if there is no improvement or a decline, the agency appears ineffective -- a WPDO staffer called their external indicators a "huge difficulty...because we don’t own the issues, it’s quite difficult to develop measures [that reflect agency performance]."

In the past, Australian governments produced a different type of measurement and accountability document -- the "women’s budgets" -- which have been more widely applauded by the women’s movement. Women’s budgets were annual collections of reports from different government departments summarizing the impact of their policies on women. Typically a department listed all programs that it felt had different impacts on women than men, and described the initiatives it was taking to ensure these impacts

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76 Government of Western Australia, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, *1997-98 Annual Report.*
were equalized. (For example, a health department would give information not only on its women’s health programs, but also more on subtle and systemic issues such as the impact on long-term care services on women, who are more likely to be the primary caregivers for their parents.) Women’s policy agencies coordinated the collection of information and in some cases prodded departments into giving more information and/or add their own comments and analysis. (The focus was on programs, not personnel; employment equity information such as numbers of female managers was not generally included.)

Women’s budgets can be considered a more systematic and useful way of measuring government performance than the measures discussed above, since they focused on tracking year-to-year changes and developments from the perspective of women. The first such document was produced in 1984 by the federal Office of the Status of Women as part of the annual government budget, and by 1990 similar documents were being produced in Victoria and Western Australia as well as New South Wales and South Australia.77 The Victoria women’s budget, initiated in 1986, was particularly far-reaching in the late 1980s because it received considerable cooperation from departments and analyzed and commented on each department’s report.78 However, women’s budgets were generally supported far more by Labor than Coalition governments, and so the Victoria, Western Australia and Commonwealth women’s budgets were all terminated in the mid-1990s by Coalition administrations. Currently there are no women’s budgets being produced in Australia.

77 Sawer, Sisters in Suits, 236.
78 Sawer, Sisters in Suits.
Might women’s budgets be revived by special policy agencies as part of the new public management’s focus on performance reporting? Possibly, but not necessarily. Apart from political opposition, a reason for the decline of women’s budgets was that they focused more on outputs than outcomes - that is, they reported what governments were doing rather than assessing what these initiatives actually accomplished. Hence, not only do women’s budgets not fit well with the production and outcome-oriented values and norms of new public management, but also they appear to have been of limited practical relevance to women’s groups (even thought they were widely supported in principle). Marian Sawer writes:

“...the Women’s Budget Program is an effective bureaucratic mechanism for maintaining pressure on government agencies to provide gender-specific data on the impact of policies and outcomes of programs. It is not...a particularly effective mechanism for providing information to women in the community nor for selling government achievements, at least to a domestic audience.”

Thus women’s budgets had their limitations. But in some ways, the external performance measures listed above for the Western Australian WPDO and DAA might be a step in the right direction for movements, since they look not just at government outputs, but actual outcomes of interest to the women’s movement such as wage rates.

The use of performance measures to assess societal outcomes has obvious appeal to movement activists. A Western Australian aboriginal activist felt that the idea of performance measures on external, societal indicators like education rates was good. “They [ATSIC and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs] get all the dollars, so they have to be accountable.” Governments cannot simply claim credit for releasing policy papers

79 Sawer, Sisters in Suits, 231.
and enacting new programs — instead they must actually measure progress publicly on issues important to movements. It may be difficult to measure the actual contribution of the policy agency, but this is less important to movements which are focused on government outputs, not agency outputs.

This suggests that the problem of performance measurement for special policy agencies is not the general idea of assessing policy and program outcomes. Rather, the obstacle is the underlying “production” assumptions of new public management; that is, its suggestion that objectives and outcomes can be easily quantified, or assessed through qualitative categories such as “high” and “low,” and that a causal arrow can be drawn between the efforts of a specific organization and broad societal trends. The experience of women’s budgets and other external initiatives show that government performance might be assessed, measured and compared in relatively meaningful ways that could make sense to the world of social movements.

But as we have repeatedly seen throughout this study, it is difficult or impossible to assess special policy agencies’ exact contribution to policy and program outcomes. This is of limited concern to traditional public administration, which measures agencies by their adherence to public service norms such as anonymity and accountability to the hierarchy. It is also relatively unimportant to social movements, which focus on government-wide outputs and societal outcomes, not those of individual agencies. But new public management tries to create links between agency activities and final outcomes by introducing a set of ideas that stress production and measurement. These exercises are meaningless at best, and may be potentially harmful to agencies’ reputations by setting targets and expectations that do not suit their ambiguous and boundary-spanning roles.
3. Generalist Managers

A third common tenet of new public management is the emphasis on generic "management" skills rather than actual background in a given issue area. The assumption is that managerial skills for assessing and increasing productivity are widely transferable, regardless of the issue area. While this is somewhat consistent with traditional public administration practices, NPM is much more far-reaching in its assumptions about the transferability of managerial skills. This distances agencies further from social movements, which value broad, deep understandings of movement issues and actors and tend to stress their unique identities and perspectives.

The idea of appointing gifted "amateurs" with no background in their portfolio is of course normal at the cabinet level in Westminster systems, and to a lesser extent in senior public service ranks (most notably in Britain). However, the new public management makes a further assumption in assuming that most mid-level managers do not need extensive backgrounds in their departments' or units' issues. Consequently, in all the major Westminster systems, senior public servants are shuffled between portfolios almost as much as ministers, and may be hired from outside the public service entirely. This is a very significant departure from previous practices, particularly in Canada and Australia until the early 1980s, where deputies and managers normally spent their entire professional careers in a single department.80

However, while the generalist manager is an established fact across public services, it is more difficult to link the trend in special policy agencies solely to new public management. As the last two chapters illustrated, there are several examples of external managers being sent to special policy agencies with a mandate to “clean things up.” This may involve either returning the agency to the values and norms of traditional public administration, or implementing a significant shift in governing ideologies and priorities. Both goals were particularly evident in the Ontario Women’s Directorate in 1995 under the new Harris government and there is similar evidence of a “clean-up” agenda in the Australian agencies -- which does not necessarily have anything to do with new public management ideas and principles.

In any event, the preference for “managers” rather than policy specialists was clearly evident in all four of the Australian agencies in 1998 interviews. None of the current chief executives had previously worked in either the agency or other women’s and aboriginal policy and program areas (with one minor exception). The chief executive of the Victoria Office of Women’s Affairs, Debbie King, had specialized in correctional affairs and particularly the privatization of prisons; Astrid Norgard, the head of the WA Women’s Policy Development Office was a longtime Commonwealth public servant working in Immigration, social services and most recently, the Customs Service. The chief executive of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, Tony Cahir, was an economist by training and had worked for many years in housing policy (where he had some experience in aboriginal housing issues). The head of the WA Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Haydn Lowe, was previously chief executive of the Office of Disability Services, where he had held a number of positions.
In contrast, all their immediate predecessors had backgrounds in the agency policy areas. The previous chief executives of both the Victoria and Western Australia aboriginal policy agencies were both aboriginal themselves (the current ones are not), and had public service backgrounds in aboriginal issues. The previous chief executive of the Victoria Office of Women’s Affairs had been promoted from within the agency, and the previous chief executive of the WA WPDO had an extensive background in women’s issues and organizing. (Interestingly, three of these four previous heads were appointed in the early or mid-1990s by the current Liberal/Coalition governments. This suggests that although Coalition governments were more resistant to feminist and aboriginal demands, they did not choose generalist managers unconnected to the policy area.)

It is difficult to say whether the contrast between the present and recent past is due simply to a new public management philosophy of appointing generalists, or a more explicit (but not necessarily NPM-grounded) determination to appoint professional managers to “clean up.” One of the current heads told me “my training was in general management...I had a reputation as a change manager, and these skills were put to good use” in taking over as agency chief executive. These skills were identified as clarifying objectives through business planning and ensuring staff were primarily oriented toward serving government - the chief executive said “I had to jettison some things that were of less interest.” Another chief executive was described by a subordinate as having been appointed with an explicit agenda. However, in this case the main problem was identified as the poor leadership of a previous manager, rather than fundamental problems in the agency. Still, there was also a clear mandate to return the agency to existing public service norms:
[The person] came in very clearly with an agenda to clean up. And [the person] tells people that - that the organization was totally off the rails. The organization wasn’t off the rails but it was the chief, the management. There were many pockets in the organization that worked extremely well...[but the person] needed to clean up.

Whether it is exclusively driven by new public management ideas, the pursuit of generic management skills, rather than background in the issue area, clearly poses problems for special policy agencies. NPM again builds on and exacerbates existing tensions. Social movements are held together by perspectives rooted deep in personal identity and experience, and are skeptical of the ability of public servants to understand their needs and passions fully. Yet the world of traditional public administration has always emphasized career-building and “neutrality.” As one aboriginal policy staffer complained, government “...rewards a whole lot of normative behaviour and normative mainstream skills. [When considering potential hiring or contracts] they look for themselves in the aboriginal community - middle class, articulate, educated - they’re the kind of people you want to do business with. They’re people like you.” Similarly, a former Australian women’s policy agency head from the 1980s told me that she tried to hire only career public servants because “...there was always this view that the [agency] was a bunch of...loonies...I didn’t want anyone to say that the [agency] was staffed any way other than appropriate for a government policy unit.”81 In short, the two worlds have always collided somewhat over this issue.

Although the exact contribution of new public management is difficult to isolate, its emphasis on generalist managers clearly exacerbates pre-existing tensions, and in

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81 This person also said that her agency was viewed as “...a bunch of raving lesbians. Not just ‘lesbians’ - but ‘raving lesbians.’”
particular pulls agencies even further away from the orientations and expectations of movements. While traditional public administration stresses adherence to central norms and overall expectations regarding the role and activities of public servants, there is generally room for discretion in day-to-day managing. In contrast, new public management discounts the importance of detailed policy knowledge, in favour of more generic management models and skills.

For example, a person experienced in Western Australian aboriginal affairs criticized the current DAA chief executive, Haydn Lowe, for following the management practices he used previously as head of disability services. The following quotation (part of which appeared earlier) illustrates the multiple tensions between movements and the managerial, service-delivery model promoted by new public management:

[Lowe is] opening up these new local area coordinator offices, which is a disability services model, a one-stop model with sixteen new officers throughout the state. And I keep saying to them, 'in terms of dealing with disabled people that's okay, because you've got a prescriptive set of guidelines and rules and principles and certain things you can fund for and certain things you can’t do.' Disabled persons, after all, aren’t going to come in and ram their wheelchair through the glass window.

Aboriginal communities are quite different. There's so many grey areas and there are so many times when you can find yourself in a situation of confrontation...there are many things that just aren't that cut and dried. They’re grey and fuzzy and you have to be careful how you handle them.

Agencies already have to grapple with the inherent tensions between public administration’s emphasis on procedural rules and neutrality, and movements’ focus on results and grassroots participation. New public management’s exceptional emphasis on generic management approaches and skills may exacerbate and provoke greater conflict and tensions.
Hence, new public management builds on existing problems between the worlds of public administration and movements, by pulling agencies away from any obligation to hire persons with specific backgrounds in their issue areas. The pursuit of generic managerial skills is rooted in NPM's production-oriented values, not in traditional public administration's emphasis on career-building and objectivity. The result is greater collisions than ever with social movements and their different values and assumptions.

4. Market Bureaucracy

A fourth trend in new public management is the growth of contractual relationships between government units. Rather than organic, mutually dependent components of the overall government, units are increasingly separated from each other and encouraged to interact through formal contracts and cost-recovery arrangements. This practice is most widespread in New Zealand, which has developed a plethora of separate units and agencies linked through complex contractual relationships.82 Mark Considine considers this a new stage of new public management beyond simple "managerialism," which he terms "market bureaucracy."83

The clearest examples of market bureaucracy are separate operational agencies, such as the British Next Steps Agencies or Canadian Special Operating Agencies. These agencies are spun off from traditional government departments and supply services to

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government while remaining largely independent on a day-to-day operating basis. In some cases (such as passport offices), they are expected to cover all operating expenses through user fees. Some special operating agencies may also sell their services outside government (such as the Canada Communications Group publishing agency). Such purchaser-provider relationships are increasingly common, sometimes with competition between similar units, or between internal government units and potential external contractors, for “business” within government. Market bureaucracy obviously downplays the notions of solidarity among public servants, encouraging them to focus on their own individual areas. It places more emphasis on public servants’ personal achievements and career aspirations, rewarding them for performance in their narrow area of responsibility.

Compared to some of the other new public management techniques described in this chapter, market bureaucracy is not particularly evident in special policy agencies. However, some examples are available which illustrate problems with this approach; they also suggest market bureaucracy practices may become more widespread in the future. These examples show how market bureaucracy ideas encourage agencies to present themselves as interpreters of movement demands on a fee-for-service basis, even though they do not have legitimacy among most movements even to speak in this way -- much less charge fees for it.

The first example is in the Western Australian Women’s Policy Development Office. Soon after the Liberal/National parties came to power in Western Australia in

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84 See for example Peter Aucoin, “Restructuring Government for the Management and Delivery of Public Services” in Savoie and Peters, eds., Taking Stock.
1993, the WPDO began to promote itself as a consulting service to other government units, as well as to private firms. One senior person involved said that the Office “...did a strategic analysis of our competencies...” and decided that the model of a small policy development unit only marginalized women - “an office of 22 was to represent 51% of the population.” Instead, the chief executive decided to pursue a consulting model, providing “strategic advice” and “advancing the status of women by influencing... decision makers” in other public and private organizations. The WPDO was to become a more entrepreneurial unit that sold its services to others.

The agency did not wait for other units to hire its services. Instead, the agency staff studied departments’ annual reports and strategic plans on their own, and then went to the department and offered to give private advice and hold consultations for them, for a fee. The interviewee quoted above said the chief executive went to agencies with the message - “my job is to help you overcome systemic bias...so when you don’t need it anymore, we’ll leave.” To gain introductions and smooth the way, the WPDO went to what she called “boysy” departments, such as Commerce and Trade or Minerals and Energy, and to conservative women’s groups such as the Countrywomen’s Association, and “sold them on our new way of working.” The Office appears to have had some success in the Department of Agriculture, by developing a Women’s Agriculture Network and breaking down some systemically biased practices and assumptions.

However, this consulting model did not last very long. The chief executive (a career public servant with a background in women’s shelter organizing) was fired in 1996 and left the public service. The new (and current) chief executive was hired from the
Commonwealth Customs Service; she restructured the WPDO and significantly reduced the emphasis on external consulting (although she did not eliminate it).

It is not entirely clear why the consulting model ended, or why the previous chief executive was fired, but the circumstances were clearly controversial. In interviews, public servants were reticent and unwilling to say much about these events. But evidence suggests that the agency became known for abrasiveness and aggression in an area that demanded sensitivity, and required respect for public administration norms. A senior public servant within the Office appeared to have been uncomfortable with the aggressive promotion of WPDO “consulting” services: “...it’s not good for communication if we’re always goading other departments.” Two public servants from outside the Office suggested that the new chief executive, as an outsider to both the Office and WA public service, was not comfortable with focusing so much on persuading or badgering other units to retain the Office’s services, and ended the consulting model for that reason. Thus it may be that the chief problem was conflict between the values and priorities of traditional public administration and the entrepreneurial style of new public management -- quite apart from relations with social movements themselves.

No other agency appears to have taken such bold steps to reinvent itself as a market-based provider of services to other government units. However, the chief executive of an aboriginal policy agency said that his agency was becoming more aggressive at promoting its consulting services on a cost-return basis:

[My agency is]...selling the service of [being] the conduit with the community, or the advisor on issues and appropriate responses. [I want] to develop a capacity to be out there, presenting that service and forcing recognition of the need for that service - rather than reacting to some enlightened person in the bowels of Health [or another department]
saying, "Oh, maybe we should talk to Aboriginal Affairs to get a better handle on the community’s views."

But the chief executive suggested a critical factor that made his agency’s consulting services much more attractive than those of a women’s policy agency. When his agency approached other government departments to offer unsolicited services for a fee, "you’re welcomed with open arms...because there’s some big issues that are affecting all of government, and [other public servants] don’t know what the hell to do with [aboriginal issues.]" This allows his agency to provide “an approach that we believe is better than the blundering around they may have otherwise made.” But, he suggested, a women’s policy agency could make the same approaches and be ignored, since women’s issues and perspectives were not always important concerns to managers. Managers would resent unsolicited offers of advice-for-a-fee because they did not see “women’s issues” as important enough or distinct enough to require the purchase of external consulting services.

A further observation, not directly made by the public servant, is that aboriginal policy agencies and women’s policy agencies are likely to be selling different types of services. While an aboriginal affairs unit may be able to sell advice to a department on how to develop the aboriginal dimensions of policies and programs, a women’s issues unit is more likely to find success only at improving the department itself as a workplace. This was the focus of the Women’s Policy Development Office – advising on hiring and promoting women, rather than providing advice on working with women’s groups, etc.

But in both aboriginal and women’s issues, what is missing in the above discussion of market bureaucracy is the role of movement organizations and activists themselves. The agencies are portraying themselves as “experts” on the issue area and, in
the case of the aboriginal policy agency, as able to act as “the conduit” to aboriginal communities. But, as this study has shown, special policy agencies exist in the middle between the two worlds, and are often not fully trusted by either. Discussions with women’s and aboriginal activists found they were very skeptical about the ability of policy agencies to even fully understand and comprehend their needs and views, much less explain them to others.

If an agency makes modest claims about its familiarity with an issue or community, it may be able to act as a conduit and bring public administrators and activists together. But, in the push to show its “value” to government as a provider of consulting services, an agency is likely to overstate its own legitimacy with either or both worlds. This appears to have been the case with the Women’s Policy Development Office, which seems to have miscalculated its relationship with other parts of the public administration world. On the other hand, an agency such as the above aboriginal policy agency can easily overstate its links and legitimacy with aboriginal groups, leading to misunderstandings and greater tensions.

Yet the ideas of “market bureaucracy," rooted again in new public administration’s values of production, continue to encourage agencies to promote themselves in this way. The result is further separation from the worlds of both public administration and social movements, and exacerbation rather than reduction of the collisions between them in special policy agencies.
5. Policy and Research Contracting

Finally, probably no aspect of "new public management" is more controversial than alternative service delivery (ASD). Alternative service delivery emphasizes the transfer of responsibilities from public servants to societal groups and organizations through formal contracts and agreements. This can be through simple fee-for-service deals, or more complex devolutions and other arrangements with both for-profit and non-profit organizations. While proponents extol ASD as creating more dynamic, focused and efficient operations and public services, critics argue that ASD is used to justify layoffs, lowered wages and non-union labour, along with decreased levels of service.

In theory, ASD appears to allow social movements to participate more in government programs affecting them and, as suggested earlier, some similarities can be identified between NPM and movement criticisms of traditional bureaucratic structures. Movement organizations do attempt to participate more in service delivery and running programs, as can be seen in women's shelters, information services and other areas. But most movement organizations do not want to take over routine service delivery if it affects their advocacy functions, and this is not always possible in the new public management framework. Jenson and Phillips argue that in the newly evolving "citizenship regime," governments prefer movements to fill service gaps rather than lobby government on policy issues. In their words, "advocates may be out, but service

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providers are in.\textsuperscript{87} Thus, for example, organizations for people with disabilities have been encouraged to assume routine service-delivery roles, but they command limited opportunities to actually shape and influence programs and policies.\textsuperscript{88}

What are the implications of ASD for special policy agencies, which focus on policy rather than services? Because policy and research functions are increasingly put out for tender just like service delivery contracts, special policy agencies, like other parts of government, are increasingly affected by the emphasis on contracting alternative sources of policy advice.\textsuperscript{89} Seeking new sources of policy has been a key demand of new social movements; this entails greater consultation with activists, listening to their voices, and letting them define policy needs and how to address them. Therefore, social movements might be able to take advantage of this new emphasis on alternative and external sources of both service delivery and policy inputs.

For example, devolution and contracting out of services has been welcomed by at least some aboriginal groups that can take over the programs themselves. Canadian and Australian public servants working in aboriginal affairs spoke approvingly of the alternative service delivery concept, and said that it was working well in their areas. One of these interviewees was aboriginal and oversaw a highly decentralized program widely supported by aboriginal groups; in her words, "we're a living example that alternative service delivery works." However, there are obvious problems with decentralization,

\textsuperscript{87} Jenson and Phillips, "Regime Shift," 129.


most notably that aboriginals are very sensitive to long-term issues of sovereignty. Agreeing to take on some service-delivery responsibilities when policies are still set by non-aboriginal governments, may be counterproductive in the long term.

The general experiences of contracting out policy research in Australian agencies and elsewhere suggests that this new public management tenet, like the others described above, is not well-suited for either the particular work of agencies and the values, orientations and general capacities of most social movement organizations. Contractual relationships in the NPM framework tend to reduce relationships to transactions based on cost and product delivery — rather than to processes with the goal of finding substantial and long-term solutions. Hence, while activists and organizations urge agencies to spend more time listening to movements to gain information and understanding, movements are less able or willing to play formal roles as research contractors within the expectations and practices of new public management.

A key reason for this inability follows from limited capacity, resources and institutional memory of movement organizations to undertake extensive research contracts. One Australian aboriginal activist expressed her resentment at being asked to monitor and suggest new policy ideas with only small project funding: “we don’t have the people or resources. Government has all the bloody resources in the world. Why do we have to do it? Why do we have to monitor what’s going on?” Supplying short-term project funding is not enough, because movement organizations require a substantial

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organizational base, capacity and institutional memory to produce quality research and policy advice. In policy as in service delivery, non-state groups are best at highlighting problems and addressing developing crises, rather than engaging in formal research projects.

A second difficulty results from the fine line between "political" advocacy vs. "technical" advice. Attempts to seek alternative policy inputs are commonly limited to consultants who demonstrate sufficient "objectivity" or competence only in more generic management areas. (For example, as mentioned earlier, the Ontario Women's Directorate asked a private consultant in 1996 to assess and recommend changes to the anti-domestic violence system. Activists roundly denounced her controversial recommendations, such as a 48 hour limit for women staying in shelters.91) But it is difficult to see how policy advice in these areas can be kept completely separate from ideological advocacy.

Research on the downloading of service delivery has shown how "the growing emphasis on contracted services from nonprofit agencies by government is having an adverse effect on the advocacy role of such organizations."92 Organizations that interact with the state feel pressured, directly or indirectly, to abandon their advocacy edge and not bite the hand that feeds them.93 It is thus difficult to see how movement activists and organizations can play meaningful policy advisory roles that are not considered by governments to be unacceptable "advocacy," unless movements are willing to blunt their

91 Globe and Mail, December 17, 1996.
92 Shields and Evans, Shrinking the State, 100.
ideological edge. At least some groups consider this to be unacceptable cooptation. One experienced Western Australian feminist activist said she had no interest in participating in any alternative policy or service initiative under the current Coalition government, since “[t]hey’re fond of doing pilot schemes that they never continue, to show that they’re doing something.” She believed her participation – even in a neutral, “advisory” role – would give legitimacy to what was viewed as a deeply hostile government.

When movement activists are successfully retained as paid consultants on policy matters, the relationship between them and public servants differs considerably from what exists in other policy areas. The most striking and widespread example is found in Australian aboriginal policy agencies, and is worth exploring in some detail.

New public management views information largely as a discrete “product” that contributes value to a production process. But contrast this perspective with H.C. Coombs’ description of information exchange between public administrators and Australian aboriginals’ view of information -

...what is accepted as knowledge is the result of negotiation between respected practitioners. Aborigines tend to emphasize the need to negotiate the content of knowledge in particular environmental and social contexts and see negotiation as a continuing process, never finally finished, but to be activated as required.94

Furthermore, at least in most remote Australian aboriginal communities, “knowledge” is generated through a complex system of discussions in which community status plays an important role. Christine Fletcher argues that these systems are so complex and time-


consuming that many public servants assume that there is little cohesion or agreement in the community. However, she argues, aboriginal communities appear able to reach considerable consensus, when given time and latitude.95

Thus a number of Australian respondents talked about the difficulty of obtaining the best aboriginal advice and knowledge when using standardized new public management procedures. The practice of “consultancy contracts” and “paying for knowledge” is widespread in Australian aboriginal policy agencies, and has no clear equivalent in Canadian agencies.96 It appears to stem from the greater emphasis among most Australian aboriginal nations on the sacredness of certain types of knowledge and the dangers of sharing information too easily with outsiders.97 This often involves awkward negotiations, and in some cases aboriginal leaders may inform public servants that they need to know certain things, and governments must pay before even knowing exactly what they are paying for.

One aboriginal public servant said that her agency constantly struggled with demands by aboriginal leaders that they be paid to advise the unit on policy ideas and their implementation. An agency head agreed that the idea of paying for general and usually unsolicited advice was a difficult issue: “we believe the community has the knowledge, but it’s a monopolistic situation.” He went on to say:

95 Fletcher, Aboriginal Politics, 128.
96 Canadian public servants sometimes complained about allegedly high “sitting fees” and expense accounts from some aboriginal activists asked to serve on government bodies and research task forces. But they could not think of an equivalent to the Australian practice whereby aboriginal community leaders demand (or allegedly “demand”) retaining contracts to give basic advice and support to public servants visiting or working in the community.
...there’s a core of people in every [aboriginal] community who know how to deal with the government, and this is a marvelous resource to help develop policy...[But] we don’t have the luxury, quite rightly, of competitive tendering...because we support the concept that in a local community, the local community organization is clearly the best way...even if it is a monopoly.

He was not entirely comfortable with this “casual approach.” But he felt that any alternative - “you can withdraw funding, or beat your breast” – would be detrimental to aboriginal communities and their prospects for development. Another senior public servant argued that purchasing knowledge was more effective than wide “consultations” that did not recognize the complexities of aboriginal communities. In her view, “they’ve been consulted to hell.”

Although contracting for external advice is a regular practice of Australian aboriginal policy agencies, it is a far cry from new public management’s emphasis on market tendering and the purchasing of “objective” or “technical” knowledge. Instead, it is a very specific response to an exceedingly complex situation, one that recognizes the difficult relationship between the world of aboriginal peoples and the norms of traditional public administration -- not to mention the diversity of aboriginal communities and the difficulty of translating solutions from one community to another. Imposing a new public management framework of traditional cost tendering and non-aboriginal consultants would upset this fragile but working arrangement between public servants and aboriginals.

97 The Australian aboriginal tradition of keeping some knowledge secret has led to numerous conflicts. A typical example occurs when a resource company disturbs a sacred aboriginal site despite having consulted with the local community. Because sacred sites are to be kept secret, the community might not tell the resource company about the site, until it has already been disturbed and the problem becomes much greater.
Overall, these examples suggest that social movements cannot be effortlessly "plugged in" as alternative sources of policy advice, in the way envisioned by many new public management theories. While the desirability of greater external advice, participation and consultations is shared by both NPM and social movements, there are very large structural and political obstacles that prevent movements from easily providing specific policy inputs for governments. Where they do provide such advice, it is exceptional and specific to the context, recognizing the wide diversity and complexity of movements.

What this all means for special policy agencies is that once again a key new public management practice is only vaguely applicable to agencies, and not in ways that suit the NPM preoccupation with *production*. But agencies are under increasing pressure to adopt and implement these techniques, or adjust their existing practices to new public management parameters. Such tensions create further problems for special policy agencies, whose place between the worlds of traditional public administration and social movements is already precarious.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has looked at the effects on special policy agencies of new public management, showing how NPM ideas and practices have affected the relationship in special policy agencies between the colliding worlds of public administration and new social movements, and agencies' ability to adapt to these tensions. Like earlier chapters on political change and other public servants, the effects are significant.
New public management generally has one of two impacts on special policy agencies and the relationship between the two worlds. NPM may take existing public administration characteristics that conflict with the world of social movements -- such as selecting narrow priorities or transferring managers between different policy areas -- and increase or formalize them in ways that provoke even greater conflict with movements. Or, NPM may stand apart from both worlds, introducing ideas and practices such as market bureaucracy that conflict equally with the norms and values of both worlds. Either way, conflict is increased.

Some evidence suggests that new public management is not entirely incompatible with the values, practices and concerns of social movements -- such as a focus on external societal results rather than simply rewarding the following of correct bureaucratic procedures, or an emphasis on seeking outside partners. But rarely do these initiatives involve real power-sharing, which is what social movements seek. Social movement values and characteristics are in tension with new public management at least as much as with traditional public administration.

NPM practices -- business planning, performance measurement, generalist managers, market bureaucracy and policy contracting -- all emphasize productivity in certain clearly defined areas. But policy agencies rarely have such clarity either in their priorities or their ability to measure progress. In fact, policy agencies are likely to see their “productivity” as an ongoing series of small successes and more numerous failures, with as many steps backward or sideways as forward. New public management strips away much of the flexibility and ambiguity that allows agencies to adapt and evolve in this atmosphere, even though there is little evidence that this pays off through increased
agency "productivity." Hence new public management exacerbates conflict between the two worlds, and creates new problems and tensions for special policy agencies.
Chapter Seven: The Permanent Ambiguity of Special Policy Agencies

This study has shown that special policy agencies exist between two colliding worlds of assumptions and demands, have unclear and shifting mandates, and rest on unsteady political and ideological foundations. As a result, agencies are most notable for the contradictions and ambivalence that follow from their natural state of role conflict and role ambiguity.

This chapter asks: what are the probable roles for these contradictory organizations? What relationship between the worlds of public administration and social movements is likely to emerge? Are special policy agencies insignificant organizations? Will social movements and public administration always be incompatible? Or do the experiences of agencies leave some room for maneuver and optimism in the relationship between bureaucrats and activists?

I have approached special policy agencies as boundary-spanning organizations that must bridge very different values and assumptions. Because of their boundary-spanning role, agencies inevitably contain tensions and a certain level of ambiguity. These conflicts are exacerbated by factors such as political change, other public servants and new public management theories. But ambiguity and ambivalence may be exactly what is needed for policy areas that defy simple structural and organizational answers. In this sense, agencies may act as shock absorbers or lightning rods that attract and contain conflicts between social movements and public administrators.
Chapter Two discussed two different sets of institutional structures — horizontal ministries and women’s advisory councils — and their general failure to cope with pressures from one of the two worlds of public administration and social movements. Special policy agencies experience both sets of pressures simultaneously. The resulting contradictions may present many problems, but agencies are capable of absorbing considerable pressures within themselves, playing the pressures off against each other as suggested by the experience of Canadian aboriginal policy agencies in Chapter Five. This creates permanent tensions, but also provides permanent institutional paths and structures that link activists and administrators over time — allowing dialogue, understanding and sometimes even trust between the two deeply conflicting worlds.

**Agencies as Bridges**

The notion of agencies as permanent bridges between the two worlds is illustrated by the comments of agency staff. While staff come from various backgrounds and may hold quite different loyalties and senses of responsibility, most see themselves as being in the middle of things. Nearly all would agree with the statement by an aboriginal policy staffer that: “[w]e exist in this nexus, being a front door for the community to government and a front door for government to the community. It's a very difficult position to be in.”

Most agency staff see their position as a unique one, and often feel quite strongly that they have special responsibilities in these complex issue areas. A former women’s policy agency head expressed a typical feeling:

You’re very much meat in the sandwich...you have to represent the issue and what it means and what its impact is to government. And you can identify with the issues - you either do or you don’t...I don’t believe you
can be independent of an issue that you're actually working on. You couldn’t be a content-free manager in this environment.

While they came from different backgrounds and orientations, nearly all agency staff interviewed stressed they felt a very strong responsibility to try to improve the lives and status of women and aboriginals. The few that did not feel particular obligations in this way were senior bureaucrats who strongly identified with public administration values of “neutrality” and objectivity, such as a senior manager who told me: “I don’t see ourselves as advocates for women...we in government are not advocates for anyone.”

Obviously the interpretation of how to improve the status of these groups, and their importance vis-a-vis other public priorities, varies enormously among staff. But almost all staff felt they were “doing what they can.” A policy analyst under a neo-conservative government said: “Sometimes I can have - it might be quite small, but - some influence from time to time about what is looked at, if I do my bit.” Although she identified herself more as “a woman working for the public service” rather than one working “for women’s issues,” she said: “I actually do care about the issues and think, maybe we can do a few extra things if I push harder” and went on to explain some of the strategies and tactics she used to advance feminist policy goals.

While they held these general and admittedly vague obligations toward societal groups and/or social movements, most staff still considered themselves positioned in the middle, between the demands of activists and what could actually be accomplished. This middle position is often blurred and becomes more ambiguous over time, particularly as governments come and go and other shifts occur in the bureaucracy and in movements themselves.
Staff stressed that their ambiguous position forced them to be realistic about their abilities, and consequently to be patient, flexible and prepared to make compromises and tradeoffs. The junior analyst quoted above went on to say: “I feel like I’m able to manage not saying what I believe all the time when I write, because you [also] do things that people understand but no one knows about.” Another public servant said: “you know that at the end of the day the government [position] will be favoured, but you can make some adjustments along the way to accommodate the needs of aboriginal people.”

Some staff seemed to thrive on these challenges. As one agency head reflected:

“It is hard, because you’re dealing in a grey area, but that’s one of the reasons I really enjoy the job. It’s got that level of complexity...it’s a little office but it’s a hard job to manage it.” Another public servant said:

I could work in a lot of parts of government, but here it’s interesting all the time. Here they’ve got everything from economic development to arts policy, to tourism, through to people in custody...It’s very broad, and I’d find it very hard to go back to one agency and one set of issues. I don’t like that; I like a nice lateral sweep.

A third person argued that the challenge of balancing the demands of government and women’s groups was more interesting and not as difficult as her previous job, which required her to balance the detached attitude of professional public administration with the reality of peoples’ lives:

I worked in the field in Housing and that was a very different...that was the real world; I work here now [in a special policy agency] and it’s just not real; I mean, it’s real work but it’s not like it is when it’s dealing with people and people’s lives. So, I find this quite easy, compared to back then when you had to tell someone they weren’t going to get priority housing and they’d been homeless...Emotionally I find it quite easy.

But most agency staff, whether they aspired to further careers in the public service or in movement activism, felt that there was a limit to how long they could work in the
ambiguity of agencies. One former agency head, who transferred to a senior position in a different jurisdiction, said: “I think ultimately you can only have a short life in that portfolio - you’ve got to.”

Regardless of the level of personal struggles and conflicts, most agency staff stressed that they had to remain realistic and flexible in both their goals and tactics. As one manager put it: “[t]he name of the game we’re in is influencing government. So we use different strategies to advance the status of women.” A former chief executive said:

My strategy was to go with what I thought the government could wear. So if it seemed to me that the government was interested in violence against women and personal safety and we had a reasonable opportunity of not only getting some policy issues through but budgets and expenditures to follow that, I’d go on those issues. However, if you’re in a situation that we knew that money wasn’t going to be flowing or we wouldn’t be able to support the initiatives that needed to be required then I’d tend to go on more structural things such as women in employment...and it seemed to be with [the current neo-conservative] government the goal was the economic status of women and women in small business, professional competence in careers, and they were the issues that they would have most affinity with and most understanding with. And those therefore were the issues that had to be pushed as initiatives while we continued to maintain the pressure on the other issues.

Another public servant described an occasion when she worked with an outside organization on a particular objective, without full authority to do so:

They were getting to the point that I was feeling nervous, thinking “we’re going to get into big trouble” - then I thought: “Go! Go!” I think at one point I might have given them just a little too much information [smiled] - - and then they had the links, they had the contacts so that they could go for it.

But yet this does not mean that agency staff see themselves solely as movement advocates or “moles” within the bureaucracy. Rather, as one aboriginal policy staffer explained: “It’s a sort of broker role. It’s about leveraging resources in government” in ways that help aboriginal people.
As one senior manager with a strong background in the women’s movement noted: “You actually censor some of the stuff that comes to you, to help those women get what they want.” Another public servant said: “We always tried to get the message through, whatever the message was, but we’d try to get it through in a way that the Minister or Premier was more receptive to.” She went on to explain:

So if the women’s movement put up a really strong negative series of letters to the Minister and then a fifth one would come in that was saying the same things but saying things in a more polite way, I’d probably put a briefing note up to the Minister that said ‘You’ve received seven letters, and this is an example of one of them’ and give her the one which said things but said them in a more diplomatic way, and then I’d say ‘well you’ve received lots of others like that’ rather than let her see the ones that were, frankly, abusive but trying to say the same thing.

This is a typical example of agencies’ self-defined role as shock absorbers or conduits between the two worlds. Most agency staff placed great value on moderating conflicts and building links between social movements and government. Agency staff were often quite proud of such achievements and what they saw as an essential role in bringing disparate worlds and perspectives together.

**Are Agencies Fooling Themselves?**

But neither senior government officials nor movement activists may appreciate the duplicity of the above tactics. They do not necessarily want agencies to absorb conflicts and moderate demands, and may be alarmed at the role agencies define for themselves. More importantly, agencies may overestimate their actual influence and ability to moderate conflicts.
Many of the criticisms of Australian “femocrats” focused on their allegedly self-appointed role as conduits between the women’s movement and governments. Hester Eisenstein notes that, since there was no alternative mechanism, “[t]he femocrats in effect selected themselves and each other to represent the women’s movement and women in general.”1 Because of this, Franzway, Court and Connell argue, “the women’s movement questions how and to whom women’s advisers, representatives of women, are accountable” to the women’s movement.2 These concerns about self-appointment were widely evident, although not always stated explicitly, among activists (and some public servants) interviewed for this study.

Aboriginal people of course generally reject the idea that any non-aboriginal organization can be trusted to represent their interests, and so they are particularly wary of agencies that see themselves as conduits between themselves and non-aboriginal governments. As one aboriginal agency head said, “we need to advocate the interests [of aboriginal peoples], but that causes tensions with the aboriginal community...they say ‘we can quite adequately do that ourselves.’”

Are special policy agencies overestimating their ability to connect the worlds of public administration and social movements? Anna Yeatman writes that femocrats’ emphasis on pragmatism and flexibility could be exploited toward very non-feminist ends: “…the [Australian] Labor governments [of the 1980s] have proved to be adept in

1 Hester Eisenstein, Inside Agitators: Australian Femocrats and the State (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1996), 100. It should be stressed that Eisenstein is not necessarily criticizing this, but simply stating it as a fact.
harnessing femocrat energies to patriarchal strategies"³ Some of the individuals involved in creating the Ontario Women’s Directorate noted that the Directorate was originally intended to only last five years, and one former head said that the OWD had become insignificant and meaningless, because “you lose your effectiveness [when] you become institutionalized.”

Many public servants from outside the special policy agencies were also skeptical about the overall ability of agencies to build bridges and span the boundaries of public administration and social movements. This was not because these public servants necessarily disagreed with the basic goals and demands of movements; but because they felt the agencies generally overestimated their influence and standing with other government agencies. A particularly memorable observation was made by a former senior Ontario official from the NDP era, speaking of OWD staff: “Oh, you always saw them around. They wore their power suits; they came to all the receptions. But they didn’t have real power - no one listened to them.”

Even agency staff themselves sometimes questioned their actual effectiveness -- or the effectiveness of their predecessors and successors. This was particularly evident when I interviewed successive heads of the same agencies. One former chief executive, who had strong personal links with movement activists, said that her successor was too much of a traditional public servant concerned with appearing “objective,” and, consequently, “...was not very impressive and could be moved aside.” But when I interviewed this successor, she told me her predecessor sometimes “was leaning on the

political side of it in a way that really put the [agency] at risk” when governing ideologies changed. Each had noticeably different priorities and methods as the agency manager.

Yet both felt that their approach and balancing of interests was the most effective way of bridging the two worlds, and that the other approach was seriously flawed.

So can we really say that special policy agencies serve as effective and ongoing conduits between the two colliding worlds? Since it is extraordinarily difficult to measure the dynamics of policy development and coordination, we lack clear criteria to determine agency effectiveness. And, as this entire study has emphasized, agencies are buffeted and challenged by many other dynamics, such as political change, the conflicting demands and expectations of other public servants, and the values and practices of “new public management.” These suggest that, while agencies may have occasional successes at linking the two worlds, their overall record is highly mixed and difficult to assess.

It might be argued that agencies were successful in the past but have lost their effectiveness in more recent times. One common argument about femocrats suggests that their heyday was the 1970s and 1980s, before the rise of “economic rationalism” in Australia. In this view, the growth of neo-conservative political attitudes and downsizing of governments, along with the ongoing diversification of the women’s movement, all reduced the impact and importance of placing liberal feminists in the bureaucracy. One longtime public servant told me:

You were sure, when [my agency] was initially set up, that was precisely what it was for - to channel in the views of women’s groups, and it was situated in the Premier’s Department so that it could have an impact on government policy. But that was then and this is now, and lots of things have changed, including the philosophy of government. The other thing that has changed is feminism, the composition of women’s groups has
changed - that kind of organized militancy is less apparent. There have been gains, and...I think...the absorption into the [bureaucratic] mainstream of feminist concerns has probably reached its limit at this point.

According to this perspective, the problem is not the agencies themselves but the increasing tensions between the two worlds. As all political parties appear to move toward the right, and new public management values increasingly supplant traditional public service norms, the world of public administration is drawn further away from both the values of social movements, and any need or desire to engage with movements. In turn, movements continue to develop and diversify, and grow more skeptical and distrustful of government in terms of both its interest and its ability to provide solutions. As we saw in the Ontario Women's Directorate and other cases, agencies attempt to juggle these changing dynamics but can lose credibility and legitimacy with both sides as a result.

*Ambiguity and Equilibrium*

Many of these criticisms may be valid and well-placed. But they are not proof that agencies are generally ineffective and insignificant, either in the past or today. Instead, they may simply illustrate the challenges facing special policy agencies, as ambiguous organizations that span the boundaries of both worlds. Agencies are not just examples of role conflict - where different groups place clear but different demands on an organization. Agencies also exist in a state of permanent ambivalence, equivocation and uncertainty -- a condition of role ambiguity. These ambiguous, boundary-spanning roles present both problems and opportunities.
Agencies quite often do not know what is expected of them by either governments or social movements. Chapter Three demonstrated that agencies are created by governments for various reasons, and rarely with a long-term vision or plan. Similarly, it is not always clear what movement activists and organizations specifically want from agencies -- particularly as opposed to demands directed at governing officials or specific line departments. Of course, it is likely that different groups and activists will have different and conflicting demands themselves, and agencies must also distinguish between societal groups and their corresponding social movement, which are often quite different (i.e., "women" and "feminists"). Even when movement activists do not present direct demands on agencies, movements' roles may be replicated by other public servants that place equivalent pressures on agencies, as we saw with aboriginal policy agencies. As well, the nature of their work means that agencies' effectiveness cannot be fully assessed. Policy analysis, coordination and development are all inherently ambiguous roles in which few actors, including decision makers themselves, can actually trace the factors that lead to actual policies and programs.

This ambiguity is further affected by political changes, the demands of other public servants and new public administration ideas. While some of these developments may reduce ambiguity in the short term (for example, if a government comes to power with a clear idea of what an agency should be doing), their long-term effect is generally to increase agency ambiguity. Political change leads to agency inconsistency over time, and frayed relations with both worlds. Different groups of public servants will place conflicting demands on agencies, and agencies will tilt toward one or the other depending largely on political circumstances. And while the ideas of new public management can
temporarily reduce ambiguity (such as by reducing agencies' activities to a list of "core businesses"), they are more likely to create further confusion and ambivalence by imposing templates and assumptions that are either badly tailored or wholly inappropriate for special policy agencies. The net result is almost always the same — ambiguity and liminal (i.e., inbetween) identities, putting agencies 'betwixt and between' two worlds of competing values, assumptions and ideas.

However, this ambiguity can be an opportunity, not just a problem. Because they span the boundaries of two different worlds, agencies can play connecting roles such as those suggested above by agency staff. Since they are not entirely part of one or the other, they can cultivate relationships with both. It is hard to know how successful they are, and this study has chronicled many of the problems associated with role ambiguity. But it has also suggested possible opportunities and valuable roles for special policy agencies to use ambiguity to establish an equilibrium over time between the two worlds.

No other state structures present the opportunities found in special policy agencies. They are not line departments, tied to particular functions and entrenched programs, like the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. Neither are they advisory councils, nominally representative but with very limited legitimacy or influence. Instead agencies sit in a middle position, charged with working across a broad range of areas affecting their respective social group, and with more flexibility to respond to the changing characteristics of social movements than found in line departments. Agencies are also not arms-length commissions, which tend to play retrospective roles rather than policy-making ones, and which lack direct access to the bureaucracy. Instead, as regular public administration organizations, agencies have some basic access and legitimacy
inside the bureaucracy (although this rises and falls considerably). They are able to participate in actual policy making, as opposed to merely commenting on policy and program outputs after the event.

As small, flexible and unique organizations spanning the boundaries of both worlds, agencies adapt and evolve considerably in response to the different challenges and pressures placed on them. Unlike the horizontal ministries and advisory councils described in Chapter Two, agencies have not disappeared or withered away under a single set of pressures. Instead, over time they tend to play off the pressures against each other — attempting to interpret the values and demands of each side to the other. In so doing, they develop ambiguous identities and unclear orientations and loyalties. But they also at times develop a certain equilibrium between these colliding horizontal and vertical pressures. I argue that only through ambiguity and equilibrium can effective links be made between the colliding worlds of public administration and social movements. The importance of ambiguity is illustrated in each of the three empirical chapters.

The account in Chapter Four of the Ontario Women’s Directorate addressed an agency that was originally created as a clear and straightforward bureaucratic organization firmly within the public administration world. Yet the OWD appeared to lose effectiveness as a policy unit once it became caught up in the turmoils of the women’s movement in the late 1980s and 1990s. The Directorate’s early success, however, likely had more to do with fortuitous political circumstances than with its conscious attempts to fit in and emulate public administration values. When the Peterson government shifted to the right in 1987 and issues such as pay equity dropped in importance, the OWD found itself alone, since it had not cultivated relationships with
women's groups. When it attempted to catch up and build these links, it alienated the world of public administration. The Directorate never really established itself in a state of true ambiguity -- rather, it radically tilted toward one or the other world depending on the party in power. This created contradictions and tensions -- but never a real state of flexibility and balance between the two worlds.

The long-term value of an ambiguous position is illustrated by the aboriginal policy agencies examined in Chapter Five. ONAS and the MAA exist between two groups of public servants, who represent the values, assumptions and demands of either the worlds of public administration or social movements. In order to bridge the two groups, the policy agencies developed ambiguous reputations. They continue to lack the full trust of either side, yet neither side views them simply as enemies or opponents. The agencies tend to tilt toward one or the other group depending on the party in power, but in the long term, agencies have served as a terrain of struggle that balances and interprets different demands and expectations. Both sides use agencies as a potential bridge to the other side, and most aboriginal policy agency staff see this as their natural role. Thus these agencies appear to have established a tenuous equilibrium between the two colliding worlds.

The importance of ambiguity may not be fully understood until it is removed. In the Australian agencies studied in Chapter Six, we saw that new public management's attempt to strip away agency ambiguity diminished agency effectiveness. The imposition of business planning, performance measurements, generalist managers, market bureaucracy and policy contracting all showed how the work of agencies could not be reduced to a straightforward production process. By approaching agencies as simple
production machines, NPM unintentionally showed that agencies’ real roles rested in the bridging of competing values and assumptions. Agencies tend to focus on different issues as they arise and, at their best, can navigate and adapt to the values and norms of both public administration and social movements.

In short, ambiguity offers at least the potential for agencies to balance public administration and social movement pressures, developing a workable equilibrium between the two. This balance obviously depends on outside variables such as political change, the configuration of other public servants and new sets of values such as new public management. But this ambiguity is a natural product of the boundary-spanning position in which agencies are situated, and allows agencies to interact with both the worlds of public administration and social movements. While ambiguity commonly leads to suspicion and fears of co-optation among both public servants and movement activists, it also has clear potential to allow agencies to be flexible and adaptable conduits between the two colliding sets of values, assumptions and orientations. This is a role which no other state structure appears capable of playing.

It is impossible to measure definitively how effective agencies are in this role. While agency staff report many successes, there are also substantial obstacles and problems that may make agencies less successful than their employees believe. But overall, agencies appear to operate more effectively than any comparable bureaucratic institution in linking the two worlds, and offer the most promising path for long-term progress. It is up to public administrators and movement activists to use these conduits to develop better understandings and relationships between their two worlds.
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