FRONTIERS IN WOMEN’S STUDIES:
CANADIAN AND GERMAN PERSPECTIVES

Edited By
Aysan Sev’er

University of Toronto
Çıkardı, hohladi, sildi gözlüklerini ve taktı tekrar.

Okudu Ayşenin mektubunu bir kere daha.

Doymadı.

Eski mektuplarıaldi dosyadan.

... Ayşeden son sekiz ayda gelen mektuplar
Dizdi mektupları iskambil fali açar gibi üstüne masanın.

Sirayla alip okudu.

Bu, Ayşeye doğru, geçmiş zamana doğru bir yolculuktu.

Nazim Hikmet

Memleketimden İnsan Manzaralari
This collection was made possible through funds provided by:

Professor Heather Munroe-Blum:
Vice President, Research and International Relations,
University of Toronto

Professor Paul Thompson:
Principal and Dean, Scarborough College

Professor Edward Relph:
Chair, Social Sciences, Scarborough College

Professor Lorne Tepperman:
Chair, Sociology, St. George Campus

All royalties from this book will be donated to:

EMILY STOWE SHELTER FOR WOMEN,
SCARBOROUGH, ONTARIO, CANADA
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements ........................................ ix
List of Contributors ........................................ xi
Aysan Sev’er .................................................... 1
   Introduction
Kay Armatage ................................................ 15
   Humboldt Exchange
Margrit Eichler ............................................... 17
   Comment on the Humboldt University and University of Toronto Exchange
Vappu Tyyskä .................................................. 21
   Local and Global Perspectives on Women’s/Gender Studies
Hildegard Maria Nickel ...................................... 25
   With a Head Start on Equality from the GDR into the Trap of Modernization in the Federal Republic: German Women after the “Wende”
Susanne Baer: ............................................... 57
   Citizenship, Loyalty and the Ordering of Gender: On Exclusion and the Relevance of Law in Gender Studies and Feminist Theories of the State
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Collections such as this book combine interesting pieces of work from numerous scholars. However, combining diverse contributions under the cover of a single book also requires an abundance of input, resources, skills and expertise. The present work is no exception. I have many colleagues and friends who deserve my appreciation and sincere gratitude.

First, I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Kay Armatage who organized the Toronto Equity Conference. This conference opened a window of opportunity for the feminist scholars and students from both the Humboldt University and the University of Toronto to share their exciting work with one another. In addition, Kay Armatage provided ample opportunities outside of the formal presentation of papers to entrench interpersonal links over leisurely lunches and relaxed receptions. She even opened her home for a warm gathering.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to my colleague and a very dear friend, Professor Vappu Tyyskä, for her determined perseverance in organizing the Sociology portion of the University of Toronto and Humboldt University Women’s Studies Exchange. Making sociology’s presence a reality within the more general realm of the Equity Conference took many hours of her time and required her exceptional networking skills. Similar thanks are also due to another colleague and a friend, Professor Margrit Eichler from OISE, University of Toronto. Vappu Tyyskä and Margrit Eichler chaired the two sessions where the papers gathered in this book were originally presented. They also wrote their own interpretations of the importance of this exchange.
x  Frontiers in Women’s Studies

In the era of economic restraints which adversely affect universities and academic publishers alike, I also need to underscore those who helped to make this project economically viable. I would like to thank Vice President, Research and International Relations, Professor Heather Munroe-Blum, University of Toronto, for her whole-hearted support of this project and for providing funds towards its realization. Her genuine support also established a path for additional support from other academic sources. Most particularly, I want to express my deep gratitude to Professors Paul Thompson, Principal and Dean of Scarborough College and Edward Relph, Chair of Social Sciences, Scarborough College, University of Toronto. Their generous support and provision of funds, and their trust in this project, are extremely noteworthy when one considers the fact that the Scarborough College was not directly involved in the establishment of the link between Sociology and the Humboldt University Women’s Studies. Yet, both Principal Thompson and Professor Relph chose to honour my own involvement and commitment to this exchange. I also thank Professor Lorne Tepperman, Chair of Sociology, St. George Campus, University of Toronto, for his support and some financial contribution.

Last, but certainly not least, I thank my German and Canadian colleagues who generously shared their work, first during the conference, then in this book. My most sincere thanks go to Professor Hildegard Maria Nickel, Director of the Women’s Studies, Humboldt University, for continuing to be a cornerstone in the Humboldt and University of Toronto Exchange. I also thank her for her warm and encouraging words during the long journey towards the publication of this collection.
LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Patricia Albanese, University of Toronto, Department of Sociology

Kay Armatage, University of Toronto,
    Director of Collaborative Program in Women’s Studies

Susanne Baer, Humboldt University, Berlin, Faculty of Law

Veronika Busch, Humboldt University, Berlin, Department of Musicology

Margrit Eichler, OISE at University of Toronto,
    Chair of Department of Sociology

Hildegard Maria Nickel, Humboldt University, Berlin,
    Director of Women’s Studies

Anna-Katharina Pelkner, University of Toronto and Humboldt University,
    Women’s Studies

Aysan Sev’er, University of Toronto, Department of Sociology

Ulrike Stodt, Humboldt University, Berlin, Women’s Studies

Vappu Tyyskä, Ryerson Polytechnical University,
    Department of Sociology
Frontiers in Women’s Studies
INTRODUCTION

AYSAN SEV’ER

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Cross-cultural links among the scholars of the world are not new. Annual conferences of disciplinary associations which take place in different parts of the world are the most visible evidence of ongoing links. However, the links that are established through such mega-international gatherings often remain as temporal efforts. In addition, they are severely affected by changing membership due to different commitments, convenience of the selected location of the meetings, competing commitments of scholars to other conferences, etc.

A more fruitful concept is to link interested scholars from two or more locations in the world in a more enduring exchange; as an exchange between sister organizations. Advantages of the expectation of longevity are many:

1. Scholars from multiple disciplines can get together to exchange a wide range of ideas, orientations, methods and theories.

2. Scholars at different stations in their careers can benefit from the vision, experience and level of enthusiasm that each brings.

3. Mixing established scholars with specialising students can add new and exciting dimensions to the more traditional channels of teacher-learner relationships.
2 Frontiers in Women’s Studies

4. Fundamental changes in thinking can emerge when walls of ethnocentric interpretations of social issues are examined, challenged and re-challenged through new insights and enthusiasm.

5. Longer exchanges (i.e., during sabbatical leaves of scholars) among the participating institutions can add depth and breadth to teaching as well as research.

The University of Toronto and Humboldt University Women’s Studies/Sociology Exchange is a vibrant example of an ongoing exchange. Particularly, the strong links forged among social scientists through this exchange need acknowledgement. Many years of individual efforts undertaken by insightful scholars from both of these institutions recently culminated in two annual meetings. The first meeting was made possible by the extraordinary effort of Professor Dr. Hildegard Maria Nickel and her associates from Humboldt University of Berlin between May 16th and 25th, 1995. During that interchange, more than a dozen formal papers on the analyses of gendered lives, as well as analyses of women/gender studies were presented. The proceeds of these efforts have been published as a special issue of Sonderbulletin, entitled Curriculum Transformation: The Impact of Women’s Studies/Gender Studies on the University Training in Canada and Germany (1996). Moreover, during the Berlin meetings, a new link between the University of Potsdam and York University has been forged. The expectation is that the new link will be relatively permanent and the exchange will be inclusive of scholars from different orientations as well as senior students who seem to thrive on the cross-cultural fertilization of ideas.
Introduction

Humboldt University of Berlin and the University of Toronto exchange was replicated between February 28th and 2nd of March, 1997. Efforts of Professor Kay Armatage, Director of Women’s Studies at the University of Toronto and her associates made the conference possible. The conference took place under the generic title of “Equity Conference.” Within the window of opportunity Professor Armatage provided, and under the leadership and organizational effort of Professor Vappu Tyyskä, a group of feminist scholars from both universities had the opportunity to reconnect. This particular book subsumes the majority of papers presented in that portion of the conference. Contributors are scholars and students from Humboldt University and faculty and students from the sociology department of the hosting University of Toronto.

In this collection, there are eight papers exploring issues of gender/women in Germany and Canada. What is unique about the collection is that the theoretical orientations, the methods used by the authors, the subjects under scrutiny, the samples utilized and the visions manifested are vastly different. In other words, the entries in this book are not bound by rigid theoretical themes and most certainly defy stringent methodological restraints of any mainstream academic field. Instead, the contributors have freely but enthusiastically undertaken issues of gendered science, gender and the state, issues of education and pedagogy, issues of the link between thought and practice and issues relating to practice and social change. Yet, underneath all this diversity, what closely binds the individual efforts in this book is their authors’ uncompromising emphasis on women’s experiences. The papers make it crystal clear that whether we analyze the after-effects of
4 Frontiers in Women’s Studies

world historic events (such as the German unification) or other macro issues of universal or state laws and policies, we are awed by the transcendental importance of gender. Even when we take a totally different subject matter and look at how we teach what we teach and how we learn what we learn, the crucial importance of gender once again emerges. The contributions in this book clearly stand witness to the paramount role gender plays in forming relations, identities, locations in life or within national or international political realities. Even the paths for opportunity versus barriers to the attainment of advanced knowledge are coloured and shaped by gender. The entries also make it clear that dedicated women from Canada and Germany have much to offer to one another in sharing their unique gendered experiences within their respective societies. More importantly, Canadian and German women have much to gain from understanding the commonalities in their struggle while learning to cherish their differences. Thus, this cross-cultural conference lays a constructive path to improve women’s living and working conditions in our respective nations. The papers also provide new insights into the struggles of women at the global level.

During the conference, Hildergard Maria Nickel and Ina Dietzsch and Irene Dolling’s presentations addressed the changes in life, family, work and identity after the unification of East and West Germany. Although their theoretical stance and methodological approach vastly differed, their efforts merged within the vortex of gender. It is women’s, especially working women’s, sometimes improved but sometimes repressive realities that Nickel’s quantitative analysis brought to the fore. It is women’s efforts to make sense of the changing realities that are beyond their control and
women’s attempts to form an identity that Dietzsch and Dolling’s (published elsewhere) qualitative analysis brought into focus. On the surface, both papers restricted themselves to the impact of one particular point in history (German Unification) and one population (German women and their work and family lives). However, their careful analysis may expand to women’s experiences in other geographic locations and other historic points in time. For example, Canada is a host society to immigrants from dozens of different countries. It is possible to apply some of the insights from these two papers to the analysis of fractured loyalties, changing norms and expectations in family and work of new immigrants. Do immigrant women go through a process of self-construction and identity formation similar to the process described by Dietzsch and Dolling? Do women suffer from finding out that their integration is nevertheless less than complete in the political and economic climate that dwarfs them? Whether the themes I suggest are similar or not requires additional in-depth analyses. My point is that even in works particularly earmarked as “German,” we find insights and questions that may prove to be more generally relevant and applicable. Likewise, even in works that are designated as “Canadian,” one can see numerous themes with much broader applicability.

Susanne Baer’s paper is also comparative. She sets out to explore the often ignored, sometimes feared link between women and law. Her discussion centres on three exclusions: gender from law; gender from citizenship and legal thinking from feminist thought. The dilemmas she explores are many. One interesting dilemma is rooted in the attempt of the law to create “a people,” and thus to abstract (sometimes erroneously) from
6 Frontiers in Women’s Studies

existing differences a “homogeneous” group to apply to. According to Baer, this is the “gender blind law” (or race or creed blind, etc.) that often works well. The opposite side of the coin is when the generally gender blind law recognizes differences. It hierarchializes these differences, ultimately becoming detrimental to the group (women) it purports to protect. Baer also deals with issues of citizenship. According to her interpretation, the ultimate purpose of the law is to distinguish between who can be trusted at times of war and whose trust is suspect in terms of loyalty. Within such a conceptualization, however, women’s loyalty is “suspect,” and women’s existence in the law remains peripheral.

In addition to the mentioned exclusions of gender from law and citizenship, Baer also quarrels with the exclusion of legal thinking from feminist thought. With few exceptions, feminism has often shunned the legal process as just another tool at the service of male domination. She observes that there is a kernel of truth to the feminist fears. In general, lawyers have omitted some important questions (i.e., gender) by obscuring the fluidity of law and the transformations laws require until they touch reality. Mainstream academe has also contributed to the layers of exclusion by seeing the law as primarily a patriarchal tool, or by simply seeing it as a text to deconstruct. Fortunately, Baer sees a way to reintegrate the excluded aspects back into law, and law back into feminist thought. The path for this reintegration is through using women’s studies as the intellectual arbiter.

Vappu Tyyskä’s work is also located at the juncture between gender and the state. More specifically, Tyyskä explores the conundrums in children’s welfare in the First and the Third World. What emerges from her
detailed analysis is the inseparability of children’s welfare from the structure of the family and women’s status. What also emerges from her numerous examples are the intersections between class, race/ethnicity and gender as structures of constraint. Indeed, the First World problems concerning women and children are cushioned by the disproportional wealth the First World commands. Nevertheless, they are not all solved. Major shifts in women’s labour force participation and family composition affect children’s well-being. The effects are exasperated by lack of government initiatives to remove some of the burden from women’s shoulders. Children and women from ethnic and racial minorities remain at the fringe.

Tyyskä’s analysis of the Third World produces a much gloomier picture. Additional layers of constraint such as the artifacts of colonialism and internal wars, move towards urbanization and wage labour without the benefit of grounded family policies take their toll on the women and children of the Third World. Whether we look at the stubborn rates of high fertility, or the declining but still high rate of infant mortality, there are serious concerns. In the kaleidoscope of Tyyskä’s analysis, we see the needs of the street children and the transgressed rights of children whose labour and/or bodies are exploited. Moreover, we see that the way to change the status quo is through changing the status of women so that their needs and the needs of their children receive social and political attention.

Patricia Albanese also examines women’s troubles and the state. More specifically, she examines how wars, particularly ethnic wars, are fought through subjugating women’s bodies and minds. Their subjugation is rooted in the state manipulation of their sensitivity about ethnic and
familial loyalty. As a backdrop, the paper provides numerous examples of war and rape from different historical periods and from vastly different ethnic groups. Against this backdrop, Albanese introduces an in-depth analysis of the more recent war in former Yugoslavia. She quarrels with social historians, even feminist analysts who have eagerly reduced the sexual molestation and rape of women to a unidimensional gender issue. She also quarrels with apportioning blame to one side. She claims that by selecting villains and victims in the order of victors and those they have defeated, the suffering of all women is undermined. Instead, Albanese charges, women from all sides are subjugated by men and by the state. They are used as biological tools to serve the ideology of their own government which demands “ethnically pure” generations from them. They are also used as biological weapons by the ethnic ideologies of the opposite side. Their bodies are penetrated by enemy men in order to pollute the “purity” of their blood line. Aside from the physical, sexual and mental suffering they endure at the hands of their captors, they also face rejection from their own people who treat them as pariahs.

Ping-Chun Hsiung’s paper (to be published elsewhere) addressed the shortcomings of the state, on one hand, and the Western biases of the Western feminists during the 1995 Women’s Conference in Beijing. Hsiung suggested that local feminist organizations who have a deep-rooted connection with women and an in-depth understanding of their particular culture are in a better position to negotiate with the state.

Three German Ph.D candidates contributed a totally different dimension to this collection, although they too explored issues of inclusion
versus exclusion. Anna-Katharina Pelkner, Veronika Busch and Ulrike Stodt all explored aspects of the educational process itself. Most particularly, their inquiry converged on gender and knowledge generation. What was clear in their otherwise individualized inquiries is their lack of satisfaction with the existing androcentric biases in university training and their search for a more gender inclusive forum.

Pelkner’s work (in this collection) is thoughtful and comparative. She is also an alumnus of the student exchange program between Humboldt University Women’s Studies Program and its counterpart at the University of Toronto. Utilizing the insights gathered from both sides of the Atlantic, Pelkner debates the practical matters of survival, success and pedagogical integrity of gender-based inquiry. She makes insightful comparisons between the more established women’s/gender studies programs in Canada and the newly establishing ones in Germany. She also makes keen observations about the differences between the programs themselves, ranging in one extreme from an administratively complete, stand-alone version to an administratively loose variation that she calls an “add and stir” technique. Her thoughts echo the concerns that are often raised by established feminist scholars (see Eichler, 1996 and Nickel, 1996 on issues about women’s studies versus gender studies programs). Indeed, concerns about administration, boundary maintenance and membership intimately and interactively affect the raison d’être of these programs. The same issues also affect the legitimacy, funding and, ultimately, the survival of such efforts. In sum, Pelkner’s analysis is thought-provoking for all women’s/gender studies programs, especially for those that are still at their
10 Frontiers in Women’s Studies

infancy (such as the one being established at Humboldt University). Gender studies in general and women’s studies in particular need to remain reflexive enough to combat the sometimes hidden, sometimes more blatant androcentricity of the institutions within which they are placed. They must also seek a way to induce positive change within the general university structure as well as among students of interdisciplinary inquiry. Pelkner suggests forging stronger links between theory and social action. Her fresh insights as an outsider looking in as well as an insider looking out (having been a student in both universities) provide food for thought.

Although in a more confined way, Stodt and Busch also address issues of inclusion versus exclusion. Their subject of inquiry is higher education, and they add their own perceptions, thoughts, insights and wishes about what they consider to be gender inclusivity. Their discussions range from the sheer surprise of finding the relevance of gender in areas one would normally not expect (i.e., music) to philosophical as well as practical debates about whether studies of gender or women should serve as the core of interest. In their enthusiastic query, what is clear is the scarcity of instruction in the area of gender. Moreover, we glean from their discussions that even the scarce university resources dedicated towards the incorporation of gender into higher education are vulnerable to downsizing. Ironically, economic restrictions continue to pit the few existing women’s programs against other women’s programs. As these two student authors keenly observe, a more equal distribution of academic and research resources remains a dream. What is also at issue is the differential courses of action chosen by older feminists and their younger feminist sisters. In closing, both
papers call for a better integration of theory and practice as well as the forging of stronger links between social thought and social action.

The contributions from three other Canadian sociologists add expertise and insights in other areas. The substantive foci of the papers are indeed very different from one another. Yet, they all exemplify the link between sociologically sound theories and the analysis of issues relevant to women’s lives.

My own inquiry involves the degradation and suffering of women through violence. In this case, the source of violence is concrete and close to home. In this paper, the link between separation and divorce and the higher propensity for violence against women by their mates is explored. The well-established power and control model in the violence literature serves as the conceptual foundation. Numerous examples from media reports and face-to-face interviews are provided to enhance our understanding of the reasons behind the increased propensity of male violence against estranged female partners.

Ross MacMillan and Rosemary Gartner (not published here) also explore inter-spousal violence. They decipher the impact of employment on violence. First, they introduce a three-tier model of interpersonal violence which subsumes interpersonal conflict, non-systematic and systematic abuse. Then, they show complex relations between the employment of men, women (and both) and the types of abuse their model identifies. Their conclusions are encouraging. Although women’s own employment is not an absolute protection from partner abuse, it still seems to act as a buffering factor.
Bonnie Fox and Diana Worts’ study on motherhood (not published here) explores one of women’s most universal, most common, but also sociologically most taken-for-granted experiences: childbirth. Among others, an important contribution of their work is the exploration of women’s own agency in the birthing process. Moreover, they attempt to contextualize women’s experiences and clearly observe the importance of supportive partners and networks.

In conclusion, the recent exchange between the Humboldt University and the feminist sociologists has been an accomplishment. Perhaps the most manifest dimension of this accomplishment is the presentation of the intriguing papers. As my brief summary and the following entries attest to, these are indeed very strong papers on various topics relevant to women, both at the national and global levels. However, I would also like to take a moment and highlight a less visible benefit of this exchange. In my mind, this exchange is yet another positive step towards carving out space, time and energy for women’s issues within the otherwise artificially non-genderized and even androcentric wheels of the academic machine.

Until recently, feminist thought and feminist action have done a commendable job by insisting on the unbreakable link between the personal and the political. In the lightning speed at which we are experiencing globalization, the feminist debate must again take the lead by insisting that not only personal is political, but also national is international. The link between Humboldt University and the University of Toronto goes a long way in such leadership. It provides a constructive cross-fertilization of
thought and action by shedding light on women’s problems as well as by proposing solutions that overflow national boundaries.

November, 1997

Aysan Sev’er
Eichler, Margrit

Nickel, Hildegard Maria
Humboldt Exchange

Kay Armatage
University of Toronto

The University of Toronto and Humboldt University Women’s Studies Exchange was founded during the signing of an international partnership between Humboldt University, Berlin and the University of Toronto. A large delegation of faculty and administrators travelled to Humboldt with the University of Toronto president for the official ceremonies. My visit to the Zentrum für Interdisziplinäre Frauenforschung was the highlight of my Berlin journey that year. It included meetings with Professor Maria Nickel, and a tour of the resource centre. Immediately, plans for further exchange were made.

The following year, Professor Maria Nickel came to the University of Toronto as a visiting scholar and taught courses which were cross-listed in women’s studies and sociology. Her public lecture for the Women’s Studies Program, attended by a large contingent of faculty and students, addressed theoretical and strategic issues pertinent to the development of gender studies at Humboldt University.

In 1996, more than a dozen faculty and graduate students from the University of Toronto went to Berlin for a colloquium on women’s studies. This was a large group, signalling a sharp increase in participation and interest. The University of Toronto supported the exchange with travel funding. The “Curriculum Transformation: The Impact of Women’s
Frontiers in Women’s Studies

Studies/Gender Studies on University Training in Canada and Germany,” was a two-day, interdisciplinary seminar. The seminar included papers from cinema, English literature, social work, graduate women’s studies, law and sociology. It was an extremely successful exchange, with substantial collegial, intellectual and material results. One tangible outcome was the enrolment of a Humboldt exchange student in the Graduate Collaborative Program in Women’s Studies, University of Toronto in 1996-97. Another outcome was the dissemination of the colloquium papers, published in the Sonderbulletin of the Zentrum für Interdisziplinäre Frauenforschung (Autumn, 1996).

The most recent event was the February-March, 1997 colloquium presented as part of the international conference “Rescuing Graduate Studies: Equity and How to get It.” As an interdisciplinary effort addressing equity issues in topics of class, race/ethnicity, disability and sexualities, the conference fully integrated women’s/gender studies into its themes and situated women’s studies as a possible model for institutional transformation. The lively Toronto and Berlin exchange occupied a whole day of the three-day conference, and served as the forum in which the questions of theory, substance, deep structure and institutional strategies for women’s/gender studies could be addressed.

In 1997-98, the exchange will continue with a visiting scholar travelling from the Graduate Collaborative Program in Women’s Studies to Berlin. Already underway are a number of joint research projects. For the future, we anticipate continued growth in the number of faculty visits, student exchanges, joint projects and publications.
COMMENT ON THE HUMBOLDT UNIVERSITY AND UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO EXCHANGE

MARGRIT EICHLER
OISE AT UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

The conference was the second act in the University of Toronto and Humboldt University Women’s Studies/Sociology Exchange. Last year, the Canadian contingent presented some of their work in Berlin, Germany. This time, it was the turn of the German contingent to present in Toronto.

Such exchanges tend to achieve a variety of things. Looking at it chronologically, and from a Canadian perspective, the first trip to Berlin was extremely interesting, not only because it was in a city that was in the throes of extreme change (one of the points of interest was pointed out at a sightseeing tour was the “largest construction site in Europe!”) but because there were enough social opportunities to query our hosts about the university system and women’s studies in a country which had just undergone a dramatic change. Of course, many other topics were up for discussion as well.

The majority of papers given in this first leg were presented by the Canadians. One of the things that invariably happen at such occasions—and certainly happened to me personally with a vengeance—is that one learns about one’s own colleagues in one’s own university and about their fascinating work. The benefit of such rare occasions is therefore cross-cultural as well as intra-cultural.
18 Frontiers in Women’s Studies

Why is this so when we could so easily call each other up and go for a coffee right here? Usually, most of us are much too busy to be relaxed enough to truly meet our colleagues from different departments and sometimes disciplines unless there is some urgent, action-oriented reason. By contrast, meeting in another country, where most of us were strangers and where we had nothing other to do than to interact with our hosts and among ourselves—all other irritants such as ringing phones, faxes that require immediate responses, students who need immediate help, meetings that one must attend, etc. being removed—creates a different type of interaction. And a relatively small group allows for a much more intensive interaction than our usual conferences. I hope that the Germans had a similar experience when they spent some days here.

For the Canadians, it was an intellectual feast to hear the papers that were presented by our German colleagues in Toronto. These papers have a special relevance for Canadians. While all the papers were important and insightful, I want to comment here particularly on the papers by Hildegard Maria Nickel (in this collection) and Ina Dietzsch and Irene Doelling (published elsewhere).

Germany has just gone through a dramatic upheaval. The reunification of the two Germanies is interestingly called “die Wende” by the Germans, which could be loosely translated as “the change” or “the turn-around.” No one uses the term “Wiedervereinigung” or “reunification.” Everyone understands what “the change” refers to.

Both Nickel’s and Dietzsch and Doelling’s papers reflect on the effect of “the change” on German women and uncover a very mixed picture.
We find here both a macro and micro analysis of the situation. Sociologists in Germany have addressed the issue of national unity head-on. Dietzsch and Doelling provide an analysis of the personal interpretation of the events preceding and following the unification by looking at the diaries of German women and how they coped with the changes.

In Canada, we were at the time of the last referendum, at the verge of a change in the opposite direction. I remember sitting glued to the television, together with my neighbours, not wanting to be alone in watching the results. The process being such a cliff-hanger, there were actually times when we held hands to give each other strength and support.

The day after, I talked with my class about the referendum. Everyone had had similar experiences. People had watched television together. They were in contact via e-mail and telephone. Many of the students (this was an all female class) had had physical symptoms of stress: one had had a severe belly ache, another a headache and so on. Yet, did we sociologists document this? Did we explore diaries or even find out whether women kept diaries of this event? Do we have an analysis of what a separation of Quebec from Canada would mean for women? Not to my knowledge!

While it may seem that a separation and a coming together of two previously separated parts of a nation are very dissimilar, both represent changes of great import that are necessarily accompanied by major institutional changes. Such institutional changes will impact on everyone, but presumably differently on women and men.
Quite apart from any possible Canadian parallels, Nickel’s comparison between the structures of equality and inequality in the two former German states and their current shape presents an illuminating case study of the interconnectedness between family and economy and how these are affected and mediated through state policies.

Overall, we have much to learn from our German colleagues as to how to address such issues. The exchange with Humboldt University has helped this learning process appreciably.
LOCAL AND GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON
WOMEN’S/GENDER STUDIES

VAPPU TYYSKÄ
RYERSON POLYTECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

The first session in the workshop of the University of Toronto and Humboldt University Women’s Studies/Sociology Exchange had three interconnected themes: 1) curriculum development in women’s/gender studies, 2) women and the state and 3) feminist research and practice in the international and comparative setting.

Based on the traditional slogan, “personal is political,” of the feminist movement, the first three presentations offered perspectives on the status and development of women’s/gender studies in Germany. The presentations by Veronika Busch, Ulrike Stodt and Anna-Katharina Pelkner were both subjective and analytical, offering insight into curriculum development. All three presenters expressed an interest in another traditional issue in discussing the location of women’s/gender studies within universities. The debate goes on between the proponents of independent, free-standing programs and those who favour an integrated or interdisciplinary program. Acknowledging the ground-breaking work done by previous generations of women, Veronika Busch went on to note her frustration that feminists engaged in this discourse are divided based on age and generational differences. In addition to these distinctions, Pelkner addressed a much debated problem in the development of academic
programs, i.e., how to keep academic women grounded in the problems that are part of feminist activism.

That there is more work still to be done, despite the efforts of our foremothers, was a point raised by all three presenters. Ulrike Stodt’s graduate student experiences at different universities in Germany echo those of many others who have found courses in gender studies either poorly developed or completely absent. She finally chose to attend Humboldt University, where the Center for Interdisciplinary Women’s Studies offered the kind of program that was missing elsewhere. However, she has been somewhat frustrated by the growing pains of that program, as well as by the slow pace at which the sociology program in particular is adopting gender perspectives into its general curriculum.

Ulrike Stodt further directed our attention towards differences in the issues/topics that are debated by feminists in Germany as opposed to North America. The international comparison was developed more fully by Anna-Katharina Pelkner, specifically in relation to Germany and Canada. Whereas women’s/gender studies have been a part of curricula in Canadian universities for about a quarter of a century, our German sisters are still struggling to secure a foothold for an institutionalized women’s studies degree program. One positive example is the Humboldt University Gender Studies Program, scheduled to start in 1997. Finally, Pelkner put into words the general concern with the diminishing role of the state in supporting education. The funding problems that are now hitting universities in both countries are likely to have adverse effects on areas considered to be less important, such as women’s/gender studies.
Pelkner’s concern with the role of the state in the lives of women serves as a thematic link to the other papers in this session by Patricia Albanese, Susanne Baer and Ping-Chun Hsiung. Although diverse in their topics, all of these presenters offered new insight into the gender aspects of state policies both in national and international contexts.

Patricia Albanese and Susanne Baer raised important concerns regarding patterns of inclusion and exclusion of women in the notion of citizenship. Patricia Albanese (paper included in this collection) discussed the role of women in nation formation in the new and conflict-ridden states of Bosnia and Croatia.

Susanne Baer (paper included in this collection) raised the question of citizenship in the context of laws that exclude women in three particular ways: 1) the exclusion of gender from law (the assumption of a non-gendered homogeneity of citizens); 2) the exclusion of women from citizenship (the gendered nature of citizenship based on assumptions of loyalty, the ability to fight for one’s country and masculinism); and 3) exclusion of legal thinking from feminism (the lack of attention to law as a potential tool for women in general and feminists in particular).

Within the theme of the state, there is also the issue of the relationship between the women’s movement and the state in different countries. Following Baer’s point about national identity being a part of gender identity, Ping-Chun Hsiung (paper will be published elsewhere) critically discussed the process of social construction of Chinese women by Western women that took place in connection with the Fourth Women’s Conference in Beijing in 1995.
Following the theme of international comparisons, Vappu Tyyskä’s submission to this collection addresses the global problems involved in evaluating children’s welfare. In the underdeveloped “South” many countries bear the legacy of colonialism by the industrialized “North” and suffer from the inequalities in the global distribution of wealth. One strand that unites the discussion of children’s well-being worldwide is that the status of children has to be related to changing family structure and, thus, to the position of women.

This session came full circle in directing attention to the difficulty involved in creating mutual understanding across international divides and the need for sensitivity in feminist comparative research and in global feminist action. For this reason alone, it is essential that more links be established between women across the globe. The papers presented in this second workshop of the University of Toronto and Humboldt University Women’s Studies/Sociology Exchange are exemplary in this regard. The exchange program holds the potential towards the development of collaborative projects that advance our analytical understanding of the issues faced by women globally and enhance our capacity to act locally. In the era of globalization, it is imperative that programs such as this receive the support they richly deserve.
It is already a banal commonplace to claim that women are the real losers in Germany’s unification. Public perceptions of this, however, are no longer as dramatic as they were. The question of why East German women suffered quite specific consequences so quickly and lastingly seems to have been dealt with by a set of plausible, sober explanations. First, we hear, it is only now that we have begun to recognize something which already existed before—social inequalities which reshaped the gender relationship to women’s disadvantage during the German Democratic Republic (GDR). There was a “secret syllabus” of gender socialization which, for all the propaganda about equality and a “head start” compared with the Federal Republic to the West (Geissler, 1992), favoured the male sex in many ways and was now subtly offering men more opportunities in the market economy.

Second, the women as losers theory is being explained and also defused by suggesting that, in the interests of children, the sexes have always adopted a different approach to employment and are different in their capacity for labour. In addition, companies in the new federal states, like anywhere else in the free market world, are responding with gender-oriented strategies to a new economization affecting all realms of life. Third and last, all this,
apparently, just happens to coincide with a recession and its inevitable cuts. The slowdown has made investment in social policies seem like a luxury. The situation, understandably did not improve and probably exacerbated the conditions for combining female employment outside the home with motherhood and family commitments. This argument serves to dampen and assuage the women as losers theory and also presents gender discrimination in the German labour market ultimately as a “normalization,” a necessary adjustment to the modern era.

My basic thesis, by contrast, is the following. On the one hand, the women as losers theory is correct, and the fact that it has lost its dramatic impact in public discourse is a disaster for the women concerned. On the other hand, however, it is only partly correct. If, as is usually the case, it is only applied to East German women, it falls short. And if we regard the consequences of German unity exclusively or predominantly as a loss for women, that is wrong too. I would advocate a more differentiated approach to the consequences of the “Wende”.

However locally specific developments in the new federal states may be, they also exemplify the restructuring of employment and labour in the wake of capitalist modernization. This is particularly conspicuous in Eastern Germany, but it symbolizes a universal trend. The modernization of advanced industrial societies opens up opportunities for individualization for women as well as men and it conceals traps, especially for women. It is accompanied by a new gendering of labour and of social inputs. The gender relationship is also being restructured as part of this process.
German Women after the “Wende”

The essence of this gender restructuring is that, against the backdrop of a structural crisis of capitalism in Germany and elsewhere, gender inequalities are being powerfully reinforced to the detriment of women. Scarce resources are being distributed anew, and “gendering” is one way in which this redistribution is mediated (Knapp, 1993). Formerly “definite” gender attributes, such as the so-called “female occupations,” seem to be dissolving into “indefinite” attributes and reforming. Rigid polarizations between men and women appear to be growing more flexible. The boundaries of gender are opening up, but at the same time new lines of inequality are being drawn. No doubt the dismantling of tradition is also generating gains for women, but these are not enough to constitute a trend towards equal distribution of resources. Indeed, it indicates tougher struggles over distribution and increasing social differentiation between men and women, but also between women. Women’s labour is structured by a “double socialization” (Becker-Schmidt, 1987). Especially as the distribution battle heats up, it remains informed of conditions and hegemonies which pursue the logic of capital, again and again creating a gender hierarchy. Moreover, it is the pattern of male employment, untrammeled by reproductive labour and family commitments, which still determines what women do and where and to what extent they shall be granted admittance.

The signs are becoming more persistent that this trap of capitalist modernization, including the privatization of reproductive services, is no longer a problem for women only. Among the topics of everyday discussion in Germany are compulsory insurance for care in old age, the lack of care
provision, the fall in the birth rate and legal coercion to give birth, “new motherhood” and the growing poverty of single parents and large families.

TWO FORMS OF EQUALITY?
WOMEN’S POLICY IN EAST AND WEST

In a nutshell,¹ the differences five years ago can be summarized as follows. For girls and women in the GDR, the future, despite its ambivalence and problems, seemed to be clearer and more reliably plannable than in the Federal Republic (Metz-Göckel, Müller and Nickel, 1992). Official policy responded more cohesively to the dual orientation of the female sex. Social policy interventions supported women spending a full working life in employment, but did not really challenge a gender division of labour, a traditionalism in gender relations. Quite the reverse; the gender division was reinforced both within the home and outside. The forty-year history of women’s policy in the GDR can be divided into three stages (Frauen im mittleren Lebensalter, 1993:31-32).

Stage 1: Integration of women into the labour process (1946 -1965)

Ever since the GDR was established, the integration of women into “social production” was considered the foremost and most fundamental step on the road to equality. It was in keeping with the traditional ideas of the proletarian labour movement that this policy was seen as the guarantee of women’s financial independence and of their intellectual and political autonomy.
Only the world of employment, it was claimed, could liberate women from the “yoke” and the “slavery” of housework and give them an opportunity to develop their abilities and talents to the full. Female labour was a major resource for the socialist planned economy. Occupational activity provided a structure for the life of society and was deemed a core element of the socialist way of life for women as well as men. Though this stage essentially reached its culmination in the almost universal integration of all women of working age into the world of employment during the sixties, it provided the major orientation for the GDR’s policy on women right until 1989 (see Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Women of working age (in thousands)</th>
<th>Women in employment (in thousands)</th>
<th>Proportion of women in employment (percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>6182</td>
<td>3244</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>5011</td>
<td>3312</td>
<td>66.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>5257</td>
<td>3848</td>
<td>73.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>5074</td>
<td>3962</td>
<td>78.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Stage 2: Training and upgrading (1963 -1972)**

Special higher education programs for women, an educational offensive and the training of a larger number of women for technical
occupations were to turn formal equality in the labour process into genuine equality between the sexes (see Tables 2 and 3).

This stage of women’s policy was accompanied by an expansion of child daycare facilities and a broad-based campaign against the traditional division of roles in the organization of housework. Family law was reformed to accord with the new understanding of women’s role.

Table 2: Women in Higher Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Proportion of women among university and college students (percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1949/50</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952/53</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960/61</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969/70</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970/71</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>48.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>50.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Proportion of Women by Discipline (percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Med</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Eng</th>
<th>Eco</th>
<th>Lang</th>
<th>Teach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>52.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>61.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
German Women after the “Wende” 31

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Med</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Nat Sci</th>
<th>Eng</th>
<th>Eco</th>
<th>Lang</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>67.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>73.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Med = Medicine, Math = Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Eng = Engineering, Eco = Economics, Lang = Languages, Teach = Teacher Training

Stage 3: Compatibility of career and family (1971 -1989)

Falling birth rates and rising divorce rates since the mid-sixties led to successive modifications of women’s policy. Step by step, it became a policy geared to families and mothers (one year’s paid leave after the birth of a child, loans at reduced interest upon marriage, shorter hours for working mothers, etc.). This shift of emphasis was conducive to polarization between the genders (Nickel, 1990), as reflected in huge income differences, different career patterns and positions and different time resources for women and men (Frauenreport, 1990).

Seen as a whole, this form of gender policy in the GDR provided a degree of protection for women while also imposing restrictions on them. It did have emancipatory aspects in terms of the sheer number of women involved in paid employment and a relatively high degree of economic self-sufficiency. It gave the GDR “a lead over the Federal Republic on the equality front” (Geissler, 1992). Among other things, this was reflected in the fact that, as of 1989, 75.6% of all women of working age were in employment, 87% had completed some form of vocational training and 90% of working women of childbearing age were also mothers, being able to rely on the almost universal provision of child-care facilities (Nickel, 1993).
The GDR’s above discussed lead actually amounted to “patriarchal equality.” By that I mean emancipation “from above” equality which had been shaped on women’s behalf rather than fought by women themselves. It also implied cultural stereotypes supportive of a paternalistic and patriarchal gender structure and reproduced the traditional patterns in gender relations. The latter was one of the reasons for the growing divorce rate, programs to assist families notwithstanding. The contradiction is only superficial since women chose divorce as a way of rebelling against their husbands’ traditionalism. The GDR’s gender policy has changed women, but has had little effect on men. At the same time, however, these “changed women” were still subject to the constraints of traditional gender structures and cultural stereotypes. This contradiction was largely ignored at the public level, but became all the more manifest at individual and personal levels. Rising divorce rates went hand in hand with a high incidence of remarriage. The dissolution of traditional forms of gender relations culminated in the restoration of similarly structured relations in the second and third families.

East Germans still attach major importance to the family today (Gysi and Meyer, 1993; Keiser, 1992). A simple East-West comparison of marital status and number of children is sufficient to reveal not only similarities but also differences in private lives between the two parts of Germany. According to Meyer (1992), the major feature common to both East and West Germans is that, although the monopoly once enjoyed by the nuclear family has been relativized, it remains the yardstick and model for the family orientations of most Germans (Meyer, 1992:283). The following developments have been common to both parts of Germany:
German Women after the “Wende” 33

- a trend towards smaller families;
- a general reluctance to marry and a growing number of births to single mothers;
- a growing number of separations and divorces accompanied by greater reluctance to remarry;
- an increase in the number of second and third families, i.e., more frequent fluctuations in family members as a result of divorce and remarriage;
- a growing number of women who are in employment or willing to work, particularly mothers;
- a pluralization of family and household forms (Meyer, 1992:283).

If we look at the differences, the following picture emerges. While the proportions of married (70%) and divorced (9%) East Germans are both higher than in the West (64% and 6%, respectively), the number of single persons is considerably higher in the West than in the East (28% versus 19%, Keiser, 1993). There are also major differences between the ages at the time of marriage and childbirth. In the late eighties, on average, GDR women were 22.7 and men 24.7 years old at the time of their first marriage. The average age at marriage among West German women and men in 1990 was 25.9 and 28.1 years, respectively. About 50% of East German women had given birth to at least one child by their twenty-second birthday. By the time they reached the age of twenty-five, GDR women as a whole had given birth to 75% of their children. As many as 90% of East German children
were born to women under thirty (Gysi and Meyer, 1993). The proportion of East German households with children is 64% versus just 52% in Western Germany (Keiser, 1992). There were very few women in the GDR who had no children. Even women in top management positions usually had at least one child (Frauen im mittleren Alter, 1993: 256). Finally, there is a large proportion of single parent households in Eastern Germany, namely 10.8% of the total versus just 7.7% in the West. About one-fifth of all children in the East grow up with one parent as compared to no more than 11% in the West. Single parents in the GDR were almost invariably women, while in West Germany, men accounted for 11.7% of the total (Grossmann and Huth, 1993:139).

Alongside the pluralization of private lives and a trend away from traditional forms that were common to both East and West, traditional patterns persisted in gender relations in the GDR. This was reflected, among other things, in the division of housework. Although almost all women, like men, were in full-time employment, the time spent on housework was uneven. In the early eighties, over 60% of women were doing two or more hours of housework per day (38% up to two hours). In contrast, 50% of men spent one hour or less per day doing housework. A third spent between one and two hours, and only one in seven over two hours (Frauen im mittleren Alter, 1993: 258).

For all the contradictions, discrepancies and indisputable multiple burdens shouldered by women, the salient feature of emancipation in the GDR is that it allowed a career to be reconciled with motherhood—the compatibility mode—so that women were financially and legally independent
of their male partners. On the one hand, it is correct to say that traditionalism persisted in gender relations and roles. In addition, social polarization implied a high degree of gender segregation in employment as well as an uneven distribution of resources and power between women and men. Yet, it should not be forgotten that there was a relative equalization of the gender relationship on the economic level, which was supported by a largely complementary, relatively less hierarchical structure.

For the original Federal Republic, we can identify four stages of women’s policy (*Frauen im mittleren Alter*, 1993: 20-22):

The first stage, from about 1966, combined traditional elements with aspects of a modern women’s policy. Family and career were perceived as fields of activity for women and, albeit half-heartedly, acknowledged as such. Part-time work and the “three-phase model” became a political issue and found proponents. The “nature of woman,” however, was still equated with motherhood and care for the family, and the dominant model was the housewife/mother (*Frauen im mittleren Alter*, 1993:20).²

At the second stage, starting about 1972, vocational training and employment were seen as an established part of women’s lives alongside family duties. The women’s policy of the seventies was associated with an expansion in education and sought to provide equality of opportunity through education. The image of women enjoying freedom of choice (career/family) and the right to self-determination was expressed in bolder terms. Women’s policy at the start of the seventies also had a stronger economic orientation. Emancipation was the end, and the means to this end were equality through education and paid employment. Proposals for a
reform of legislation on marriage and the family centred on a partnership between women and men (*Frauen im mittleren Alter*, 1993:21).³

At the third stage, approximately from 1976 to 1980, attention still centred on freedom of choice for both sexes and the discussion of equal opportunities. At the same time, greater prominence was given once again to the family domain. The “compatibility of family and career” took on added political significance and was no longer discussed just in terms of the three-phase model (*Frauen im mittleren Alter*, 1993:21).⁴

The debate on the “new motherhood” (from about 1979) marks the fourth stage. A neo-conservative policy on women now sought to amplify the role of the family. Women’s policy became synonymous with family policy. The emphasis was less on the freedom of choice between family and/or career. Instead, the concept of new motherhood was coined to draw women’s attention more closely to their “nature” again. This policy focused less on working women as a group. As a result, individual strategies employed by specific women and the subjective decision between a family and a career replaced the concept of reconciling the demands of a career with those of the family by means of social policy.⁵

The trend towards a pluralization of relationship patterns associated with the modernization of life forms in an industrial society has continued, neo-conservative concepts notwithstanding. Changes such as a growing reluctance to marry, rising divorce rates, the postponement of marriage and childbirth, an increase in childlessness and a break with traditional family structures (in other words, changes in marriage and the family) seem to be
initiated mainly by women. Meyer and Schulze (1993) refer to the following processes in the original Federal Republic.

First, there has been a general increase in the proportion of women in paid employment, particularly married women and mothers. This is due to rapid economic growth in the postwar years and the associated sectoral shifts in the labour market. The proportion of working women increased by almost 10% between 1960 and 1991 (from 49% to 58%), and the increase was attributable to a larger number of part-time jobs (36.4% of all working women are currently employed on a part-time basis, Meyer and Schulze, 1993:167). The largest growth in jobs for women has been in public services and retail.

Second, women have benefited from the reform of the educational system. It has led to a much larger supply of well-trained labour, although improved educational opportunities for women have not translated to a commensurate improvement in their prospects in the labour market.

Third, both processes—integration in the labour process and educational opportunities—as well as the growing instability of partnerships and the associated risks to social security, have led to changing attitudes among girls and women. Now, most seek to remain in employment as long as they are of working age, with only a brief interruption for the birth of a child. In reality, however, women’s careers do not lend themselves to better planning than they used to (Frauen im mittleren Alter, 1993: 24). They are ridden with discontinuities and risks, so that it remains doubtful whether women will be able to earn their own livelihood. “For West German women, having a family entails a conflict-ridden decision between motherhood and
38  Frontiers in Women’s Studies

a career, which has never confronted East German women in this form” (Meyer and Schulze, 1993:168). The proportion of women in employment before the collapse of socialism underlines this dilemma.

Fourth, and finally, the changes are also seen against the background of more liberal sexual morals since the sixties and the decoupling of female sexuality and motherhood. These changes have given women much greater choice in planning their lives and in choosing their relationships.

Unlike the GDR, in West Germany, women themselves achieved, “from below,” the progress in terms of equality between the sexes. Indeed, the conflicts inherent in women’s “dual role” were articulated in public with the emergence of the women’s movement, and gender relations became a public concern. It follows that one might expect to find a greater public sensitivity to the gender structure in West Germany than in the East, but acceptance of equality between the sexes is more symbolic than genuine. Actual gender relations are still marked by huge differences in income, highly hierarchical structures, social inequality and women’s economic dependence on male partners at least when they give birth.

TRENDS: FIVE YEARS AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF THE GDR

Through its accession to the Federal Republic, the GDR abandoned its legal system. The new provisions which were introduced in their place implied major social changes for East German women. The new provisions also eroded the “lead on the equality front,” and for many women a levelling down, a negative adjustment to Western inequality became unescapable.
German Women after the “Wende” 39

For women, the change or the integration of the GDR society into the market economy of the original Federal Republic has been associated with an entirely new context. There are also demands of a completely new quality and kind of change.6

The institutional constraints of a labour market functioning according to the laws of capital have suddenly been extended to that part of Germany which had a centrally controlled economy for forty years. The controlled economy had implied predictability, postulated equality and functioned by means of a paternalistic welfare policy. The unification of Germany introduced economic dictates into all relationships and activities, efficiency criteria for planning lives. The latter affected and changed women’s situations in particular. Peter A. Berger was quick to spell out what few wished to acknowledge at the start of the unification process. Institutions as legal entities may be abolished or established to a precisely defined deadline, but the recruitment of new members of instrumental organizations, and the upgrading and retraining of “old” ones, is a time-consuming and slow process. The rate of adjustment to the new conditions declines proportionately to the extent one “moves away from the systemic sphere of instrumental social institutions and towards established practical orientations, cultural patterns and norms” (Berger, 1992).

We have very little research addressing the intertwining of these two “time frames” characterized by different speed and logic. But we can say this: while the institutional pressure to adjust takes rapid and radical effect, day-to-day actions and everyday awareness will adjust more slowly and gradually. What can be cemented under these circumstances of values
conducive to women and their emancipation—and these include above all women’s employment and a right to earn their own livelihood—is currently impossible to forecast with any degree of accuracy. The united Germany will witness a diffusion and equalization of lifestyles and dispositions, albeit ones which lack equilibrium and are hegemonical in structure. This also applies to the gender relationship. We are more likely to see a process of falling into line with West German standards than pressure for reform in the other direction, although this will not be entirely absent either. The thesis that East German women are the losers of German unification needs to be qualified in this context. In the process of transformation, state-controlled institutionalized biographies and standard female life cycles, which were typical of women in the GDR, give way to “the individualized performance principle with the resultant need to put on a show” (Beck, 1990). Individuals must “find their way through the maze of options with its hidden constraints, piece together their own biography” (Beck, 1990).

The advance in individualization also manifests itself as a mass break in biographies affecting the different generations and sexes in Eastern Germany in different ways, redefining dividing lines and affiliations. At the very least, traditional forms of life that were typical of the GDR are restructured. It is possible that what were once profoundly institutionalized biographies will take on a larger element of self-choice and self-determination. Seen from this angle, East German women would also be beneficiaries of the transformation. Modernization in this sense stands for a pluralization of options, a differentiation of outlooks and forms of private life, an individualization of women’s biographies. On the other hand, this
modernization process brings with it new structural constraints: a labour market under growing pressure, moves towards deregulation of welfare, and a new formalization of job recruitment conditions. In other words, developments will likely restrict women’s options. In this sense, modernization also means developing female adjustment strategies which minimize individual risks and avoid the traps of modernization. The individualization of women’s standard biographies also implies a restriction of the scope for action more closely in keeping with the dictates of efficiency, and a social dividend in terms of opportunities to enjoy a share of society’s economic, political, cultural and social resources.

**Reshaping employment structures**

The integration of almost all women in the employment system in the GDR had been accompanied by a close association between genders and specific, polarized fields of work. It did little to change the relatively constant sex-specific segregation of paid employment (Willms-Herget, 1985) of the previous hundred years. In some cases, it had actually amplified segregation (Quack et al., 1992).

There was also little change in the typical characteristics of female employment, such as lower income, poor promotion prospects and fewer opportunities for women to put their qualifications to benefit. At the same time, the relatively consistent separation of female and male domains in the employment system limited direct rivalry between the sexes. Despite the problems and the concomitant structural discrimination against women, developments in employment patterns, which would have constituted a crisis
under other conditions, still provided an effective barrier to the shedding of mainly women’s jobs during times of recession (Hakim, 1992). It was to be expected, therefore, that the segregation of the employment system inherited from the GDR would have drawbacks. For example, it might give certain groups of Eastern women the advantage of “playing on home ground,” notably those in the (still) prospering branches (i.e., services) and those with the right qualifications.

Women have been over-represented among the unemployed since June 1990, accounting for two-thirds of the jobless population. This is an important sign that the reform of the economic system in the new federal states is not at all blind to gender. Moreover, re-entry into the employment system is a particular problem for women.

Looking at specific flows in the labour market, the risk of redundancy that is associated with gender is not the main problem. The problem is the different prospects for men and women finding new work. There is actually nothing to suggest that appreciably more women’s jobs than men’s have been lost in the new federal states. While it is true that more women’s jobs were shed between 1990 and 1991, the reverse was the case a year later (Holst and Schupp, 1993). Major differences emerge, however, when we look at those changing their place of work (including East Germans commuting to the West of the country). Only 16% of women managed to find a new employer between 1989 and 1990, as against 27% of men.

While the demarcation lines and zones precluding open rivalry between the sexes in the new federal states have not yet disappeared, they have been eroded. Structural shifts in the employment system are reflected
in an ongoing transformation of specific branches, with individual sectors witnessing a sometimes major change of profile. These shifts are accompanied by the recharting and redefinition of gender-specific segregation lines. There is a general trend common to many different sectors towards successive reductions in the proportion of women employed. This trend has been observed regardless of the prospects facing the branch concerned (contracting, stagnating, prospering). The trend is also true for typically female and typically male fields of employment. Schenk anticipates the following scenarios combining displacement and exclusion processes (see also Schenk and Schlegel, 1993).

1. Typically female branches in the GDR (retailing, banking, insurance, other services) will become mixed branches. Women in the new federal states do not stand to profit in the same way as their West German counterparts from the growth in the tertiary sector which has now gotten underway in the East. In the GDR, jobs in these areas—mainly because they were poorly paid—were neither attractive nor lucrative, which is why they were so readily accessible to working women. Now, given the general pressure on the labour market and the changing significance attached to these fields of employment in particular (Hüning, Maier and Nickel, 1993; Hüning and Nickel, 1993; Thielecke, 1993), men have increasingly set their sights on these areas. Men are also enjoying the lion’s share of the benefit from the growth in employment in these areas.
2. Mixed branches (what remains of the manufacturing industry, agriculture, transport/railways/post office) are tending to become male-dominated. In addition to the service and welfare sectors, manufacturing industry was an important field of female employment in the GDR, accounting for about 40% of the total. These areas now employ a much smaller workforce, and two in every three job losses have been sustained by women.

3. Branches that were typical male preserves in the GDR (mining and extraction of primary fuels, building, metal manufacturing, electrical engineering) are closing their doors to women, so that their recruitment prospects are slim indeed. A survey of employment patterns in the construction industry, for example, reveals that men account for almost all new recruits (89%). The metal manufacturing and electrical engineering industries present a similar picture.

Against this background, a conclusion can be drawn that the restructuring of the gender relationship and the cementation of gender-specific inequalities of opportunity are taking place at two levels. On the one level, occupational employment, having become scarcer, is being redistributed to women’s disadvantage. On the other level, successive “gender changes” are occurring in different fields of employment, so that women are once again pushed into less promising, more insecure and less attractive careers.

This also seems to be encouraged by the fact that the “lack of sensitivity” of East German women when it comes to perceiving imbalance
in gender relationship has now turned against them (Nickel, 1993). Being “male” remains an important evaluation and personnel recruitment criterion. In addition, initial studies indicate that personnel policy decisions against women are sometimes based on motives which are conspicuously reminiscent of women’s image of themselves (Hüning, Maier and Nickel, 1993; Thielecke, 1993). Both sexes perceive men to be mobile, flexible and able to work under stress, rather than women with a dual burden. The cultural reappraisal of performance and its association with men has been made possible because it is accepted by quite a few women.

Gender-specific differences can also be found in career positions. “As early as the spring of 1991, there were hardly any women left in management functions” (Holst and Schupp, 1993: 4). This is reflected in growing income gaps between men and women in the new federal states. In October 1992, the average gross earnings of men working in industry (including construction) were DM 481 higher (as against DM 298 in January, 1992) than their female counterparts. The retail sector, banking and insurance present a similar picture. The difference in income was as much as DM 511 in October 1992, as compared with DM 322 in January of the same year (Sozialreport, 1882:23).

**Adjustment strategies: Balancing the gains and losses**

The gender-specific adjustment conflicts and disparities in the new federal states cannot be adequately explained by the internal logic of the labour market and the resultant selection processes. There are no substantial differences in the employment conduct of men and women to account for the
sudden massive restructuring of the employee system along gender lines. East German women are still as inclined to work as they ever were, and pressure on the labour market continues from women who have been forced out of paid employment. East German women, moreover, continue to see the theoretical possibility of reconciling a career with a family, production with reproduction, even if the process is no longer uninterrupted. It would also seem that continuous occupational activity for women is a matter of cultural experience, for East German women and men alike, something they take for granted when planning their lives (Frauenreport Land Brandenburg, 1993). The latest studies show wide differences between East and West German attitudes to women’s employment. As many as 93% of East German men consider it a matter of course that their partner will work full time if they have no children at home. This compares with just 75% of West German men. Moreover, 54% of East German men do not see a child under three as an obstacle to their partner’s working part time, while just 21% of their Western counterparts share this view. In fact, 76% of the latter believe women should not work under such circumstances, as compared with just 37% of East German men (Dannenbeck, 1992: 244, 246).

For most women in the new federal states, withdrawal from occupational life was not due to family reasons but resulted from the involuntary loss of their job. “From 1991 to 1992, there were hardly any employed women (0.7%) who took advantage of their right to leave to look after their children” (Holst and Schupp, 1993:6). Finally, a number of analyses demonstrate that women in the new federal states—contrary to the stereotypes constructed by themselves and others—really do show mobility
and flexibility in adjusting to new work situations, improving their qualifications and working on job creation schemes and projects to stay in the labour market (KPSW Reader *Erwerbsarbeit und Beschäftigung im Umbruch*, 1994).

Clearly, the restructuring of the “gender system” (Knapp, 1993) underway in the new federal states can only be understood if we take a closer look at the strategies behind the actions of those affected, the “doing gender.” It emerges that male and female stereotypes are actually less standardized than many research findings suggest. The *idée fixe* which forms the basis for the legitimation of segregation and hierarchies along gender lines is described only in part by the substantial features of males and females. It may be important that gender stereotypes derive from their basically dualistic form, their ability to express distance and relationships of dominance associated with different “contents” (Knapp, 1993:31).

The coping strategies employed by women indicate that the transformation process is perceived on the strength of previous social and cultural norms and dispositions, predating German unification. The experience of this transformation is by no means identical for all East German women. Thielecke, for example, found three typical strategies for coping and adjusting in his analysis of the insurance sector.

First, the East German women employed here include a “high performer type.” This characterizes those women who see the risks associated with individualization in employment as an individual opportunity. Their lifestyle corresponds closely with male standards. It seems compatible with a partnership, but not with motherhood, and is much
more common among younger women than older ones. Excellent vocational qualifications coupled with the experience of “never having pushed their abilities to the limits in the GDR,” of having been restrained, seem to motivate these women to make enormous efforts on the occupational level. For example, one of the interviewees said,

over the past eighteen months I have felt happiness and success like never before in my life. It is like flying. Really... I have become a workaholic through and through... maybe I was not exploited so much in the past. I can’t really say, but I feel better now. Now I’m certainly being exploited, and I do it gladly. I stay till ten or eleven at night and don’t ask for extra pay... I do it voluntarily, feel good about it, get a kick out of it, and the company also benefits (Thielecke, 1993:129-130).

Second, the largest group of East German women are those with a “normal” biography (motherhood) who seek to achieve a balance between occupational and family commitments. These women fight for their jobs, but without any career ambitions: “I don’t want to have a career. It’s too late for that. I just want a job which I enjoy” (Thielecke, 1993:134). These women do have an order of priorities. Fighting for their job may involve family concessions, but must not be entirely to its detriment. What the family can reasonably be expected to bear is discussed in the family. This group of women seems to be able to rely on support from their partners and on a large degree of male acceptance for the tried and tested “compatibility” model.

Finally, there is a third type of woman spanning all generations. This type lacks orientation, has no definite ideas about employment, has few if any vocational qualifications, prefers to wait and see and will typically lead a highly traditional lifestyle. This type of woman—possibly anticipating
no real chance in the labour market—is quick to agree to settlements which mean the end of her working life. For example, she will often prefer redundancy pay to a possible change of job.

Seen as a whole, these and other findings (Hüning, Maier and Nickel, 1993) point to a broken transition to new gender-specific structural patterns and a transformation of social inequality structures which differ according to the group concerned. In the context of fiercer struggles for a slice of the social cake—as stressed at the beginning—it will accentuate the disparities between men and women. It will also give rise to a growing differentiation between various groups of women. Unlike in the GDR, these lines of differentiation will be defined by social features like motherhood or childlessness, single parenthood or partnership, number of children, etc. It is not by chance that women, and East German women in particular, are still over-represented among the “potentially underprovided groups.” The national poverty report identifies households with a large number of children in both East and West Germany as the “group most at risk” (Hanesch et al., in Hanesch, 1993).

Women as individuals can offer resistance to the structures which place them at a disadvantage, and the findings show that some do resist doggedly, and thus seek to escape structural disadvantages in the labour market. But this does not change the structures themselves. There is clearly a hierarchical relationship between (social) structures and (individual) action, as the transformation process seems to demonstrate.

At the same time, there is much to support the thesis that individuals are capable of activating considerable potentials to limit externally induced
processes of change. These potentials may call into question the functioning of structural connections and their power to shape reality. The rapid decline in the birth rate and growing gaps in the consensus between the generations are clear warnings which are increasingly making themselves felt.

The differentiation of new social inequalities will take place in the context of structural changes, on the one hand, and group-specific options for action, on the other. The outcome will be decided by the strategies employed to cope with the new situation and the availability of resources. In the final analysis, as Kreckel remarks with respect to the (abstract) gender relationship, it is “only empirical experience which can tell us how people come to terms in social practice with the structural anomalies that affect them” (1993:59-60).

The fairly steady rise in women’s employment to date, the continued individualization of social problems, combined with a gender-polarized distribution of opportunities and burdens associated with the modernization of industrial society, may work less well than in previous orientation and transformation phases. Declining birth rates and a fall in the number of marriages and divorces in the new federal states show that there is a price to pay for this individualization. Now, East Germans too are seeking to minimize the individual risks involved in their plans for life. In the final analysis, production and reproduction must remain compatible not just for women but also in terms of the connections which run through the society as a whole. The debates on the crisis in caring for the sick and changes in generative behaviour are perhaps the first signs of this cost and an expression of a new potential for social conflict. It may turn out that
structures do not primarily or wholly lead to adjustment. It may also give rise to externalization processes and resistance, especially when the changes are enormously at odds with individual plans in life. Social security through one’s individual livelihood and welfare—still derived mainly through paid employment—is becoming increasingly important for women. Even now, it has replaced marriage as a lifelong provider, equalizing the burdens in the fundamental conflict between productive and reproductive work. The conflict cannot be solved through the hope for social cushioning in the family group, even if to lend support in this way seems to be greater than sometimes suggested (Bertram, 1992; Frisé, 1993; Optionen der Lebensgestaltung junger Ehen, 1992). The state is called upon to enact the social policy provisions. The present provisions require a large measure of reform if we are to prevent the modernization of the Federal Republic from falling into the trap it has created.
52 Frontiers in Women’s Studies

REFERENCES

Arbeitsmarkt-Monitor für die neuen Bundesländer. Umfrage 5/92 - Tabellenband. Beiträge zur Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung, Nuremberg

Beck, U.

Beck, U.
1990 Ein Deutschland der Ungleichzeitigkeiten in die Tageszeitung, 24 Dec. p.5.

Becker-Schmidt, R.

Berger, P.A.

Bertram, H. (ed.).
1992 Die Familie in den neuen Bundesländern, Opladen.

Berghahn, S.

Bericht der Bundesregierung über die Situation der Frauen in Beruf, Familie und Gesellschaft, 1996.

Dannenbeck, C.

DIW-Wochenbericht 15/92

DIW-Wochenbericht 19/92
German Women after the “Wende” 53


*Frauenreport*, Berlin 1990

*Frauenreport Land Brandenburg*, Ministerium für Arbeit, Soziales, Gesundheit und Frauen, Potsdam 1993


54 Frontiers in Women’s Studies

Hakim, C.

Helwig, G. and Nickel, H. M. (eds.)
1993 *Frauen in Deutschland 1945 - 1992*. Bonn/Berlin: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung and Akademie Verlag

Holst, E. and Schupp, J.

Hüning, H. and Nickel, H. M.

Hüning, H., Maier, F. and Nickel, H. M.

Hüning, H. and Thielecke, F.

Keiser, S.

Knapp, G.A.

KPSW Reader Erwerbsarbeit und Beschäftigung im Umbruch 1994.
Kreckel, R.

Kreckel, R.

Meyer, Thomas

Meyer, Sibylle and Schulze, Eva

Metz-Göckel, S., Müller, U. and Nickel, H. M.

Quack, S., Maier, F. and Schuldt, K.

Schenk, Sabina and Schlegel, Uta.

Thielecke, Frank

Trappe, Heike
56 Frontiers in Women’s Studies

Willms-Hergert, Angelika

1985 Frauenarbeiter - Zur integration der frauen in den arbeitsmarkt.
Campus Verlag, Frankfurt, Main.
German Women after the “Wende”  57

NOTES

1 We now have a number of comparative analyses concerning the position of women in Eastern and Western Germany: Geissler, 1992; Jugend, 1992; Helwig and Nickel, 1993; Friedrichs and Steinrücke, 1993; Frauen im mittleren Alter 1993.

2 See Bericht der Bundesregierung über die Situation der Frauen in Beruf, Familie und Gesellschaft, 1966.

3 See Bericht der Bundesregierung über die Massnahmen zur Verbesserung der Situation der Frau, 1972, and Zweiter Familienbericht, 1975.


5 See Dritter Familienbericht, Die Lage der Familien in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1979.

6 For a comparison of the women’s policy context in East and West Germany before unification see Heike Trappe, Veränderte Rahmenbedingungen zur Vereinbarkeit von Berufs- und Familienarbeit (Annex 1).

7 I draw here on the points made by Sabine Schenk, which were published in an essay by Nickel and Schenk, “Geschlechtsspezifische Differenzierungsprozesse im Erwerbssystem” in KPSW-Reader: Erwerbsarbeit und Beschäftigung im Umbruch, Akademie Verlag, Berlin 1994. See also Schenk and Schelgel, 1993.

8 The decline of about 60% in the birth rate in the new federal states since 1989 indicates that it is no longer always possible to achieve this in practice given a deterioration in conditions for reconciling occupational and maternal commitments.
CITIZENSHIP, LOYALTY AND THE ORDERING OF GENDER:
ON EXCLUSION AND THE RELEVANCE OF LAW IN GENDER
STUDIES AND FEMINIST THEORIES OF THE STATE

SUSANNE BAER
HUMBOLDT UNIVERSITY

Citizenship is a reborn topic of the 1990s. Loaded with new hopes for civil societies in Eastern Europe, loyalty became an issue with the rise of communitarianism, and orderings of gender are genuinely a gender studies topic (as we seem to have to prove every other day), of not yet even fully understood importance. This paper is an attempt to bring all three aspects of current political thought and action together. It is also an attempt to redraw attention to the law, particularly in a discussion of women and the state. At the same time, I want to see us escape the call of the syrens of law as a defining code of our lives, and to turn the escape into a constructive rewriting of laws. We must not run away from law in fatal ignorance of the power behind and in it, but to engage in discourses to change—or recently coined: to deconstruct—laws, to constantly re-do them in striving towards justice.

The focal point of this discussion of citizenship, loyalty, and orderings of gender is exclusion, or inclusion, depending on the perspective one has. Law, as we will see, does not allow everyone to take any perspective one wants in this context. There are three dimensions of exclusion which seem to be relevant here.
First, there is exclusion of gender from law and rechtswissenschaft (legal science). In this regard, I want to draw attention to the traditional forms of legal thinking—the German version, although the differences between Germany and Canada are significant—a common law versus a continental law system, a different state and ordering of the academy and theorizing. Further research is needed on how relevant these differences are in a gender sensitive context.

Second, there is the exclusion of women from citizenship. In this context, I want to demonstrate what feminist jurisprudence can do. The analytical tools developed from and with feminist theory in law will allow us to move beyond the narrow focus of traditional legal thought, as well as beyond the limited focus of socio-political and cultural analyses alone.

Third, and as part of the limited focus just mentioned, there is the exclusion of legal thinking from feminism. In an admittedly self-critical context, I want to open the discussion about the relevance of legal questions to and in gender studies, about the necessity and possibility of integrating such questions into our work. In a way, I would like to motivate us to be a little more bold with the law. People within a common law tradition tend to have less of a problem with this than us civil law Continentals, but people in academic discourse with an emphasis on text may sometimes underestimate the institutional and thus specifically powerful characteristics of law.

EXCLUSION OF GENDER FROM LAW
The issue of citizenship is looked upon by traditional jurisprudence from a very particular perspective. By citizenship, I mean what is in German *Staatsangehörigkeit*, the legal belonging to a state and *Staatsbürgerschaft*, which is a more or less clearly defined participatory status of those who belong. The core issue behind discussions of citizenship is that to build a nation-state you need a people, and to have a distinct people within an entity which one may call a state you need citizens. Therefore, you create citizenship as a *modus vivendi* for some as distinct from others, from “the other,” the outsider, the foreigner, often the woman, from non-citizens.

Historically and today, two categories of people, us and them, we and the other, citizens and non-citizens, have not been enough. External exclusion has been supplemented by internal distinctions. In ancient Athens, political theorists defined full and half citizens, the latter partly consisting of women. From other systems we know of property-based distinctions between citizens, and in today’s Europe, we know the citizens of the European Union as well as citizens of each member-state within it. On the ideological level of legitimating exclusion from citizenship, gender-based distinctions—I will return to them—are present on all those levels.

To create a people to constitute a state, law abstracts from our differences and forms homogeneity. When it comes to Canadians or Germans before the law, there is, by definition, no race, no class, no gender, but only “a people.” In the context of citizens as legal subjects, this is what was meant by colour-blindness as the legally proper attitude towards racism, what our constitutions dream of when section 15 of the Canadian Charter or
Article 3- III of the German Basic Law state that there shall be no distinction or discrimination based on such characteristics or attributes.

However, to traditional legal perspectives, the homogeneity of a people, or in German a *Volk*, is not created by law, but is a fact law portrays and reacts to. From the traditional point of view, differences are not only ignored (as feminist work in history, sociology, and political science shows) but also obscured up to the point of outright denial that they exist. But since law is a means to transport recognition, to create the “us” and to expel the “them,” law’s obscuring of differences leads to the exclusion of gender from law itself. At the same time, whenever law recognized the gender difference, it lead to a hierarchization of gender which has been, and still often is, detrimental to women. All of that, again, is rarely noticed within a traditional perspective on law.

Next to the homogeneity of the people; another core issue in law of citizenship is who belongs, who fits in. Throughout the world, states regulate and define who does and who does not. Contrary to much public belief, such regulations tend to be increasingly similar since all face the global challenge of mass migration. The myth is that particularly German law is based on ethnic criteria, the *ius sanguinis* or law of the blood alone, and that traditional immigration and thus multicultural nation-states like Canada define citizenship according to *ius loci*, the law of the place of birth alone. Looked at in detail, both countries did and do combine elements of both legal principles.¹³

German citizenship law, in Article 116 of the constitution, defines as German anyone with German heritage, born or married to a German. In
addition, German law allows for state authorities to grant citizenship based on permanent residence, economic independence, integration into German culture. Article 16 a of the basic Law allows some immigrants to stay based on humanitarian reasons. De lege lata, Canadian law operates on similar grounds. One important difference between the two is that in Canada one may have a right to citizenship, while in Germany it is a question of government authority to grant citizenship to those who apply. The more important barrier which excludes people from German citizenship is its strict policy of avoiding multiple citizenship; this, however, is also an issue of international law.

The perspective of traditional legal science allows us to see and analyze such regulations and to even criticize them using the standards of constitutional and national or international human rights law. This offers much, but it is not always sufficient. The premises and self-presentation of traditional legal science often obscure what is done in strictly legal terms. To analyze national immigration law from a constitutional or human rights perspective, the latter has to be established through the interpretation of broadly termed norms. For example, the sentence “all men are created equal before the law” needs significant refining before it can tell us that a rule forbidding a homosexual partner to stay in the country of his lover while a man who marries a citizen there does not have to leave violates basic as well as gender-equality rights. This work of refinement, this interpretation, is far advanced and well developed in the German tradition of a legal science, but it is also particularly well designed to produce the “purely legal” myth of a
political objectivity rather than admitting that it may be a partly blind, quite specific way of reasoning, in the case of gender, for example.

To use a recent example, we could look at the debates about the reforms of immigration law in Germany. For quite a while, and in the course of a development into a factually yet not legally multicultural society of Germany, left-wing politicians demanded a quota-based immigration law which, as they thought, would allow for a more fair system of immigration. The ensuing political debate was intense, revealing and accompanied by legal commentaries quite representative of the state of the art.

In this discussion, a typical piece of work on immigration law tells us that the constitution does not allow for a move away from the recent *ius sanguinis*. It tells us that the constitution guarantees a homogenous German identity needed for stable democracies and that the parliament cannot change that.\(^{15}\) More progressive lawyers argued that we need homogeneity to make sure that the Basic Law, the German constitution, is accepted. The German Federal Constitutional Court explicitly said that German law does not require anyone to give up his own cultural personality,\(^{16}\) but that it asks for a certain degree of integration. From the perspective of most legal scholars, the German constitution is oriented towards assimilation.\(^{17}\)

Now, it is not a problem to hold that opinion, but how this is expressed is a problem. The typical lawyer says, “This is the law.” But there is no such thing as “the law” with only one possible interpretation, with uncontested meaning. Therefore, the constitution does not necessarily direct us towards a system of immigration primarily based on family ties. The constitution also allows for arguments with a stronger emphasis on the
principle of diversity and pluralism. In terms of method, it would be more true, and different from traditional legal arguments, it would open and structure rather than close a discourse if lawyers would be more explicit about their particular ways of reasoning. In addition, it would allow for a clearer analysis of the institutional responsibilities which enable some, for example judges, to say what the law “is.”

Traditional perspectives on law, and typical law talk, thus tend to obscure the political aspects of jurisprudence; this is particularly obvious but not exclusive to the continental tradition. This is not to say that law and politics overlap or are even the same. It is meant to indicate that there is no law speaking for itself; political decisions make the law and attempt to create specific social orderings. Interpretations of such law are informed by specific interests. As long as lawyers obscure the transformations law has to go through until it touches reality, legal science or jurisprudence will exclude certain questions. In particular, it will not ask some questions extremely relevant to our understanding of the ordering of gender in the state.

The International Court of Justice stated in its most prominent citizenship case of Nottebohm in 1955 that citizenship is “a legal bond having at its foundation a social fact of attachment, a genuine connection of existence, interests and sentiments.” From an interdisciplinary gender studies perspective, one may now ask more questions than lawyers traditionally do. For example, it is not clear whether and what kind of bond or what kind of homogeneity we need and for what. In addition, one may ask whether it is possible to call for some basic bond and not continue a
history of male bonding (Kreisky) in the formation and structure of states? Another question is whether there really is a social reality of attachment, of bonding, which transcends all the differences we try to cope with today—like race, class, and gender—and whether this national attachment really extends to our interests and sentiments. Differently put: Does one feel differently as a Canadian or does one feel differently as a German, and regarding what? Then, one may ask, how much difference do we have to accept, does the past teach us about the dangers of unqualified acceptance of difference when we look at the horrifying effects of an emphasis of difference, particularly as a legitimation of genocide, but also as so-called rationalization of sex inequality.

EXCLUSION OF WOMEN FROM CITIZENSHIP

When we look at citizenship from a non-traditional, thus not “purely legal” perspective, we see what I introduced as the second dynamic of exclusion: the exclusion of women from citizenship as such. An analysis of justifications for exclusion from citizenship from the perspective of feminist jurisprudence, a method based on power-focused research not focused on females and males, reveals several reasons to believe that citizenship has never been universal. The justifications at issue are loyalty, the ability of citizens to fight for their countries and masculinism.

Justifications of the denial of citizenship rights surface in debates about migration. In Germany and Canada, fear of migration is a topic on the political agenda. In both countries, attempts are made to close the doors to immigrants. However, Canada needs immigration to replace emigration to
the United States, a factor often ignored yet nevertheless unchanged over time. In contrast, Germany is already densely populated and has no next-door neighbour attracting that many people. Therefore, and for many other reasons, emphasis is differently placed, motives differ and much more importantly, immigrants’ realities differ. However, the theoretical and ideological background of this debate has some common characteristics.

One characteristic of the debate about new rules for or against immigration is its focus on loyalty. The issue might resonate in Canada with the recurring question of Quebec and its loyalty to Canada as a whole, or the loyalty of the Quebecois to Quebec in the first place. Questions of loyalty inform much political activity around secession and unity, and thus are a vital ingredient of statehood and of a state’s people (citizens). It is no coincidence that some of the communitarian extensions of liberalism use Quebec as an example of the communities at issue.

Today, the issue of loyalty surfaces when discussions of immigration law focus on nationals from other countries who apply for a second home, for dual citizenship. In international as well as in German law, multiple citizenship is to be avoided at all cost. A few months ago, a German court decided that a Turkish man who does not want to give up his Turkish citizenship for economic reasons cannot get a German passport even if he is married to a German woman, has lived in Germany for over thirty years and is culturally completely assimilated. The reason behind such decisions is that in case of conflict a person who is a citizen of two countries at war with each other faces a dilemma since he does not know whose side to take. His loyalty is torn. However, this loyalty is not a genuine feeling of real people,
but one constructed by law. It is loyalty to father and motherlands which has been established as a core element of citizenship in theory and law because this loyalty is exchanged for the protection a state is supposed to give to its people. It may be interesting to note that if someone is German by birth, nobody asks for the level of his or her loyalty.

More generally, it is questionable whether loyalty is the central feeling of people towards Canada who live in Canada. In more homogenous societies like Germany, it might be easier to adhere to that idea, yet even there loyalty might be reserved for smaller entities than whole nation-states. An immigration law which asks people to give up their loyalty (i.e., their passports and citizenship for one state and replace it with another) and which does not allow for a reality of complex biographies with multifaceted, if not even split identities, loyalty is legal fiction, which is fiction with a specific force.

When we look at the second universal characteristic of citizenship law, it turns out to be inherently male. Citizens who populate the various states of the world are men, not women. In this context, loyalty is a male thing and women are excluded. Loyalty is not only defined as a feeling which manifests itself in a decision to be part of only one state, but these rules are made to not have people face dilemmas when nations are at war. The dilemma thus arises in cases in which warfare of nations corresponds to a duty of the nation’s citizens to fight. Ultimately, the contract between the state and its people, which so many believe to be the basic legitimation of state authority, is based on this willingness to defend the state in exchange for the state’s willingness to defend its people. In this contract, it is not only
historically and conceptually men who subscribe, but it has been and still is men who do the fighting. In Germany, the constitution itself prohibits women to serve in combat, and women are not subject to the draft. Therefore, our loyalty can never be proven by risking our lives. This might be seen as an advantage to women, but it also has the detrimental effect of creating second-status citizenship, at least in theory, and in many instances even in practice.

Although it has been part of legal reform towards equality in many states of the Western hemisphere, another characteristic of citizenship law not to be easily abandoned as history is its outright masculinism, or simply its male focus. This can be seen in legal systems which only allow for a transfer of citizenship rights from men to women they marry but not from women to men. It can also be seen in systems which allow for a transfer of citizenship from the father, not the mother (and thus not for children of single women), or which do not allow for the exercise of various qualitative elements of citizenship, ranging from the vote to electability into office, to education, to access to speech.

In sum, we have seen three universally known characteristics of citizenship law—loyalty, the ability to fight and masculinism—all of which exclude women from citizenship and participation in democracies. It is no coincidence that our first dynamics of exclusion, the exclusion of gender from legal thought, informs a law which excludes women from socio-political existence.

EXCLUSION OF LAW FROM FEMINIST DISCOURSE
The third exclusion I want to point to in this context is, in a way, home-made. It is the exclusion of law from feminist discourse. In the wake of feminist analyses in social sciences, and since the beginning of the women’s movement, law has been seen as a “master’s tool that will never dismantle the master’s house,” to use a famous phrase from Audre Lorde. Therefore, feminism’s attitude towards law was, to say the least, an attitude of scepticism. In part, this attitude found its rational foundation in real life experience: attempts to change social structures by going to court or to the legislature proved largely unsuccessful. Losses in court and the watering down of legislative initiatives towards equality provided too many arguments for those who saw law as a men’s thing, inherently male, not of much use for women. It is an entirely different statement when Catharine MacKinnon says that it is sort of a miracle that women still use law despite the discrimination which stems from it, and that law is a tool to be used despite its inherently, epistemologically, male character.

Feminism largely started with a scepticism towards legal questions. Later, there seemed to be sociological and psychological evidence to support the sceptical position. Not only do women use law less than men, but women think differently than men about law and justice. At a closer look, however, those assumptions cannot be upheld. As to the use of law; a system which never thought of women as subjects or agents lacks opportunities for its use. Therefore, women’s lack of use of law, or as it was coined in the German debate, women’s “negative legal conscience,” never afforded chances to use it. It might be interesting to find out why we encounter such
a human rights enthusiasm in the women’s movement after Beijing, despite the fact that human rights are the weakest weapon in the arsenal of law.\textsuperscript{36}

Regarding men’s and women’s thinking about law, Carol Gilligan’s studies of adolescent girls and her critique of Kohlberg’s scale of moral development\textsuperscript{37} were interpreted by some feminist lawyers as arguments against law. Not only did many misread Gilligan and her later work,\textsuperscript{38} and ignored the empirical and methodological problems with her early studies,\textsuperscript{39} but it also seems like a fatal conclusion in our highly regulated worlds to abandon law completely.

At the same time, parts of the women’s movements, and from a German perspective looking at the activities of LEAF in Toronto and across Canada,\textsuperscript{40} continued to use law against discrimination. But in academe, feminism too often remained untouched by legal questions. A more recent example to illustrate my perhaps overstated point is feminist poststructural theory. In it—and I could point to Jacques Derrida’s discussion of the force of law\textsuperscript{41} as an example, despite its telling title—law is treated as yet another text; it is even a perfect example of a text which attempts to totalize experience.

In feminism, American legal philosopher Drucilla Cornell uses Derrida to talk about law as a problem in and of itself. In her early work, she pointed to the “feminist dilemma” feminist legal politics faces when we are called upon to formulate law against sex discrimination and thus define sex discrimination, fix sex discrimination and perpetuate what we want to get rid of.\textsuperscript{42} Cases in point are rules which purport to protect women against discrimination yet have the effect of legitimizing women’s second-class
status; more concretely, laws which prohibit women to work night-shifts, lift certain weights, work in mines, or work exposed to chemical substances are of such ambivalent nature.

Postmodern legal theory argues that we should avoid the negative consequences of law defining one’s life. But then we come back to classic liberal or, as I described them earlier, traditional principles in law. In the end, law does not define lives, but it also does not take explicit note of them. In former times, this was called colour-blindness. These arguments against law and in favour of broad, traditionally liberal, weak versions of law ignore the specificities of law itself. Law is a text, it is also a specific discourse of power (and much of Foucault’s work picked law for a reason), but it is not like other texts at all. First, law carries a certain legitimacy based on democratic deliberation. Second, law is the business which constantly recreates itself, including the creation of a distance between law and the world, legal discourse and other conversations (and this distance is exactly what some feminists argued for at least in the past). Third, law has a set of institutions and the state behind it to turn rules into reality. Therefore, poststructural analysis is certainly illuminating, but it cannot serve as a guideline for law in life.

Because of the force to turn rules into reality, we cannot turn away from law. In addition, we have to take these specific conditions of legal discourse into consideration when we talk about the state and, as I tried to do, about the people who belong to states, about citizens.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**
In feminist theory, there is not yet enough interdisciplinary work about the state as such which includes analyses of the legal side of it. In German feminism, there is a great deal of criticism of the laws which define who belongs to the state (i.e., citizenship laws), but not much analysis which moves beyond political arguments and undertakes the effort to understand the dynamics, closings and openings of the legal regime in this field. Therefore, and I want to end on this optimistic note, we need gender studies which deal with legal questions as legal questions, and which at the same time provide for external perspectives on law. If we want to understand, for example, the state and its citizens, we have to understand what courts do with a specific rule, why they do it, what the consequences are of what they do and what can be done about it. Interdisciplinary debate may provide us with the needed starting points for furthering our analyses.
Frontiers in Women’s Studies

NOTES

1 Dr. Susanne Baer, LL.M. Assistant at the Faculty of Law of Humboldt University in Berlin, researches and teaches administrative and constitutional law, comparative and feminist jurisprudence, and legal and political theory. Law School at Free University of Berlin, First State Exam 1989, Second State Exam 1991, Legal Counsel with the Environmental Protection Agency of the Berlin Government, LL.M. at University of Michigan Law School.


3 For the Canadian situation, the conference “Rescuing Gender Studies,” University of Toronto, 1997 of which this panel was a part, provided a fascinating insight into the possibilities as well as the difficulties gender studies offer and face.

4 This was the title of the panel at the conference on which this paper has been presented. I am grateful to Hildegard Maria Nickel and the organizers for offering me the chance to participate.


6 On the options of a deconstructive reading of law, see Lacey, Nicola. Closure and Critique in Feminist Jurisprudence: Transcending the Dichotomy or a Foot in Both Camps? In Norrie, Alan (ed.). Closure and Critique, 1993, 194-213.

7 I am grateful to Astrid Deuber-Mankowsky for pointing in this direction.


9 In some postmodern feminist theory, law in a legal sense is confounded with law in a Lacanian sense (the symbolic law of the Father) which feeds positions of the fatal ignorance of the ambivalent power of law mentioned above.

10 It is crucial to emphasize particularity despite traditional jurisprudence’s claim to objectivity and neutrality. See generally MacKinnon, Catharine A. Toward a Feminist Theory of the State. Cambridge 1989 (Part II and Ch. 13); Baer, Susanne. Objektiv-neutral-gerecht? Feministische Rechtswissenschaft am Beispiel sexueller Diskriminierung im Erwerbsleben, 77 KritV 2/1994, 154-178.
Citizenship, Loyalty and Gender


14 Bill C-86 classified immigrants into three categories defined by various degrees of ethnic or family relations with Canadians, assets of interest to the Canadian state or humanitarian status. For an overview see Thompson, John Herd and Weinfield, Morton: Entry and Exit: Canadian Immigration Policy in Context, 538 Annals, March 1995, 185; critical Jenson, Jane and Philipps, Susan. Staatsbürgerschaftsregimes im Wandel - Die Gleichberechtigung wird zu Markte getragen. Das Beispiel Kanada, 26 PROKLA 105, 4/1996, 515.


16 BVerfGE 76, 1, 55.


18 This is the point Derrida raises in his The Force of Law, 11 Cardozo Law Review (1990). Different from critical and postmodern legal theory, radical indeterminacy of legal texts is not my reason to do so here.

19 ICJ Reports 1955, 4.

20 The methods of gender studies are not at all homogeneous or uniform, but rather multiple, flexible, and contested. I refer to the understanding which informs the creation of a gender studies program at Humboldt University of Berlin, bringing together perspectives from various disciplines yet emphasizing the heuristic value of each on its
own terms.

21 Kreisky, Eva. Der Staat als “Männerbund.” Der Versuch einer feministischen Staatssicht. In Biester, Elke u.a. (Hg.): Staat aus feministischer Sicht, Berlin, 53


25 Thompson and Weinfeld, supra.


28 VGH Kassel NVwZ Beilage 1 /1996, 1.


31 Lorde, supra, talking about the academy.

33 MacKinnon, Catharine A. *Towards a Feminist Theory of the State*, 1989, see xiii-xiv and 156.


41 Supra.


43 For example, Cornell favours a version of equality law which offers very little guidance to determine hierarchies, supra and her *The Imaginary Domain. Abortion, Pornography, and Sexual Harassmen..* 1995.
Changing Family Structure and Children’s Welfare: Global Perspectives

VAPPU TYYSKÄ
Ryerson Polytechnical University

Despite changes and problems, the family is universally regarded as the most desirable context for child rearing....
There is general consensus that good family welfare is the best child welfare. (Kadushin, 1980: 633)

In its broadest definition, child welfare encompasses a continuum of desirable outcomes ranging from mere survival to access to the necessary resources and opportunities for all children to develop their full potential. (Leslie and Buvinic, 1989: 11)

The United Nations (UN) Declaration of the Rights of the Child, issued on November 20, 1959, acknowledged that the family is the primary context of child welfare. This is also captured in the first quote above which forms the main focus of this paper: how changes in family structure influence children’s welfare. Families are fluid entities, and their structures can be seen to respond to economic and political changes. Major transformations in family forms are associated with the worldwide expansion of a wage work economy, industrialization and urbanization. In this flux, one has to be sensitive to the different positions and status of individual family members: men, women and children.

The same UN declaration lists a universal criteria for children’s welfare. As the second quote above illustrates, child welfare includes “every
activity that either directly or indirectly promotes the welfare of children” (Kadushin, 1980: 1). This wide definition is essential for an examination of children’s welfare in a global context: the industrial First World in comparison with the less developed Third World. The UN declaration (1959) specifies ten principles aimed at ensuring the physical, mental, moral, spiritual and social development of children. The specific rights of children include: the right to name and nationality; social security, including nutrition, housing, recreation and medical services; additional consideration for children with special needs; the right to a family and to societal protection for children without families; the right to education; the right to be the first to receive protection and relief; protection against neglect, cruelty and exploitation; freedom from the burden of work; and protection from all forms of discrimination. It is the responsibility of both families and society to fulfil these needs.

The social context for this undertaking is often riddled with pervasive inequalities. The term “structures of constraint” refers to sets of asset distributions, rules, norms and preferences that empower given social groups. These constraints also set limits on individual choices. Gender, age, sexual orientation, social class, as well as race, ethnicity and nationality, are all structures of constraint which operate globally. For example, in order to understand people’s lives in the Third World, we need to pay special attention to the legacy of colonialism and the fate of the independent nations that are newly emerging in Asia, Africa and South America.

These structures of constraint interact in complex ways in that individuals occupy multiple positions (Folbre, 1994: 51). For example,
female visible minority children from an underprivileged socio-economic group in the United States experience different sets of constraint in their lives than children whose families belong to more privileged groups (i.e., class and race). Individuals may also occupy contradictory positions (Folbre, 1994: 51). For example, although it may be true that all women are disadvantaged because of their gender, women of upper classes still occupy an economically privileged position.

These contradictory positions affect the way in which political alliances are forged and decisions are made. Interests of various groups in society may be in conflict or they may be the basis of alliances, on which political decisions are based. Child welfare, like all issues of general welfare, is a political one. Decisions made worldwide and by individual countries bear consequences on the way children are treated. All of the structures of constraint are important, but the focus of the following discussion is on age as a fundamental structure of constraint. Children around the world, whether they live in the wealthy industrial countries or in the impoverished nations, are a powerless, disenfranchised group. They have no say in the decisions on their behalf, and that is reflected in their universal position as an underclass.

In children’s welfare, country-specific social class divisions as well as the general economic status of individual nations are important considerations given the global distribution of wealth. Another set of constraints is “patriarchy” as based on gender and age (Folbre, 1994: 59).¹ We must examine global changes in women’s economic and familial roles, since the status of women is closely associated with children’s welfare.
82 Frontiers in Women’s Studies

In the sections below, I will outline how child welfare is generally approached in the First and the Third World. I will then focus on the impact of changing family structure on child welfare. A paramount concern is the rising rate of female employment and the resultant needs and problems for families and children. I will outline the challenges and show how policies are out of step with changes in the institution of the family where women and children remain powerless.

THE FIRST WORLD

Generally, the industrialized West enjoys a relatively high standard of living in this century, associated with great improvements in children’s lives. Child welfare concerns are focused on the more favourable end of the continuum, i.e., concern with the development of full potential rather than merely ensuring basic survival. This focus is sometimes called the “problem of plenty” (Marsden, 1995). For large segments of the population, most of the stated goals in the UN declaration have been realized. Yet, this does not mean that all problems are solved. There are still “cast-away” children living on Canadian streets (Webber, 1991), and large numbers of children live amidst economic insecurity, and physical and sexual abuse by family members (Conway, 1993).

In the West, child welfare is intimately connected to the construction of the welfare state, a type of government which emerged in the post-World War II years to respond to the problems of unemployment, disability, illness and old age. Problems were exacerbated by a wage economy and urbanization. Children’s lives were transformed radically in the transition to
the wage economy. With the advent of child labour laws, they were rendered more economically dependent on their parents. Also, they benefited from the rise in the overall standard of living of their families, associated with improvements in nutrition, shelter and health care. As a result, child mortality rates were, by and large, brought under control in all of the industrialized world. Universal education became the norm, and since the 1970s, differences between the education of girls and boys have disappeared.

A part of the vast network of welfare and social services developed in the post-World War II era were child welfare measures designed to respond to situations in which families are unable to look after their children. For example, in the United States, the range of services and programs is aimed at supplementing, supporting or substituting the care families give to their children. These services include child guidance clinics, family service agencies, and child protective agencies, as well as financial maintenance programs, homemaker services, daycare programs, foster homes, adoptive homes, and various child institutions (Kadushin, 1980: 25-27; Cohen, 1992).

The income equalizing measures which accompanied the rise of the welfare state helped families establish a more reasonable standard of living. Still, not all children of the West are benefactors of this wealth. For example, in 1989, thirty-six million Americans were poor, including 8.6 million families with children between ages five and seventeen. One in every five children lives in poverty (nearly twice the adult rate). Poverty rates are higher among black and Hispanic families (Cohen, 1992: 4-6). Similarly, in
1990, over one million Canadian children, or 17% of all children, were poor (Conway, 1993: 56). Although child mortality has been brought under control in most of Europe and Canada, high child mortality is still a problem in the United States, one of the richest nations of the West (Kadushin, 1980: 56-57).

Minority status is an important economic and cultural variable in the changing family structure and child welfare. This is a very important issue in North America, and especially in the United States where the legacy of slavery produced a black underclass (Pleck, 1992). The chance of black American children dying in the first year is twice that of white children. The culprit is poverty and the lack of adequate maternal and infant care available to the poor (Kadushin, 1980: 56).

Thus, welfare state measures still hold both class-based and racially based structures of constraint. In addition, gender and age form additional constraints (Folbre, 1994: 124). This is especially visible in the examination of changing family structures, women’s economic role, and children’s welfare.

**Changing families, women and children’s welfare**

In Europe as well as in North America, changes in family structure were brought about by a move from agrarian economies to wage-work in an industrial setting. The conventional Euro-centric path of family development corresponds to the transition from feudalism to capitalism, and the ensuing “modernization” process. Generally, there is a shift from an extended or flexible family form to a conjugal/nuclear family (Levine, 1989). This model
holds, although it is also accepted that economic development is not uniform, giving rise to a variety of family forms rather than one standard pattern (Trumbach, 1990; Wall, 1994).

In the West, with 20th Century “modernization,” birth rates have fallen steadily and family sizes have declined, except for women in the lower socio-economic groups (Leslie and Buvinic, 1989). There are other changes which essentially amount to a diversification of family structures, due to increased divorce rates, remarriages and single parenthood (e.g., Conway, 1993). Western family structure is characterized by serial monogamy and an increased prevalence of single-parent, female-headed families (the fastest growing family form in America). The largest change by far, due to the increase in women’s labour force participation, is the prevalence of dual-earner families (e.g., Lewis et al., 1992).

Traditionally, women’s economic efforts in families were hidden behind the contributions of male household heads. The rapid development of women’s participation in the formal wage labour force following World War II forced a recognition and study of women’s contributions. However, the economic value of activities inside the family/household is still not sufficiently recognized. The artificial distinction between the concept of “production” and “consumption,” hides the fact that what takes place within the household has economic—productive—value. This oversight has left unrecognized unpaid labour, largely performed by women. Regardless of their employment status, women bear the primary responsibility for the family, including the care of dependents, be they children, the elderly or the infirm (e.g., Folbre, 1994; Tyyskä, 1993, 1995).
When both parents are employed, child care is a problem. Thus, a major issue facing governments in the industrial West is the need to develop policies that would respond to the needs of families with two wage-earners. After the war, and with the development of welfare states, there has been a gradual development of family policies: family allowances, maternity leaves, parental leaves and child care. All of these are issues of child welfare. They either ensure a caregiver within the family, or support the caring role through provision of financial assistance (family allowances) or substitute care when parents are not able.

Increasingly, it is recognized that children benefit from attachment to both parents. The parental leave policies of some European states reflect this recognition (Lewis, 1992:9). Nordic countries, with their generous maternity and parental leaves and universal child care programs for wage-working parents, are exemplary in well-developed social policy. The Nordic model, also called as “institutional” or “state corporatist” welfare state, is based on the principle of universalism, or access of all citizens to these programs (Esping-Andersen, 1989). Particularly, Sweden provides a model where egalitarian ideologies are combined with economic needs in the development of a comprehensive family policy (Lewis, 1992: 12).

The Nordic model can be contrasted to the Anglo-American (Britain, U.S.A. and Canada) “residual” approach (Esping-Andersen, 1987). This means that far from being universal, most welfare and social programs apply only to the neediest of the population. In the United States, for example, the residual approach to child welfare operates only after there has been a breakdown in the functioning of the main institutions: family, religion
Children’s Welfare: Global Perspectives  87

and the marketplace (Cohen, 1992: 3-4). Family policy is poorly developed in both the United States and Canada. The former lacks a national guideline for maternity leaves. Although Canadian mothers are entitled to maternity leaves, they are shorter and the level of compensation is lower than in many European countries. Canadian child-care policy leaves much to be desired. In fact, over one million children (approximately 90% of those requiring daycare), fall outside of the government supervised daycare programs which ensure the quality of the care children receive (Tyyskä, 1993, 1995, 1997).

There is general agreement among feminist analyses of the welfare state that children are being squeezed between the family’s needs for more income and the lack of political will for children’s well-being. Families, mostly mothers, still have the main economic responsibility for children, but changes in society’s structure leave families unable to meet this responsibility (Jensen, 1989; Tyyskä, 1993, 1995, 1997). This remains one of the main child welfare challenges of the West. The view which holds mothers responsible for their children’s welfare is especially punitive for those mothers and children that lack a male wage-earner.

Mother-headed families

Women’s wage work participation in the last decades of this century is not restricted by marital status or presence of children. For example, in Canada, the largest increase in the labour force participation is among women with very small children (Tyyskä, 1993, 1995, 1997). However, women’s increased economic independence is paradoxically related to the increased economic insecurity of women and children who are not associated
with a male wage-earner. This paradox is rooted in the sexual division of labour. The tasks performed by women in the gender segregated labour force are consistently undervalued. Canadian women still earn only approximately seventy cents to every dollar earned by men. No Western country has achieved full wage parity between the sexes.

Low wages for women in light of changing family structure, especially the increasing prevalence of single-parent female-headed families, translates into increased poverty among women and children. The phrase “feminization of poverty” captures this phenomenon (Cohen, 1992: 41-44; Conway, 1993). Folbre (1994: 20-206) prefers the term “pauperization of motherhood,” for the American pattern. In 1991, 22% of all families and 54% of black and 27% of Latino families were maintained by women alone. Poverty in these families is much higher than in any country in Northwestern Europe. In Canada, in 1990, children living in single parent families accounted for about 39% of all poor children. Stated differently, “children in female single-parent families faced six times the risk of poverty compared to children in husband/wife families” (Conway, 1993: 56).

The challenge facing Western countries has to do with a reorientation of thinking. If women’s and children’s welfare is to be improved, we need to formulate new policies which avoid the assumption that women and children are dependent on a male wage. However, this reorientation is going to be a daunting task, especially in light of the recent restructuring of Western welfare states. The current tendency is to dismantle universal programs rather than build new ones.
THIRD WORLD

The developing countries of the world occupy a geographically vast area, and there are large variations between individual nation-states. Therefore, generalizations presented here should be understood in this context. Moreover, there is a lack of consistent data. By necessity then, the following discussion emphasizes uniformity at the expense of variety.

As indicated in the beginning, the major factor to be considered in examining the less developed nations is the international dispersion of wealth. By far, the most wealth is concentrated in the First World, whereas only a fraction goes to the Third World, where approximately two-thirds of the world’s population reside (Kadushin, 1980: 636-638). This disparity is reflected in the quality of life of all individuals. This does not mean that all families and children in the Third World are poor. Generally, children of privileged families and male children are much better off than children of underprivileged families and female children. However, one’s chances of being poor are far greater in the Third World than in the First World. In addition, in the Third World, the unproductive groups (children/elderly) place a larger burden on the productive groups (Kadushin, 1980). For example, in 1992, the number of children under fifteen years of age in Southeast Asia ranged from a low of 22% of total population in Hong Kong to a high 40% in Indonesia (Davis, 1994: 5-7).

The results of poverty are seen in population statistics. For example, per capita incomes in Southeast Asia are in direct proportion to life expectancy and infant mortality rates, i.e., where incomes are lowest, life expectancy is lowest and the mortality rates of young children are high.
Frontiers in Women’s Studies

(Davis, 1994: 1, 5-7, 10-11). Over 95% of the world’s infant deaths take place in the developing world: Africa, Latin America and Asia (Davis, 1994: 10-11).

Three quarters of the world’s children live in developing countries. Of the hundred children born every half-minute in these areas, twenty will die in their first year; two thirds of the remainder are likely never to see adolescence, and only one in four reaches “old age”—which, in terms of the average length of life in some of these countries, is about thirty-eight years. Of one hundred children born in India and one hundred children born in the United States, more American children will live to age sixty-five than Indian children will live to age five. (Kadushin, 1980: 637-638)

The tragedy is that a large proportion of these deaths are preventable through GOBI (growth monitoring, oral rehydration therapy, breastfeeding and immunization, see Davis, 1994: 10-11).

In the underdeveloped world, child welfare is often a question of basic survival, shelter, nutrition and education, in the midst of the prospect of utter poverty, famine and war. In the last decade alone, there were mass starvation in northern Ethiopia and southern Sudan, and brutal wars in Somalia, Mozambique, Uganda and Angola (SCF, 1990: 10), as well as Rwanda. There is a fundamental lack of basic welfare and security for most of the population. For example, the severe socio-economic crisis in Latin America of the last two decades has created poverty for millions (David, 1987; Altimir, 1984).

Race, ethnicity and colonialism
The problems of the Third World are compounded by the legacy of colonialism in areas such as sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean and South America, and have great bearing on the status of women and children (Bulbeck, 1992; Osirim, 1992; Radforth-Ruether, 1993). An international survey of quality of life of women and children comparing the 1960s and the 1980s found that the longer a country had been independent of colonial status, the more economic development had taken place, with the associated improvements in the lives of women and children (Stover and Baer, 1987).

In addition to the economic subjugation of the colonized populations, colonialists often imposed their own social and family structures on the indigenous peoples. In the Caribbean, slaves were originally subjected to male-female divisions, and they remained partly outside the market system and supported men through their subsistence activities rather than wage-work (Caulfield, 1974). In Brazil, the Portuguese colonizers brought with them a patriarchal family structure, where the *paterfamilias* was the head of the household where his wife, children and slaves were his property. Many plantation owners had sexual relations with their slave women from Africa, which became an accepted form of polygamy. Children from these unions were not acknowledged and faced ostracism (Almeida, 1986).

Ethnic and racial dividing lines are generally accompanied by either formal or informal systems of economic hierarchy. This hierarchy has a great impact on children’s lives. In Southeast Asia, children of mixed race are the products of voluntary marriages, but are also the result of war, prostitution and rape. Some are mistreated, abandoned, neglected or abused.
In India, the caste system has had detrimental effects on children of the lower castes who face special physical and intellectual challenges in a “culture of poverty” (Issmer, 1989). India’s most deprived groups include the migrant building workers, most of whom are women with children. There are Hindus, Muslims and untouchables among them, and they are usually illiterate (Bridgland, 1972). The legacy of apartheid in South Africa is a black infant mortality rate eight times that of whites. Child-care facilities also reflect the inferior government services available to black children (Cosgrove, 1992). In countries like Kenya, where educational programs exist, their cost is prohibitive to many nomadic or disadvantaged groups (Nkinyangi, 1982).

**Changing family structure**

In addition to the family structures imposed by colonialists, Third World countries have a mixture of family forms, based on life in nomadic, horticultural, agricultural as well as urban industrial settings (Zimmerman, 1974). The majority of the traditional family structures in Asia are variations of the extended patriarchal family type in which men are inarguable household heads and extended kin connections play a large role in determining the living patterns and the quality of life of women and children (Lewis et al., 1992: 11; Mathur, 1992: 5; Khalakdina, 1979: 15). This means that children benefit from a wide variety of relationships and an extended support network (SCF, 1990: 38; Hake, 1972: 19).

In sub-saharan Africa, the typical family structure is polyandry, women having children of more than one man. Mothers and children form
the basic unit of society, and a man’s direct cost of having children is reduced. This social structure is an adaptation to marginal agricultural land, which is owned by clans, not by the families. Since women and children do most of the agricultural work, a high birth rate is favourable, as it increases the clan’s food production (Caldwell and Caldwell, 1990; SCF, 1990: 38; Hake, 1972). Reflecting the patriarchal family pattern, male children are valued over female children (Khalakdina, 1979: 24-25; 51-52). This value difference becomes a problem when families face poverty, and children become a disadvantage instead of an asset. Female infanticide may be practiced, and girls and women suffer worse standards of nutrition and health (Uddin and Kabir, 1990; Natarahan and Puri, 1990; Rajanetram, 1990).

The gradual move to a wage-work based, urban economy has not resulted in the uniform destruction of old family norms in the Third World. Neither is there an automatic move to a conjugal nuclear family form. Most countries exhibit a mix of old and new family patterns. Empirical evidence shows that the link between modernization and family structure varies across societies with different cultural heritage (Behnam et al., 1985; Kumagai, 1986; Singha, 1984; Khlat and Halabi, 1986; Chamratrithirong, Morgan and Rindfuss, 1988; Peil, 1991; Ruxian, 1991; Suh, 1992; Mathur, 1992). In fact, in several countries in Africa and Asia, old family support patterns seem to prevail despite urbanization (Guetta, 1991; Peil, 1991; Suh, 1992; Hashimoto, 1993). Research from Algeria suggests that the urban housing and employment crises encourage the reconstitution of extended patriarchal families among peasants who migrate from rural to urban areas (Guetta,
It seems that transformation is more likely to happen among the wealthier middle and upper classes (Zimmerman, 1974). However, where transition between traditional and modern ways of life occurs, it is often characterized by uncertainty and conflict between generations (Singha, 1984; Mathur, 1992: 6-9) as well as spouses (Tsala-Tsala, 1992; Mathur, 1992: 6-9).

One of the areas of uncertainty is the acceptable number of children. Research in four Latin American countries (Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico and Peru) found that rural localities have attitudes favouring large families (ten to twelve children). This is because children are seen to provide economic assistance to their parents. Although some new attitudes favouring smaller families are emerging, there is much ambivalence. The normative family includes around five children, enough for high fertility and rapid population growth (Simmons, 1974).

Generally, industrialization and urbanization have meant that the size of the average family has fallen dramatically since the 1960s, from six to three children (Gadd, 1995). However, this is by no means a uniform pattern. For example, Mexico and Brazil have shown resistance to smaller families (Taylor, 1995). Furthermore, there is the same observed class difference in fertility as in the West. For example, in the Andean countries in the 1960s, the poor tended to have larger families with more children (Musgrove, 1980).

Although there is no conclusive evidence that a move to urban wage economies uniformly destroys old family patterns, there is evidence to suggest that the manner in which family members engage in wage-work can
be seriously disruptive to family life. In some countries, e.g., Jordan, a large proportion of the labour force works abroad, some of them leaving family members behind (Kamiar and Ismail, 1991). In other parts of the Third World, internal migration patterns from rural to urban areas can cause problems of separation of families. The prevalent pattern is one in which the husband/father leaves to look for work, while the wife/mother stays behind with children. The South African situation is an extreme example of the way in which this system was institutionalized under apartheid. Legislation prohibited blacks from living in urban areas unless gainfully employed. This meant that the bulk of black men spent their working lives separated from their families, returning to visit them at their rural homes a few weeks each year. Thus, many black women spent their married lives separated from their husbands and children grew up fatherless (Jones, 1993). The apartheid system eroded the formerly cohesive black family structure, and increased the need for alternative care for black children in Soweto (Thomas and Mabusela, 1991).

Women’s work, children’s welfare

Often, women’s work in an agricultural and exchange-based economy is subsumed under the economic activities of the male head of the household. Research done in Third World farm economies suggests that rural women’s work makes a significant contribution to family income and welfare and hence to national income, welfare and economic growth (Singh and Morey, 1987).
Wage-work is still secondary to agricultural and exchange economies in significant areas of the globe, but it is expanding. It has been noted that even though women in the Third World have always made an economic contribution, the patterns of women’s work have changed substantially. The proportion of women officially in the labour force in developing countries rose from 28% in 1950 to 32% in 1985 (Leslie and Buvinic, 1989). In some countries, women still provide a pool for low-skilled, low-paying jobs for the electronics and textile industries (e.g., Porpora, Lim and Prommas, 1989).

Women’s work is sometimes perceived in negative terms (Leslie and Buvinic, 1989) due to the established link between the role of the mother and the welfare of children. Much attention was paid to the connection between maternal and child welfare. It is noted that “[A] changing attitude toward the child is tied to a changing attitude toward the mother” (Kadushin, 1980: 642). An important aspect of child welfare in developing countries is attention to the mother in the areas of nutrition, education and pre-natal care. For example, maternal education in the Third World is linked to lowered fertility, reduced child mortality, and children’s improved cognitive development (Mahadevan, 1990; Gulick, 1985; LeVine, 1980; Leslie and Buvinic, 1989).

It was originally assumed that women’s wage-work participation would undo the positive impact on child welfare by, for example, reducing time spent in breastfeeding and child-care (Leslie and Buvinic, 1989). In an analysis of fifty studies on the relationship between women’s work and infant feeding practices and children’s nutritional status, little evidence or
justification was found for limiting women’s labour force participation on the grounds of promoting child welfare (Leslie, 1988). Instead, international development experts note the connection between children’s and women’s welfare. Pressured by the international women’s movement, they acknowledge that improvement in children’s lives is contingent upon improvement in women’s status. The constant feature in the Third World is women’s lack of input and access to the power structure and power elite (da Veiga Pinto, 1976). There is a formal acknowledgement of the need for change (Kumar, 1989: 1). It is clear that development programs which approach women stereotypically as dependents and not as household heads have been unsuccessful (Macoloo, 1990). A wider approach to changing women’s status is required to improve the lives of children and family members in general (Rajaram et al., 1990: 423). Some maternal and child development programs have been put in place in the Third World, with encouraging results (Pollitt, 1980; Myers, 1992; SCF, 1990). Over the last three decades, women in the Third World have taken on initiatives on their own to improve the standard of living and welfare of themselves and their children (Nader, 1986; Gwagwa, 1991; Nash, 1990; Bashizi, 1979).

**Mother-headed households**

The increase in wage-work participation among women has also lead to an overall intensification of labour for women (Ramamurthy, 1991). The impact is similar to the one discussed for Western countries, namely increased poverty and suffering of women and their children. Economic recessions and severe food production crises in areas such as sub-Saharan
Africa have intensified the burden on poor women (Leslie and Buvnic, 1989). With increased migration and disruption of traditional family patterns, there is an increase in the numbers of women who provide primary economic support for themselves and their children. Urbanization and migration to the cities gave rise to female-headed families, deserted by husbands and fathers (Zimmerman, 1975; DeVos, 1987; Boul and Cunningham, 1992). Over 40% of the rural households in Kenya, Botswana, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Lesotho are headed by women. The figures are similarly high in many urban slums and shanty towns (Myers, 1992: 269). It is estimated that one-third of Jamaican families and a minimum of 10% of most Arab Middle Eastern families are female-headed (Leslie and Bovinic, 1989: 4). These households have less income, more and younger children, fewer secondary sources of income, and less access to productive resources (Myers, 1992).

**Child abandonment and child labour**

A major issue in the Third World is the prevalence of child abandonment and child labour (Davis, 1994; Salazar, 1991; Bernstein and Grey, 1991; Kadushin, 1980). This is not only a feature of wage economies, however. The traditional extended family networks are not uniformly nurturant and supportive of children, some can be exploitive. As apprentices in family businesses, children can become a source of cheap, exploited labour. The system of fostering children of family members can disguise the formation of labour units in which family relationships are replaced with employee-employer relationships. For example, in Senegal, the system of
Children’s Welfare: Global Perspectives

apprenticeships provides the hub of unpaid child labour (SCF, 1990: 64-65).

It is estimated that there are twenty-five million street children in Latin America alone (Lusk, 1989). In Africa, street children provide cheap labour in large cities, such as Kampala in Uganda. Children work in the market unloading produce, fetching or carrying goods just to feed themselves. They sleep in the bush or on the streets, or sometimes provide labour, money or food to various community members in exchange of a place to sleep. Child abandonment caused by poverty and division of families due to war send more children to the streets (SCF, 1990: 68). Children are also sent to work on the streets to supplement family income (Davis, 1994: 28-29). Sometimes, they are exploited by the prostitution industry. In Thailand and the Philippines, the majority of the users of children’s sexuality come from Australia, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, and Britain. The exploited children face hunger and disease, and recently, the threat of AIDS is an added concern (Davis, 1994: 29-41).

Third World states and social policy

Often, Third World social policy is not considered, especially not in comparison with Europe and North America (Midgley, 1985). In the Third World, state development has taken a different path from the West, due to different social patterns, slower economic development and poorer resource accessibility. Horowitz (1989) distinguishes Third World policy from the West in a number of ways. Numerous regimes in the Third World are politically volatile, involving less public participation and more powerful state structures relative to society, and leading to greater imperfections in the
making and implementation of policy. Moreover, countries which have recently gained their independence are putting more effort into promoting national integration and legitimizing the central government (Williamson and Pampel, 1991).

In developing countries, as well as in the West, social programs have contributed to an improvement in living standards following World War II. There have been notable advancements in the Third World in providing for the needs of children since the 1960s. Child mortality levels are getting lower, even though they are still unacceptably high (Lyons, 1983; Nkinyangi, 1982). Even though drop-out rates of children are still high, African countries have made strides in educating children since gaining independence (SCF, 1990: 75-89).

In the last two decades, however, economic conditions have deteriorated to the point that the effectiveness of many programs has been impeded (Midgley, 1993; SCF, 1990). In the current worldwide restructuring and decline of the economy and welfare, women and children suffer the most from welfare budget cuts (Nash, 1990). Family policy which would address the problems of contemporary families in urban settings is poorly developed or nonexistent (Lewis et al., 1992; Kadushin, 1980: 649; Fiawoo, 1978-79). Cutbacks combined with internal warfare have meant that even where legislation exists, there has been a near collapse of systems needed to administer children’s legislation and child welfare services (SCF, 1990: 75-89).

Even in the more affluent newly industrialized societies of Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore and Taiwan, social and welfare policy development
Children’s Welfare: Global Perspectives 101

is largely incremental in nature (Midgley, 1986). Where legislation exists to safeguard the basic welfare of children, some countries, such as India, lack the organizational machinery to enforce the law (Damania, 1989). Within Southeast Asia, for example,

many countries are not even in sight of the level of social, educational and welfare services required to cater for today’s child population; too few people are anticipating in practical terms what the level of need will be in the year 2000 and beyond; and only the tiniest fraction of the adult population in Southeast Asia appears actively involved in programme planning, policy formulation and the development of child-care action packages. (Davis, 1994: 9)

CONCLUSIONS

In the West, relative prosperity has made it possible to build welfare states that provide some basic measure of well-being for most of their citizens. However, the patterns are not uniform, and they are ridden with gender, age and racial inequalities. Still, there are children living in the midst of economic, physical, emotional and sexual exploitation. Women and children, especially from minority backgrounds, are still worse off, and policies to aid them are slow in coming.

The main difference between the First and Third World lies in the availability of wealth. The history of the international distribution of wealth has its roots in extensive colonialism by Western countries over large segments of the Third World. This pattern is continuing in the amassing of world’s wealth in the very same countries that began the exploitation
process. Third World countries that have been politically independent from their colonizers for a number of decades still have the legacy of a poor economy. They are also left with imported patterns of family hierarchy, detrimental to women and children. In addition to the structures of constraint based on social class, gender and age, nationalist interests are often paramount, paradoxically resulting in policy efforts in which child welfare is not a priority.

A wage economy has disrupted the lives of millions of children through changes in the established family patterns. In the Third World, family breakdown has resulted in the large-scale abandonment of women and children by men who have previously provided for their subsistence. In both First and Third Worlds, women are faced with poverty and hardship for themselves and their children. Children are cast away by families that are unable to support them, and end up on the streets as sources of cheap labour and sexual gratification.

One of the main issues worldwide is how to deal with children when both parents work. The experience is that government policies to support the combination of wage-work and family life are important achievements. However, it is also the case that traditions and behaviours, especially around the sexual division of labour, are extremely slow to change. Lewis (1992: 12-13) states that “in this sense, all countries, not only those in the Third World, are developing rather than developed countries.” Even though Western countries are better off in this regard than countries in the less developed world, this is a matter of degree. That children’s welfare worldwide happens to be a very low priority is reflective of their position as
disenfranchised members in the family and in the economic and political order.
104 Frontiers in Women’s Studies

REFERENCES

Almeida, Angela Mendes de
1986 Sexuality and marriage in the Portuguese colonization of Brazil; Sexualidade e casamento na colonizacao protuguesa no Brazil. Analise Social, 22 (3-4):697-705.

Altimir, Oscar

Bashizi, Bashige

Behnam, Djamchid, Vida Nassehi-Behnam, Fatou Sow, Nur Vergin and Fahed T. Al-Thakeb

Bernstein, Andrea J. and M.M.A. Grey

Boult, Brenda E. and Peter W. Cunningham

Bridgland, Kathryn

Bulbeck, Chilla

Caldwell, John C. and Pat Caldwell
Caulfield, Mina Davis  

Chamratrithirong, Aghichat, S. Philip Morgan and Ronald R. Rindfuss  

Cohen, Neil A.  

Conway, John F.  

Cosgrove, John G.  

Damania, Deenaz  

da Veiga Pinto, Francoise  

David, Petro  

Davis, Leonard  

Co. DeVos, Susan  

Esping-Andersen, Gosta  

Fiawoo, D.K.  
Frontiers in Women’s Studies

Folbre, Nancy
1994  
*Who pays for the kids? Gender and structures of constraint.*

Gadd, Jane
1995  

Guetta, Maurice
1991  

Gulick, John
1985  
Changing gender roles of Egyptian females. *Social Science Newsletter* 70(3): 159-161.

Gwagwa, Nolalumo N.
1991  

Hake, James M.
1972  

Hashimoto, Akiko
1993  

Horowitz, Donald L.
1989  

Issmer, D. Samuel
1989  

Jensen, An-Magritt
1989  
Care giving and socialization in the view of declining fertility and increasing female employment. *Marriage and Family Review* 14(1-2):127-144.

Jones, Sean

Kadushin, Alfred


Kamia, M. S. and H. F. Ismail


Khalakdina, Margaret

1979  *Early child-care in India.* London: Gordon and Breach.

Khlat, Myriam, Suzan Halabi


Kumagai, Fumie


Kumar, Ashok


Leslie, Joanne


Leslie, Joanne and Mayra Buvinic


Leslie, Joanne and Michael Paolisso (eds.)


Levine, David
108 Frontiers in Women’s Studies


LeVine, Robert A.

Lewis, Suzan

Lewis, Suzan, Dafna N. Israeli and Helen Hootsmans (eds.)

Lusk, Mark W.

Lyons, Raymond

Macoloo, G. C.

Mahadevan, K.

Mahadevan, K. (ed.)

Marsden, Lorna

Mathur, Deepa
Children’s Welfare: Global Perspectives 109


Midgley, James


Midgley, James


Midgley, James


Musgrove, Philip


Myers, Robert


Nader, Laura


Nash, June


Natarahan, K.S. and R. K. Puri


Nkinyangi, John A.


Osirim, Mary J.
110 Frontiers in Women’s Studies


Peil, Margaret

Pleck, Joseph H.

Politt, Ernesto, with the collaboration of Robert Halpern and Patricia Eskenasy

Porpora, Douglas V., Mah-Hui Lim and Usanee Prommas

Radforth-Ruether, Rosemary

Rajaram, P., R. Jayasree, G.S. Moni and Sumati S. Rao

Rajaneetram, T.

Ramamurthy, Priti

Ruxian, Yan
Children’s Welfare: Global Perspectives  111

Salazar, Maria Christina


Save the Children Fund (SCF)


Simmons, Alan B.


Singh, Ram D. and Mathew J. Morey


Singha, Dur ganand


Stover, Ronald G. and Linda L. Baer


Suh, Mee Kyung


Taylor, Kate

1995  Feminism and the population crisis. *Globe and Mail*. Aug. 28:C1

Thomas, Adele and Shirley Mabusela

112 Frontiers in Women’s Studies

Trumbach, Randolph

Tsala-Tsala, Jacques Philippe

Tyyskä, Vappu

Tyyskä, Vappu

Tyyskä, Vappu

Uddin, M. Mosleh and M. Kabir

Wall, Karin

Webber, Marlene
1991  Street kids. *The tragedy of Canada’s runaways*. Toronto:
University of Toronto Press.
Williamson, John B. and Fred C. Pampel
1991  Ethnic politics, colonial legacy, and old age security policy: The
Nigerian case in historical and comparative perspective. *Journal
Zimmerman, Carle C.
1974  Family systems of the Third World. *International Journal of
Zimmerman, Carle C.
1975  Family systems in Latin America. *Sociologia Internationalis*
1 Folbre considers sexual orientation as well, but that consideration is beyond the scope of this paper. The addition of age widens the scope of the term “patriarchy” from the usual connotation of “rule of the father” or “male domination.”
New Nations, Old Oppression:
Role of Women in Nation Formation

Patricia Albanese
University of Toronto

In July 1993, Catherine MacKinnon informed us that the rape of Muslim and Croat women by Serb soldiers in Bosnia and Croatia was unprecedented in its purpose and form. She concedes that sex “has been used before to create, mobilize, and manipulate ethnic hatred, from the world of the Third Reich to the world of Penthouse” (MacKinnon, 1993:27). Yet she adds that “the world has never seen sex used this consciously, this cynically, this elaborately, this openly, this systemically, with this degree of technological and psychological sophistication, as a means of destroying a whole people” (MacKinnon, 1993:27).

I urge you to recall that long before the Third Reich and Penthouse rape was used consciously and cynically, elaborately, openly and systemically. For example, Belgian and French women were raped by German soldiers in World War I (Harris, 1993). One must also remember the “Rape of Nanking” where Chinese women were raped by Japanese soldiers in 1937, and the rape of Armenian women at the hands of Turks in 1915. MacKinnon may also recall the Scottish Highlander women of her own ethnic background who were raped by the English, approximately two hundred and fifty years before the break-up of Yugoslavia.
In 1746, Scottish Highlanders and the English met in battle at Culloden. Scottish clansmen were defeated in combat and the already crumbling clan system was defeated using rape. Duncan Forbes, British court advisor on Highland affairs at the time, wrote that a highland clan “is a set of men all bearing the same surname, and believing themselves to be related the one to the other, and to be descended from the same common stock” (Prebble, 1967:34). He goes on to explain that “the clan remained a man’s only identity, and the broadsword his only understandable law outside it” (Prebble, 1967:34).

John Prebble (1967) added that “the ties of blood and name were strong among the people, and pride of race meant as much to a humbly in his sod and roundstone house as it did to a chieftain in his island keep” (Prebble, 1967:33-34). He continued by writing that “each clan was enough to itself, and the world ended beyond the glen” (Prebble, 1967:38). Thus, ties of blood and name were not simply a matter of honour, but cardinal to Highland society. The clan was society. So, the rape of a clanswoman by an outsider was equivalent to the severing of blood lines. The rape and possible impregnation by the outsider called into question the purity and integrity of the clan and questioned clansmen’s abilities to protect their society from invaders. Because of the stated reasons, the rape of clanswomen would, by today’s standards, amount to a form of genocide.

The rape by an ethnic “Other” puts into question the authenticity, legitimacy and purity of the blood ties that bond that ethnic group, subsequently tainting and perhaps even contributing to the eventual annihilation of the group. The problem is that this explanation often
accompanies ethnocentric and xenophobic forms of nationalism reminiscent of Nazi Germany. In Nazi Germany, the purity of the nation was associated with feminine chastity. For example, according to Max von Gruber (cited in Bleuel, 1973: 24-25), Germans in the interwar period were expected to esteem and cherish feminine chastity as the supreme national asset, because only through the chastity of “their” women could men be sure that they were truly the fathers of their children and their nation. Women’s chastity and purity was perceived to be important, since on it rested the family (Koonz, 1981:189). More than a cell within the nation, family was seen as the organism which governed the nation’s germination (Bleuel, 1973).

Without excusing the brutal acts of individual men, I will argue that nationalist attitudes towards the purity of blood ties is partly to blame for the appeal of rape in war and other forms of subordination of women, because rape in war is not about the sexual gratification of armed troops. After all, in 1746, the English army travelled to Culloden with “their own” women, wives and “doxies” (“loose women”) at their tail.

In ethnic conflict, women are often victims of sexist ideology inherent in extreme forms of nationalism. Craig Calhoun (1993) notes that nationalism has been a distinctly gender-biased ideology wherein the family becomes the source of the nation’s continuity in time; where men are seen as martyrs and women as mothers (Calhoun, 1993:231). He adds that nationalists oppose women’s movements because these women often challenge the monolithic view of the nation, they promote the personal identity of women and they challenge the concept of male-dominated nationhood (Calhoun, 1993:231).
Can nationalism be blamed for all rape in war? Certainly not. Nevertheless, nationalism does add to the appeal or motivation to rape. It also plays a role in the eventual treatment of the issue and the rape victims by the ethnic groups and by the international community.

First, I will outline the role ethnic nationalism plays in fostering rape in war. Upon outlining this role, I will show why rape is such an effective tool in war for all parties involved, including the rapist, his ethnic group, the victim’s ethnic group, the international community and the media. My intent is not to sanction the existence of rape in war. On the contrary, I wish to demonstrate that what happened to Croat, Muslim and Serb women in the war in Bosnia is characteristic of wars in general and ethnic wars in particular. But more importantly, I will explain why and how such an act is not only possible but also purposeful in war and after war, especially when ethnic nationalism is involved.

In my mind, nationalist rhetoric is two-faced. As nationalist rhetoric outwardly boasts of its right for self-determination, inwardly it inflicts upon its members the task of ethnic renewal, since nationalism depicts ethnicity as a biologically self-perpetuating group. Whether modern or pre-modern in origin and factual or mythical in nature, nationalism hinges upon the fundamental similarity of a nation’s members (Calhoun, 1993). It follows that nationalism, in its own mind’s eye, preserves its people’s biological purity and its own raison d’être by maintaining real or imaginary blood ties that become concrete ethnic boundaries. Once boundaries between “Self” and “Other” have been set and enforced, the weight of national reproduction rests heavily on its women’s wombs (Albanese, 1996:187). Simultaneously,
once ethnic boundaries differentiate the ethnic self from the other, many notable differences that exist within a group are obscured, minimized or outright disregarded. From the point of view of classes, genders and individuals, ethnicity is totalizing, but also divisive and ideological. It cuts across class and gender lines, obscures the existence of antagonistic interests and suppresses the awareness of them. An ethnic identity exists at the expense of class, gender and individual identity. In-group disparities such as class and gender differences are whitewashed by nationalist jargon (Albanese, 1996:188). This is especially evident when an ethnic group is at war. George Herbert Mead wrote that in times of war

the self-protective impulse in all the individual members of the state is unitedly directed against their common enemy and ceases for the time being, to be directed among themselves... the usual social barriers between these groups are likewise removed; and the state provides a unified front to the given danger, or is fused into a single unity in terms of the common end shared by, or reflected in, the respective consciousness of all its individual members. It is upon these war-time expressions of the self-protective impulse in all the individual members of the state or nation that the general efficacy of national appeals to patriotism is chiefly based. (Mead, 1934:306)

The differential treatment of a nation’s men and women is justified if it ensures the survival of the group. For example, by monopolizing the chastity of its women, nationalism secures its ethnic boundaries and demarcates “the juncture between internal cohesion and external differences” (Wilson and Frederiksen, 1995). Purity of nation hinges upon the chastity of its women. They are jealously guarded from the ravaging hands of an
120 Frontiers in Women’s Studies

ethnic “Other,” while generously presented to the sexual indulgence of the masculine members of the ethnic “Self.”

As I alluded to in the beginning of my paper, to the nationalist, rape in war becomes especially significant in that rape and the subsequent pregnancy caused by the invader makes it impossible to confirm blood lines. According to nationalists, war rape not only disrupts or threatens the sanctity of family temporarily, but also threatens the purity of the entire ethnic group permanently. All of this hinges on the notion that virtuous and pure virgins produce a nation (Koontz, 1981:189). Women who are raped by invaders are damaged or tainted and cannot sustain the purity of the ethnic group. That is, in peace, women are used to ensure the survival of their ethnic group, while in war, women are abused or otherwise sexually “misused” by the ethnic “Other” to destroy the group.

In peace, sex-biased and nationalist social norms ensure that chastity is championed, at least in principle, while in war, social mores are suspended. “Though shalt not kill” becomes “kill or be killed.” And coveting thy neighbour’s wife is not only widespread as an ideology, but acted upon. Despite all this, social norms continue to apply to rape victims in war. They are expected to value chastity, despite the fact that they have no control over their assailants. For instance, some doctors who treated rape victims lamented that single women in the traditional Muslim society “stigmatized by rape” will never marry (McKinsey, 1993:B1). They are tainted, unpure, unworthy and stigmatized because they could not fight off their attackers.

A victim’s “impurity” becomes her ethnic groups’ problem—and a cause for call to arms—while her physical and psychological wounds are her
own to deal with. This became clear to me when women’s groups in Zagreb wanted to set up a special hostel where victims could receive long-term counselling, and the Muslim community objected, believing that special hostels will identify and further stigmatize women (Grant, 1993).

Society stigmatizes these women, not the hostels. Had their society not set a double-standard surrounding women’s chastity, these women could have received some treatment, as victims of violence, and they could have possibly been relieved of some of the psychological burden of knowing that they will be rejected by their “own” men for something done to them by others. They would also not appear as delectable prey to one group of men out to harm another.7

In the Bosnian and Croatian wars of secession, all women were subjected to this sexual double standard. They were subjected to a sexual-political jeopardy as well. Victims of rape were sexually abused by their assailants, while their co-nationals politically instrumentalized that abuse. In Bosnia, as in other ethnic wars, women on all sides of the conflict were used as pawns at both the national and international level. The abuse of women in war mobilizes one’s own troops, demoralizes the enemy and, among other things, acts as an appeal for international attention.

In this war, rape has been used as a propaganda weapon. Amnesty International warns us that all sides of this conflict minimize or deny the abuses committed by their own forces and maximize those of their opponents (Amnesty International, 1993:3). They warned us of this possibility six months before Catherine MacKinnon published her article in Ms. Magazine (July/August 1993). But why head the warning? Sex and violence sell!
In January 1993, Amnesty International released a report on the rapes in Bosnia. Contrary to many other reports that followed, this one explained that all sides of the conflict committed these abuses against women, although Muslim women were the chief victims. Again, contrary to other reports, Amnesty International indicated that although local leaders may have had knowledge of, and generally condoned the rapes, there was no proof that rape was explicitly singled out by politicians and military leaders as a weapon against their opponents. They added that all estimates as to the number of women who have suffered rape and sexual abuse must be treated with caution and that information is not available to confirm many of the allegations made (Amnesty International, 1993:3). This is not to say that women did not suffer at the hands of armed soldiers. But, it should alert us to the possibility that there are certain interests at stake aside from helping women cope with their traumatic and often horrific experiences.

Upon reading MacKinnon’s work, I began to wonder why she, as an American feminist, opted to defend only Muslim and Croat victims rather than all raped women. She provides us with a politicized response as do many others analyzing this crisis. However, her politics do not focus on the violence women experienced at the hands of armed soldiers, but rather around “good guy/bad guy” politics that we so often see in both Hollywood and Washington.

When reading her article, I was struck by the fact that while she criticized the Serbs for believing that everything that is Muslim and Croatian is unfit to live, her own biases were only slightly less veiled. Although I agree that there was no love lost between Serbs, Croats and Muslims, I do
not feel Serb hatred for Muslims and Croats warrants her concluding statement that “the Serbs make the Nazi efforts look comparatively primitive” (MacKinnon, 1993:30).

The international media also deserve criticism. Not only have they played a key role in presenting one side of the story, they have taken advantage of the crisis in order to sell their newspapers. In Bosnia, in 1993, one of the most common statements uttered by journalists was: “Anyone here been raped and speak English?” (Grant, 1993). Sex sells, even when it comes in the form of rape. It is eroticised horror, as I have come to call it. Time after time, we were exposed to images of young, beautiful Muslim virgins raped by brutish, gun-wielding Serb militia men—the perfect victim, the perfect rogue—and all in graphic detail. Although we were told that young girls as well as older women were raped, we were spared the details of the latter. Instead we read about a twenty-four-year-old Croat virgin named Marija, about Amela and her Serb captors who selected their victims “by the light of matches,” and Aida, the “dark-haired factory worker” (McKinsey, 1993).

Linda Grant, journalist for the *London Guardian* confirms that “there is something sexy, in media terms, about thousands of pretty Muslim virgins sobbing out their tales of sexual violation (Grant, 1993). She critically adds that “when there are no more weeping girls, the long-term fate of a traumatized nation becomes substantially less worthy of media attention.” She also informed us that when the hospitals of Zagreb and Sarajevo did not “fill with abandoned infants” the media lost interest (Grant, 1993).
Nonetheless, while it lasted, rape in this war was certainly more newsworthy than rape in peace. Which is another reason why I am led to believe that media attention to this issue is less about violence against women and more about national and international politics. For example, few people are aware of the fact that in the same year that the Bosnian rapes were occurring, rapes in Russia increased by 16% in the first half of the year alone (Calgary Herald, 1993). In Canada, the 1993 Violence Against Women Survey quietly informed those who wanted to listen that 6% of women in Canada were sexually assaulted in the twelve months prior to the survey. Although not “consciously, cynically, openly and systemically,” as MacKinnon christened the Bosnian rapes, a total of 4.4 million Canadian women aged eighteen and over, or 42% of all adult women in Canada, had experienced at least one incident of either non-spousal sexual or physical assault since the age of sixteen. In fact, over one in three women had been victims of sexual assault (Statistics Canada, 1995:104-106). But the assailants were not necessarily Serbs or any other politically relevant ethnic nemesis, therefore not as worthy of media attention.

My point is that rape at the hands of the ethnic “Self” seems to be played down, receives much less attention and is deemed less important. The rape victim is less important than the rapist, and the rapist becomes less important than his ethnic group. The rape victims become lost in a political shuffle and the issue proves to have little to do with the rights of women. Rape victims’ scars and their trauma become secondary to their own and their rapist’s ethnic group. Which brings me back to my initial point that
somewhere in this crisis, nationalism and nationalists have redirected the focus away from women.

Sex-biased nationalism in its fanatic quest for purity exposes women to abuse. Ethnic hatred makes women perfect targets of sexual violence, and national and international political groups and interests manipulate all these aspects. In the end, rape victims become a statistic, their trauma becomes an amorphous cause and they remain physically and emotionally scared long after their ethnic group absolves them of their stigma—as the political need arises.

In war, a male victim becomes a hero while a female victim becomes damaged goods, at least until it suits the society to treat her otherwise. Rape in war is an extension of the powerlessness and subordination that women experience in peacetime. Throughout the course of the war, women descend from being virgins to being victims to being forgotten. When the war is over, “their” sins are absolved, the stigma lifted and they are appealed to by their respective governments to forget their ordeal and become diligent mothers for the sake of their nation. This has already taken place in Croatia, for example.

Croatia’s democratically elected government, the Croatian Democratic Union (Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica - HDZ), tried to fulfil its election promise for a social and demographic policy which will “bring to an end the biological endangerment of Croatia and enable a demographic renewal of the Croat nation” (Croatian Democratic Union, 1990:86). In the spring of 1992, the Ministry for Renewal established a Department for Demographic Renewal under the control of a Catholic priest. The Croatian
government’s “Program for Demographic and Spiritual Renewal” proclaimed motherhood as the highest vocation and profession for women (B.a.B.e, 1995:1). Strategies were developed to raise the “ethnically clean” birth rate in Croatia, and social service incentives were proposed for women who gave birth to more than three children. This was to alleviate nationalists’ fears of “biological endangerment.”

The Croatian policy for demographic renewal calls for, among other things, a redefinition of the notion of womanhood, which attempts to affirm women’s primary allegiance to the household and family (Germinal, 1995:6). The Croatian government has been urging women to “become heroic childbearers” (McKinsey, 1992), and to “assist” women with their reproductive decisions, the Croatian government has passed a law which recognizes women with four or more children with a paid status of “mother educators.” Catholic fundamentalists like Don Ante Bakovic are firmly in support of this policy, saying that “the most sublime profession in the republic is the profession of mother-child raiser” (McKinsey, 1992).

Although women’s groups support social security measures for families, they have been sceptical of this act from the onset, (especially since courts have recorded an increase in domestic violence since the end of the war). Women’s groups in Croatia argue that existing practice shows that the Croatian state has not fulfilled its obligations in the past, and public discussions have revealed that the state’s budget for 1996 could not cover the expense for such a policy. In fact, the government has reduced spending on social services, while parental benefits, maternity leaves and daycare are threatened (B.a.B.e., 1994a; 1995:5). Second, the implementation of this
part of the country’s demographic renewal program, if it succeeds at swaying women, will undoubtedly have detrimental effects on the status of women in the country, as it moves towards the repolarization of gender roles.

The everyday life of many women will be characterized by non-modern and anti-modern divisions within the family based on traditional parental roles where husband/father is the breadwinner, protector and discipliner, and the wife/mother is a good housewife and diligent mother (Tomanovic, 1994:487). Finally, the official (government initiated) and unofficial (Bakovic-lead) demographic renewal program has taken steps to limit the availability of contraceptives, make abortion illegal and silence feminist voices. Making the ethnically “right” kind of child has become a top priority among nationalists.

Don Ante Bakovic, the president of the Croatian Population Movement and editor-in-chief of the movement’s publication entitled Narod (“Folk”) has published fourteen “population calendars,” which are intended to foster a more “massive multiplication of Croats” (Globus, 1996:14 and 43). He believes that wall calendars (agenda/day planner) are effective instruments of appeal to even semi-literate members of the Croat nation. He hopes that his calendars, which carry “pro-life” messages, will remind Croats of their reproductive obligations and inspire them to do their sexual duty, every day of the year. His calendar includes slogans such as “One loves Croatia by having children!” “There is no Croatia without Croats!” “Children are the blessing of Croatia!” and “Is Croatia dying out because of you too?” (Globus, 1996:14).
In war, women were terrorized by guilt and humiliation at the hands of their ethnic nemeses. They were sexually violated and forcefully impregnated mostly because they were of a specific ethnic group. In peace, although not as violently and certainly more subtly, the same women were shamed and coerced into motherhood by men in power who uttered statements like: “In a time when so many Croatian soldiers are leaving their lives at the alter of the motherland, we cannot do away with lives of unborn children” (McKinsey, 1992: B1). The state policy is also reflected in standard police response to charges of domestic violence: “We are at war, there are more important things to deal with” (B.a.B.e. 1995:7). In other words, physical and psychological abuse of “our” women at the hands of our enemies is intolerable, but the rule does not apply within our own ethnic and domestic boundaries. While the rapists treated women as sexual diversion in wartime, their “own” government insists that they should become diligent wombs in peacetime. The double-edged sword of nationalism is that, in war, women are violated because they are members of the “wrong” ethnic group, in peace they are targeted because they are part of the “right” one.
REFERENCES

Albanese, Patricia

Amnesty International
1993 January, Bosnia-Herzegovina - Rape and Sexual Abuse by Armed Forces.

Baban, Adriana and Henry P. David
1994 Voices of Romanian women: Perceptions of sexuality, reproductive behaviour, and partner relations during the Ceausescu Era. A Joint Publication with the Centre For Development and Population Activities, Washington and Bucharest.

Barrett, Michelle

Barth, Fredrik
1970 Ethnic groups and boundaries - The social organization of cultural difference. London: George Allen and Unwin

Bilandzic, Dusan, Boze Covic, Pero Jurkovic, Mladen Klemencic, Slaven Letica, Radovan Pavic, Zdravko Tomac and Stanko Zuljic
1991 La Croatie entre la guerre et l’indépendence. Zagreb: OKC.

Blagoevic, Marina

Bleuel, Hans Peter
130 Frontiers in Women’s Studies

Brownmiller, Susan
1975 Against our will: Men, women and rape. New York: Fawcett Columbine.

Burstyn, Varda and Dorothy Smith
1985 Women, class, family and the state. Toronto: Garamond Press

Calgary Herald
1993 Rapes on the rise in Russia. August 11:A12.

Calhoun, Craig

Catterall, Tony

Chalk, Frank and Kurt Jonassohn

Chanteur, Janine

Coleman, Janet

Commission on Security and Cooperation In Europe
1993 Human rights and democratization in Croatia. Washington, DC.

Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ)

Curlin, Peggy

DeConcini, Dennis and Steny H. Hoyer
1993 Human rights and democratization in Croatia. Washington: Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

Dickinson, James and Bob Russell (eds).
New Nations, Old Oppression


East, Roger

Enzensberger, Hans Magnus

Germinal
1995  *Globus*  

Grant, Linda
1993  *Horror of rape.*  
*Calgary Herald,* August 8:A11.

Harris, Ruth
1993  The ‘child of the barbarian’: Rape, race and nationalism in France during the First World War.  
*Past and Present.* Number 141:170-206.

Hayes, Carlton

Heckmann, Friedrich
1994  Nation, nation-state and policy towards ethnic minorities. In Bernard Lewis and Dominique Schnapper (eds.)  

Hodson, Randy, Dusko Sekulic and Garth Massey
1994  National tolerance in the former Yugoslavia.  

Ivekovic, Rada

Jordan, Michael
1993  *Myths of the world.* London: Kyle Cathie Ltd.

Koonz, Claudia
Laslett, Barbara and Johanna Brenner

Licht, Hans

MacKinnon, Catherine

Martinez, Andrea

McKinsey, Kitty

McKinsey, Kitty

Mead, George Herbert

Mladjenovic, Lepa

Mostov, Julie

Prebble, John

Roksandic, Drago
New Nations, Old Oppression  133

Silovano 39.628 Srpkinja
Statistics Canada

Tomanovic, Smiljka

Trifunovska, Snezana (ed.)

United Nations

United Nations Economic and Social Council (Economic Commission For Europe)

United Nations

United Nations
1979  Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

United Nations

Van Benthem van den Bergh, Godfred

Verdery, Katherine

Verdery, Katherine


Wilson, Fiona and Bodil Folke Frederiksen (eds.).


Zajovic, Stasa


Zametica, John

Notes


2 Jewish women were abused and killed by German soldiers in Germany, Poland and Russia during World War II, Vietnamese women were gang raped by American soldiers in the Vietnam war (Peter Arnett, Associated Press correspondent in Vietnam, believed that Americans participated more in gang rape because they were trained in the “buddy system” for security against the dangers of individual fraternizing on operations (Brownmiller 1975:98). Bangali women were abused at the hands of Pakistani soldiers in 1971 (Brownmiller, 1975).

3 MacKinnon was one of the clans involved in the battle at Culloden in 1746. It was a branch of Siol MacAlpine and possessed lands in Mull and Skye (Prebble, 1967:342).

4 In fact, rape victims were forbidden to have sex with their partners for nine months following the rape, so that purity of blood ties are ensured.


6 Ruth Harris (1993) described how French soldiers in the First World War felt psychologically emasculated when they were unable to protect “their” women and their right as “pere de famille” from the “barbarian’s incursions” (German troops, see Harris, 1993:199). French men were expected to destroy “bastard” children and re-impregnate French women in order to reappropriate them, the French family and French National territory (Harris, 1993:200). It is perhaps because national identity is often linked to sexual reproduction and blood ties that it has been labelled as an “eroticised identity” (Calhoun, 1993:231).

7 Susan Brownmiller argued that “war provides men with the perfect psychological backdrop to give vent to their contempt for women... A simple rule of thumb in war is that the winning side is the side that does the raping.... Rape by the conqueror is compelling evidence of the conquered’s status of masculine impotence” (Brownmiller, 1975:24-31). In other words, it is a battle between two (or more) groups of men.

8 In the spring of 1992, the head of this department was Don Ante Bakovic. One year later, following protests from the liberal press and women’s groups, Bakovic was removed from the state ministry, subsequently establishing a quasi-NGO, the Croatian Population Movement (B.a.B.e 1995:1-2).
9 Don Ante Bakovic criticized members of the Sabor (Croatian Parliament) for having an average of two children. He argued that having only one or two children contributes to the death of Croatia (Globus, January 5, 1996:14, 43).


11 The war setting and tolerance of militaristic culture have resulted in a general disregard by police and other state personnel to ensure women’s rights to be free from violence: “We are at war, there are more important things to deal with” (B.a.B.e. 1995:7, Status of Women In Croatia).
Feminist scholarship is oriented towards the improvement of the status of women and is undertaken by scholars who define themselves as feminists.... One part of feminist scholarship has moved towards the creation of a new field—women’s studies—while another portion understands itself as a perspective that is brought to existing disciplines, such as sociology.... One leads to the establishment of degrees at both the undergraduate and graduate level, whereas the other works towards transforming existing disciplines. (Eichler, 1995:3)

Since the late 1960s, when the second wave women’s movement emerged worldwide, feminists have worked to institutionalize women’s studies in academia. However, in the late 1990s we can see that the level of institutionalization differs in various countries. While Canadian women’s studies as an acknowledged academic field is currently celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary, women in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) are still struggling, after twenty years, to establish and to institutionalize women’s studies programs at the university level. Women’s studies in the FRG exist in terms of courses, lecture series on feminist issues offered at a few universities, research projects, professorships and the like, but not in terms of institutionalized women’s studies degree programs (see Broeck and Levin 1995:6).
In about thirty Canadian universities, women’s studies programs have been introduced since the 1970s. Degrees are granted at both the undergraduate and the graduate levels. For graduate work in women’s studies there are various models in place, such as the Graduate Collaborative Program at the University of Toronto (UofT), the Interdepartmental Graduate Specialization in Feminist Studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) and Canada’s first free-standing MA and Ph.D programs offered at York University.

In the FRG, however, there is hardly any systematic consideration of feminist thought and scholarship in mainstream academia. Women’s research in Germany mainly takes place outside the university in self-run projects often with low pay or without any financial support. Even the “restructuring” process after unification did not lead to further institutionalization of women’s studies. On the contrary, a conservative academic model has been re-established in East German universities, which had been previously criticized in the FRG.

The rhetoric of restructuring and downsizing dominates political discourse internationally. Currently, public budget cuts and privatization of social institutions such as welfare, health care and education rule and restrain the political agenda in Canada as elsewhere in the world. In terms of the financial cutbacks in higher education, the prospects for feminist institutions do not seem very encouraging. Among others, the Simone de Beauvoir Institute at Concordia University in Montreal—a bilingual research institute founded in 1978 and world renowned for its feminist documentation centre—is threatened. Similarly, in the Federal Republic,
various feminist institutions are at risk due to economizing in the public sector. For instance, the Institute for Social Pedagogy at Berlin’s Technische Universitaet (Technical University), well known for its feminist approach in theory and praxis, is also slated for closure.

In this paper, I will speak from my own experience as an exchange student at UofT. After a very brief reference to the historical background of Canadian women’s studies, I shall discuss the different women’s studies programs at UofT, OISE and York University. Also, I shall share my impressions and some of the problems I observed during my study visit. In addition, I will express concerns about the recent development within the politics of higher education in Germany, including a critical assessment of the gender studies program which will be introduced this year at Humboldt University in Berlin. Finally, I will ask how women’s and gender studies programs can be transformed in order to re-connect with the feminist political movement outside academia and thus re-emerge in the struggle for social change.

Canadian women’s studies emerged in the 1970s during a period dominated by a federal liberal government which, as part of its mandate, fostered groups striving for self-determination and self-expression. “Feminist groups were funded through the Secretary of State’s Women’s Program” (Eichler, 1996:3). In Canada, a large number of feminist organizations are directly funded by the state. This is very unusual compared to most other countries (Eichler, 1996). In 1970, the Royal Commission on the Status of Women recommended that efforts be made to improve the conditions for women within the educational system. In 1982, the government of Quebec’s
Commission on Adult Education reached a similar conclusion, noting the deterioration of women’s economic status regarding access to full-time and well-paid employment. Therefore, women’s studies were seen as essential for the improvement of women’s opportunities for learning (Brodribb, 1987:1).

The first women’s studies course in a Canadian university was taught in 1970 at Sir George William University (now Concordia) in Montreal. Since then, women’s studies programs have been introduced in almost half of Canadian universities. Many conferences have been held by organizations such as the Canadian Women’s Studies Association (CWSA) and the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW). Various women’s studies journals have been created. The *Canadian Newsletter of Research on Women*, later renamed *Resources for Feminist Research/Documentation sur la Recherche Féministe* (1972), *Atlantis* (1976) and *Canadian Women’s Studies/les Cahiers de la Femme* (1978) are some of the major ones.

Nevertheless, the fragility of these accomplishments is obvious. The permanence of women’s studies is threatened with each government announcement of redundancy and fiscal exigency. The politics of restructuring in Ontario exercised by a conservative government has led to tremendous cutbacks and downsizing in education (and social nets). Similar in its terminology and in its actual impact on society is the current restructuring discourse in Germany.

*Abwicklung* (dismissal), *Erneuerung* (renewal) and *Aufschwung Ost* (improvement in the East) became widely used slogans of a discourse that
came into being after unification. The restructuring process (not confined to the educational system) has had a tremendous impact on everyday life and the organization of social relations, especially in the Eastern Federal States. Within the academic context, numerous institutions were closed down and thousands of academics (primarily women) lost their jobs or were pushed into early retirement. Those who remain employed are often in insecure, temporary positions at the middle and lower levels within the university hierarchy.

In the course of renewing sociology in the Eastern Federal States of Germany, for instance, all new implemented professorships (N=38) with the exception of four are occupied by white German men. The new sociological institutes are organized in conformity with the four classical spheres of mainstream sociology, that is, theory, methods, macro and micro sociology. According to Reinhardt Kreckel (1994), one of the new chair holders,

[1]his important step within the institutionalizing process of sociology in Germany inevitably leads to the creation of an orthodoxy: If you don’t participate in the institutionally defined principal item of sociology you automatically remain at the margin. This is what has happened to the sociological women’s studies and gender studies. (Kreckel 1994:9, translated by the author)

According to Kreckel, the exclusion of women is “the unfortunate wrong side of the presumably most important breakthrough for the German Sociology as a whole.” Therefore, he recommends that the most successful strategy for sociological women’s research “would be to sensitize and thus enrich the principal item of the sociological spheres such as theory, methods, macro sociology and micro sociology” (Kreckel 1994:9).
The image of women at the “wrong side” of the “most important breakthrough” serves to justify the systematic exclusion of women. It also declares a conservative academic concept as a “new beginning.” The role of women in academia, as Kreckel suggests, is based on a traditional concept of social relations of a gendered division of labour: men as decision-makers, women as assistants. Only as assistants in subordinate positions are women welcome to “sensitize” and “enrich” the major fields of sociology; thus a gender hierarchy within the academic community is reinforced. In addition, the myth of women as passive victims is perpetuated and the resistance of women against these practices of power is denied.\(^2\) Finally, considering the fact that in Germany only 5% of professors are women, compared with 22% in Ontario, women’s studies in Canada appear to be more stable and secure.

However, the introduction of women’s studies in universities does not necessarily create a feminist environment for sustained and collective reflection in the field. As Somer Brodribb (1987), a former student at OISE and currently a tenured faculty member at the department of Political Science at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, states:

\[
\text{[M]} \text{ore is required before scattered courses pulled together in an interdisciplinary programme can exist as feminist studies. The most valuable criteria for identifying a feminist orientation in a women’s studies program are the possibilities for students to participate in their own education and to create their own feminist plan of studies. Essential for feminist studies is, therefore, a variety of sustaining and enabling resources, such as special library collections, archival resources, bulletins, newsletters and}
\]
most importantly, spaces and centres where women can meet and study. (Brodribb, 1987:5)

The Centre for Women’s Studies in Education at OISE (CWSE) is one of the places that creates such a space. The Women’s Resources Centre, part of the CWSE, not only provides access to books and journals relevant for feminist studies, but also to other unique archival material such as pamphlets on the early women’s movement, files of clippings, flyers announcing feminist gatherings at the university and in the community, and much more. Furthermore the centre provides the possibility to discuss individual research projects with experienced feminist scholars.

Feminist Studies at OISE involves faculty and students from a number of departments who share an interest in this large and growing field of scholarship, activism and research. Students can specialize in Feminist Studies at the master’s and doctoral levels within the different OISE departments. This specialization includes a large number of feminist scholars on the faculty, a variety of research projects and many students working in the area. The Women’s Resources Centre, and the Centre for Women’s Studies in Education with its active research program and the journal, Resources for Feminist Research/Documentation sur la Recherche Féministe, published by OISE, also contribute to the effectiveness of the program.

Within the Graduate Collaborative Women’s Studies Program at UofT, OISE builds the strongest component. It provides a third of more than one hundred women’s studies courses listed, followed by the English department (eleven courses) and the French department (ten courses).
The Graduate Collaborative Women’s Studies Program at UofT (CPWS) is based on the traditional disciplines. As collaborating units within the program, the departments contribute courses and provide facilities and supervision for graduate research. Prospective students must apply to, and register in, one of the collaborating units, the so-called “home departments,” then follow a course of study acceptable to both the participating unit and CPWS. The CPWS provides a wide range of courses from eighteen different departments. However, a closer look at the courses offered reveals that there are many (almost a third) which do not indicate a feminist approach either in the title or in the course description. The new Gender Studies Program that will start in autumn 1997 at the Humboldt University in Berlin is shaped in a similar manner. The courses listed in the program include a number of courses which do not necessarily imply a feminist approach. The problem of how to decide what courses will be included in a women’s studies program derives from the lack of discussion about what constitutes feminist scholarship. In Germany as in Canada, most of the women’s studies programs are simply put together depending on the disciplines and faculty involved.

The initiative to establish a program in women’s and gender studies at the Humboldt University has existed since the establishment of the Centre for Women’s Research in 1989. In the course of the Wende (societal changeover) in the German Democratic Republic in autumn 1989, the Zentrum fuer Interdisziplinaere Frauenforschung (Centre for Interdisciplinary Women’s Research) at the Humboldt was established by
a group of women academics who had been working on feminist issues for about ten years.

Currently under discussion at Humboldt is an interdisciplinary degree program planned and conceptualized along the lines of the Graduate Collaborative Women’s Studies Program at UofT. This means that the new study course at Humboldt will be provided by the existing departments offering courses and lectures on gender issues. The idea is to get a major degree in a conventional discipline and a minor in gender studies. Humboldt will be the first university in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany offering a degree program in gender studies.7

Normally, considering the current budget situation in Berlin, requesting financial resources for feminist projects such as the program at Humboldt would meet with tremendous resistance. However, the proposed program at Humboldt does not request fiscal support. Therefore, the prospect of introducing the study plan seems quite positive as there will be (in the beginning) very few, if any, financial resources required. According to the experience at the UofT, it is obvious that such a large program requires an extensive coordination (Armatage, 1996:15). Once started, we will have to see whether or not the program is feasible in terms of administrative work (i.e., registration, study counselling, student services and so forth).

A third institution offering women’s studies programs in Toronto is York University. York introduced the first free-standing graduate women’s studies program in North America. The graduate program has been in existence for five years, and in 1997 the first Ph.D in women’s studies was
Frontiers in Women’s Studies

confferred. The concept behind York’s approach seems to be “both a complement and a corrective to established fields at York and a new academic discipline of its own” (Women’s Studies 1996-7, York University). It also provides an environment for sustained and collective reflection essential for study in the field. Students have access to research resources, meeting rooms and centres on the campus necessary for feminist scholarship. These resources include the Nelly Langford Rowell Library (women’s studies library), the Centre for Feminist Research and the Canadian Women’s Studies/les Cahiers de la Femme, a feminist journal edited by the centre. However, some students have criticized the women’s studies program for not addressing issues related to race, sexuality and lesbian studies.

In sum, while the UofT model claims a “potential for multidisciplinarity” (Armatage, 1996:15), the Women’s Studies Program at York is defined as an “interdisciplinary discipline” (Shteir, 1996a:22). OISE provides the opportunity to “specialize in Women’s/Feminist Studies” (OISE bulletin 1996/97). Gender studies at Humboldt defines itself as a “critical perspective towards the traditional disciplines” (Studienordnung (study regulations), spring 1997:9).

These programs differ in terms of their structure and vision, and thus reflect the discussion concerning the institutionalization of women’s studies in general. Is women’s studies a discipline on its own (i.e., York) or is it a perspective applicable to all disciplines (i.e., OISE)? Or is the “add and stir,” the multi-discipline model (i.e., UofT) the desirable one? Does it make any sense to institutionalize degree programs in women’s studies at
The question of whether women’s studies/feminist scholarship should be separated from or integrated into the university system as a whole has been debated since the emergence of women’s studies (see among others Bowles and Klein, 1983; Shteir, 1996).

According to Deborah Gorham, a senior women’s studies professor at Carlton University in Ottawa, “degree programs... enmesh the project of feminist scholarship.” She argues that the institutionalization of women’s studies programs under current conditions distracts us from the original purpose of feminist scholarship, which is to transform the whole educational system: “[S]quandered in the Sisyphian labour of administrating units which are always underfunded and understaffed... our energy is drained away from transforming the disciplines and the university as a whole” (Gorham, 1996:66). Therefore, she promotes the idea of having centres for feminist research with looser, less conventional structures, rather than discipline-based, isolated women’s studies programs with structural and administrative obligations.

Comparing the three Toronto programs, the model introduced at York University appears to be the most progressive. Since York has introduced the first free-standing Ph.D program in Northern America, it seems the most developed model in terms of accomplishment on the administrative level.

On the other hand, the program offered at OISE seems to be the most radical in transforming the curriculum of the institution as a whole. Introducing feminist studies at OISE did not require a new administrative apparatus (separate funding etc.) since the structure to implement feminist
Frontiers in Women’s Studies

scholarship was already in place. Furthermore, the concept of feminist scholarship at OISE includes community outreach. For instance, the Centre for Women’s Studies in Education (CWSE) has been organizing the “Popular Feminism Lecture and Discussion Series” for thirteen years.

Women’s studies at the UofT stands somewhere between the York and OISE models. As a cooperative model, it depends on the goodwill of the collaborating units. In addition, the participating disciplines in the program require their students to take most of their courses in their home discipline. For example, difficulties arise in studying sociology and women’s studies since the Master’s program in sociology at UofT allows students to take only two courses outside the department. Thus, the UofT sociology department accepts sociology courses taken at OISE only as the outside course substitutes. These restrictions leave little flexibility in combining a discipline-based interest with a full engagement in women’s studies.

Despite the apparent rigidity, the UofT model has some advantages because of its discipline-based structure, that is, students may graduate in a traditional discipline as well as in women’s studies. As the students enter the program “through a traditional department, a base of disciplinary canonical knowledge and methodology can be assumed” and the “potential for multi-disciplinarity” is guaranteed due to its institutional structure (Armatage, 1996:15f).

The importance of being an expert in a traditional discipline is also articulated by students in the program, since it is still difficult to compete on the academic job market with a degree (exclusively) in women’s studies. Even applying for a university position explicitly designed as a women’s
studies position seems difficult for scholars qualified exclusively in women’s studies. Apparently, the market seeks applicants qualified in both women’s studies and in a conventional discipline.\textsuperscript{10}

At the UofT, those enrolled in the women’s studies program do feel encouraged and empowered to address and to speak up on feminist issues in their home departments. At the same time, women’s studies students at the UofT feel divided and doubly committed because they are involved in two programs and communities. Furthermore, the lack of teaching assistantships and the absence of a women’s studies department or a centre where feminist students can meet and socialize are the main concerns of students currently enrolled in the program.\textsuperscript{11}

Women’s studies at the UofT is an understaffed and underfunded project. Faculty members are either untenured or cross-appointed. In the former case, they generally have no employment security; and in the latter, faculty have little time to increase the institutional status of women’s studies because of their departmental obligations. Only two of the six core faculty hold the majority of their appointments in women’s studies. Thus, being employed in women’s studies often requires additional work from the faculty. Moreover, due to the fact that women’s studies courses are embedded in the general university structure (including increasing tuition fees, requirements and assignments), some students are more concerned about getting good marks than engaging in feminist issues. On the other hand, students depend on these marks to further their academic careers.

Let me now come back to the situation of women’s studies in the Federal Republic of Germany and at the Humboldt University. As noted
Frontiers in Women’s Studies

earlier, the prospects of introducing the proposed gender studies program seem very good, particularly since there is no extra financial burden on the university. However, I want to draw attention to the problematic assumptions underlying this proposal.

Under current economic and political conditions, the prospect of introducing a new program requiring an infrastructure, faculty and resources seems very unlikely. Implementing a program that involves no or very few extra financial resources seems to be the only realistic strategy for setting a program in place. However, I feel this approach is problematic as it perpetuates the notion of women’s research as a resource available for free. Moreover, it takes for granted the unpaid extra work (done by women) such as administration, registration, counselling, student services and the like. As a result of all this unpaid labour, a gender studies program will be introduced that will apparently cost next to nothing and at the same time will improve the university’s profile and reputation.

Moreover, we must not overlook the context in which the introduction of gender studies at Humboldt takes place. Chances are fairly good that gender studies will be established at Humboldt. At the same time, among others, the Institute for Social Pedagogy at the Technische Universitaet (Technical University) in Berlin is at risk of being closed down because of the ongoing cutbacks in Berlin’s higher education. This particular institute has had a special emphasis on feminist research and theory for years.

Looking at recent developments in German sociology and Berlin’s higher education budget cutbacks, it seems like a double conservative
backlash. Progressive institutions are going to be closed down and progressive approaches are removed from the agenda while “new” conservative ideas and institutions are being (re)introduced. In that context, I feel that the success of introducing gender studies at Humboldt is rather doubtful, despite the fact that its establishment is a remarkable achievement. After more than twenty years of struggle, the first academic gender studies degree program will be introduced in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany.

In conclusion, I want to suggest some possible changes in terms of curricula and pedagogy in women’s and gender studies committed to challenge the status quo of academia and society. To build on what has already been accomplished, women’s and gender studies should consider the concerns articulated by students enrolled in the programs. To create space where feminist students and faculty can meet and socialize should be one of the main goals in order to strengthen the feminist academic community. Moreover, women’s studies programs may consider implementing alternative forms of conducting research and presenting findings as feminist action research suggests. The curriculum of women’s and gender studies could be transformed, for example, by introducing a practicum component as part of the program. Possible locations for such a practicum could be found among other feminist community-based organizations like emergency services, women’s shelters, abortion clinics, women’s centres providing educational programs, counselling and information about legal help, health care, etc.
Students could thus become acquainted with feminist services as well as activism outside the university and find ways of making their work relevant to women’s lives by using their skills as activists. Other placements could include feminist resource centres and archives such as the Women’s Resource Centre at OISE or the Women’s Research Centre at the Humboldt University. Women’s studies programs should also consider offering students the opportunity to work collectively on papers, exams and final theses. Additionally, the presentations of research findings could be designed in a popular manner in order to reach a broader audience. For example, a thesis could be presented as a theatre play, video production or be published as a series of articles in the popular press and media. Thus, women’s studies would contribute to bridging the gap between feminist communities outside the university and feminists in academia. By creating collective research projects, the network between feminist scholars and feminist activists could be further strengthened.

Since women’s studies emerged from a political movement, it is always being challenged. Thus, feminist scholars have to rethink their theories and assumptions. There is a need to become aware that the categories of class, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation must be included in a feminist theory that is committed to liberating all women. Feminist theory, as bell hooks (1989) points out, has to analyze racism, classism and sexism as interlocking systems of domination and oppression in order to abolish white, and male, supremacy. However, invoking and using a radical discourse which remains exclusively in the halls of academia has no political force as such (Stanley and Wise, 1990:22). Feminist
scholarship in general, and women’s/gender studies in particular, has to align itself with a political women’s movement in order to strive for social change.
154  Frontiers in Women’s Studies

REFERENCES

Armatage, Kay

Beattie, Mary and Berkely, Heather A.O. (eds.)
1996  Working together. A Publication for the Education Community at the University of Toronto.

Bowles, Gloria and Klein, Renate Duelli (eds.)

Brodribb, Somer with the assistance of de Seve, M.
1987  Women’s studies in Canada: A guide to women’s studies programs and resources at the university level. Resources for Feminist Research/Documentation sur la Recherche Féministe, Special Publication.

Broeck, Levin

Coates, Jacky, Dodds, Michelle and Jensen, Jodi

Committee on the Status of Women
1996  Status of women in provincially-assisted Ontario universities and related institutions.

Eichler, Margrit
Eichler, Margrit

Gorham, Deborah

Graduate Collaborative Women’s Studies Program, University of Toronto 1996/97

hooks, bell

Kreckel, Reinhardt

Nemiroff, Greta Hofmann

Nickel, Maria

OISE Bulletin
1996/7 Graduate degrees in education. University of Toronto/The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Reinharz, Shulamit

Shteir, Ann B.

1996  Making the vision a reality: York University’s graduate program in women’s studies. Pp. 3-10 in *Visions and Realities*. Ann B. Shteir (ed.). York: Inanna Publications and Education.

Shteir, Ann B.


Stanley, Liz and Wise, Sue


The first women’s studies course, entitled “Women’s Identity and Image,” was co-taught by Greta Hofmann Nemiroff and Sister Prudence Allen then Christine Gorside (Nemiroff, 1989:14).

I refer to the notion of women as the loser of German Unification, which leads too easily to simplifying and reducing the complexity of the German transformation process.

OISE used to be an independent institute for graduate studies and research in education, affiliated with the University of Toronto. Since July 1, 1996, the institute has merged with the Faculty of Education of the UofT, which has had and presumably will continue to have an enormous impact on its structure and further existence. Right now, it is not clear where the Centre for Women’s Studies is going to be in the future. Interestingly, in a diagram of the new structure of OISE, the Centre for Women’s Studies carries the note “floor to be announced” (Beattie and Berkeley, 1996:2).

See Graduate Collaborative Program in Women’s Studies 1996/97.

Collaborating disciplines are, among others, Anthropology, Law, History, Political Science, Philosophy, Social Work and Criminology.

The inclusion of non-feminist courses is also confirmed by students who went to attend those courses, realizing that the course or the instructor was not dealing with feminist scholarship at all.

The proposed study program will lead to a Magister, which is comparable to a Canadian master’s degree.

The critique was brought up during an open session attended by women’s studies students and faculty at York University in January 1997.

OISE is both, part of the UofT and part of the UofT Graduate Collaborating Women’s Studies Program. It also grants its own degrees.

I am referring to a discussion which appeared on the internet in April/May 1997 (http://www.ambc.edu/wmst/forums.html).

I refer to the program evaluation I attended in October 1996 and to personal conversations and interviews with the women’s studies students.
Feminist action-oriented research “allows people to both understand and change inequitable distributions of power, knowledge and resources” (Coates et al., 1996:96). Building connections between university communities and communities outside academe is crucial to feminist action-oriented research. Suggestions to make feminist action-oriented research broadly accessible include using non-academic language and making research available in various ways (such as publication in popular press, distribution through community groups and acting out in popular theatre, also see Reinharz, 1992).

This has already been practised, for instance, in the UofT women’s studies core course “Feminist Philosophy” taught by Kathryn Morgan.
EXPERIENCES WITH GENDER STUDIES (I)

VERONIKA BUSCH
HUMBOLDT UNIVERSITY

As a student of musicology in Heidelberg, my experiences with gender studies were practically non-existent. In this romantic old town at the Neckar River, I knew, of course, that women could also compose. I also knew the names Clara Schumann and Fanny Hensel. But that was about it. The curriculum in our music department included neither women composers nor general questions about music and gender. The curriculum was as ancient as the town.

Then I transferred to Humboldt University of Berlin and realized that in addition to the historic musicology, there also exist the interesting fields of systematic, sociological and popular music research. All of them are represented at Humboldt University. And while the latter two of these fields regularly offer courses about gender-related questions, the traditional historic musicology had to wait for two young assistant professors to bring in the gender subject. Three years ago, Annegret Fauser and Tobias Plebuch offered a course, entitled “What is Feminist Musicology?” which was a first attempt to break out of the traditional canon of questions. But, astonishingly, the course had to be cancelled due to lack of student interest—almost no one attended the course. And I must admit that I also felt a little bit uneasy about the feminist attribute. Although I personally felt emancipated, I preferred to stay away from any radical feminist associations. But I became interested
in what feminism is able to provide for musicology. In discussions with the
two quite disappointed assistant professors, I soon became aware of the
enormous significance the category gender has in music and in the whole
music industry. For music is composed, listened, researched and
commercialized by individuals who are all restricted to certain gender roles
which must also affect the music, its market and its research.

Shortly after the cancelled course, I had the opportunity to organize
the annual student congress of musicology together with seven other students
from Humboldt University. The organizing committee consisted of three
women and five men. We soon agreed on “Gender Studies” as the theme of
our conference and were really astonished at the number of responses to our
call for papers, mostly from the United States and Great Britain. The
contributions were selected without knowing the respondents’ names and we
invited them to Berlin in October, 1996. With Michele Edwards from the
United States, Eva Rieger from Germany, Alan Stanbridge from Canada,
Peter Franklin from the U.K., Margaret Myers from Sweden and a number
of other contributions by younger scholars and students, this congress
promised interesting discussions. It was very important for us to have both
female and male speakers in order to avoid being dismissed as a “women-
only-conference.”

While again almost no student from our department attended, a
large number of them came from other universities, as well as many people
from outside academia. Feedback from radio stations was also very good.
So there was a strange tension between obvious indifference, on the one
hand, and a strong need to talk about gender and its significance for
musicology on the other hand. This need was reflected in our decision to allocate as much time to discussion as to the papers themselves.

In the course of the conference, one question turned out to be central for the participants and very exciting for me: Which direction should future research of music take? Feminist musicology versus gender studies was the topic of the opening lecture by Fauser and Plebuch, who presented their paper as a dispute. The same question also dominated the panel discussion at the end of the conference. In the following sections, I want to summarize the main points, especially the ones of the opening lecture.¹

While Rieger and Edwards pointed out the necessity for a feminist musicology, Stanbridge called for a kind of critical musicology that could serve as an umbrella for an interdisciplinary music research, including feminist approaches. Everyone seemed to be involved in this discussion because feminist research versus gender studies is not just a matter of methods and content, but also of authority, influence and financial support. In short, “It is about power!” as Fauser and Plebuch put it.

They said that one could wilfully accuse the proponents of feminist research of just trying to hold on to their niche in which they work among themselves, obtain subsidies and are protected from male competition. On the other hand, there is a need for intensive and strong women’s research and promotion because female scholars are still under-represented in institutions such as the university. And only slowly do they get a chance to penetrate male-dominated academia. The importance of motivating one another to keep on fighting must not be underestimated because only strong women will have enough energy to actually change the status quo in the long run.
I could not help but ask myself the following questions: What could a field of study look like that would be reserved for women only? Is there a specific female method? I do not think so. Rather it is possible to have a specific female object of study. Why should only women be able to work on questions concerning women? Do men lack the necessary intuition or the experience to understand women’s lives? What about the usual standards of validity or reliability? Or do we have to think about a totally different approach to the act of studying? If so, what would it look like? Is it not desirable to reach a point where the scholar’s sex becomes irrelevant? Not only women had and often still have to live up to certain gender roles. Men are also formed by constructions of gender and confronted with expectations. So it seems that the question about the relationship between the two sexes is the important one. Are gender studies the solution then?

Fauser and Plebuch stated that there is a danger of deterioration of scholarly standards if both female and male scholars feel obliged to contribute one or two articles in order to complete their list of publications. However, gender studies offer women the opportunity to achieve an academic reputation, while men could gradually occupy a field initially dominated by women. Thus, gender studies could be seen as a softening of the feminist research agenda, which thereby becomes more presentable but at the same time loses its punch. Through the backdoor, the male-dominated canon would be reinforced and again men would speak for women.

Are gender studies just a further development of feminist research? And do gender studies now turn to feminism as an interesting object of study that had an enormous influence on the discipline? Including men into these
studies prevents feminist approaches from being isolated in the academic discourse—according to the motto “we do not have to care about it, there is a female professor who does.” Both men and women are called to think about different gender roles and effects on their own discipline. So specialization may be very important and useful, but it could also be dangerous. But how can a relatively young discipline be generally accepted when it does not concentrate on its own institutional establishment first?

I was really surprised about the energy that was devoted by the participants of our conference to the question of feminist research versus gender studies. And I wonder whether the whole discussion might not reveal a generation problem. The musicologists who took the first step with feminism and brought the gender subject to our discipline obviously felt uneasy or even annoyed about the more general gender studies, because the latter threatens to take away their impetus and their privileged positions. For the students, however, it seemed to be just a matter of course that excluding men cannot be the solution. Rather a dialogue of both sexes is needed to realize different constructions of gender and their relationship to one another. One can suspect a kind of arrogance behind the latter position. The younger generation does not have to struggle as hard as the older one just because of being female. We profit from the earlier fights and often take our position for granted. But until we reach a point where the equal treatment of both sexes becomes a taken-for-granted reality, there is still much to be done.
Almost all papers will be published in the congress report by autumn 1997 (S. Fragner, J. Hemming and B. Kutschke (eds.) ConBrio Köln, series Forum Musikwissenschaft).
EXPERIENCES WITH GENDER STUDIES (II)

ULRIKE STODT
HUMBOLDT UNIVERSITY

Since I first started studying social sciences in 1992, I have actively followed the debate on gender in the widest sense. In fact, I guess I chose this course of study so I could explicitly pursue feminist sociology.

Then, as now, I consider myself committed to feminism and want to bring the key findings and discourses into the focal point of my studies. I embarked on my studies in Göttingen in central Germany. What that university had to offer in terms of courses on gender studies was somewhat lean, but at least it was integrated into a B.A. equivalent courses in the form of an “Introduction to Feminist Theory.” What was striking about this course was that it contrasted with the experiences I was to have later on in my studies of feminist theory, in that this seminar was well-attended by male students.

In terms of the content, the course offered a well-grounded historical overview. We discussed questions of whether Rousseau was a misogynist, for example, and examined Marxism and feminism on the basis of texts by Catherine McKinnon. It did not address the debate around issues of equality, difference and—increasingly topical these days—deconstructionism. Thus, after my initial training in feminist theory, I found myself wondering how theory and practice in everyday life could be linked; a key question, and one
that I, and presumably many others like me, feel still requires an adequate answer.

At this point, two things of great importance for my future development happened. First, I had to choose a topic for my B.A. thesis, and second, I attended a conference on “An International Comparison of Women’s Studies.” At first glance, these two things might seem to have little to do with each other, but for me, they were of decisive significance in terms of my “career” in gender studies.

My thesis on women and right-wing radicalism was my first attempt at applying feminist theories to a phenomenon that exists in the present-day social reality. The result made a great impression on me at the time. Right-wing radicalism remains something exclusively associated with typically male dimensions (such as direct violence) and thus is dismissed as a peripheral phenomenon. Theoretical findings on gender-specific socialization were also ignored, as were somewhat more female forms of articulating this stance (such as structural violence).

What emerged for me from working on this issue was a growing need to go further into women’s studies, but at the same time, I had a sense that Göttingen had little to offer me in pursuing this aim. There was little room for innovation at this very traditional university and the wave that led me along—women and right-wing radicalism—died down. I was to get no further with such an issue here. To a certain extent, I was thus ready to move on. I sought a way of making my ideas of where I wanted to go with my studies a reality. It was then that I took part in the workshop I mentioned above.
Among many other academics who held talks about their work in the field of women’s studies and about its institutionalization at various universities and colleges, Gabriele Jähnert spoke about the Centre for Interdisciplinary Women’s Studies at the Humboldt University in Berlin. Still in its infancy, the centre was working towards getting established and being able to offer courses at the Humboldt University.

This lecture strengthened my resolve to continue my studies at the Humboldt University. I looked forward to being able to satisfy my need to learn feminist theory and I was excited about the discussions that awaited me there in the wake of German unification.

In the fall of 1993, when I started studying in the philosophy department, I realized that I had come to Berlin with unrealistically high expectations. Hildegard Maria Nickel was, and still is, the only professor at our institute who offers courses on feminist theory. The institutionalization of the centre was still in the distant future and the Humboldt University, particularly the social sciences faculty, was still searching for a new identity. Motivated, I took part in the seminars offered and was struck by the fact that far fewer students attended them than had been the case in Göttingen. Perhaps one explanation for this might be that feminist or gender-specific issues were less of an issue in the former East Germany than in the former West Germany, since in East Germany, the equality of women was considered more or less self-evident. As a result, fewer women perceived themselves as oppressed or marginalized and had less need to address this issue.
Despite the smaller numbers of students, these seminars offered an opportunity for intensive work, and the issues they addressed (including women’s employment in a time of change) came closer to what I was looking for in terms of combining feminist theory and social practice. The course dealt less with feminist positions and more with the impact of gender relations on employment.

It is certainly true that sociology is the discipline most predestined for gender studies, but I believe that current discourse in Germany is increasingly losing its relationship to practice in everyday life. In times when women are being described as the losers of the German unification and the welfare state is being increasingly dismantled to the particular disadvantage of women, discourse on feminist theory remains in an ivory tower.

The fact that the Humboldt University will be running an interdisciplinary course on gender studies starting this fall is certainly something to be celebrated. The “gender issue” can now be debated on a very wide and cross-sectoral basis. An understanding of gender as a structural category is certainly a step in the right direction towards uncovering social power and hierarchy relations. But breaking them down requires feminist positions and not a moderate “look at gender relations.”

I have no wish to dispute the importance of sensitizing people in all fields to gender issues, but in my opinion, disciplines like sociology need to take an innovative and somewhat less conditional approach by attempting to relate feminist theory discourse to empirical social reality. I see the danger of a certain political responsibility getting lost in this discipline, as the scope
Experiences with Gender Studies (II)  169

of an interdisciplinary course of study presumably means that its contents will have to be more broadly based.

A project headed by Hildegard Maria Nickel, called “Women in the Process of Industrial Transformation,” which I am also working on, attempts to create this link between theory and empirical experience. We are trying to ascertain the courses of action open to (East German) women in changing industrial realities in order to identify potential alternatives women have in terms of their employment preferences in a labour market that is becoming increasingly more restricted.

In terms of content, this project has brought me to a point that appears to do justice to my initial aspirations. But it never ceases to alarm me how little one can take this discourse for granted.

As a discipline that ought to be among the avant-garde of feminist thought, sociology is increasingly losing its political feminist focus. The ever-broadening debate around the deconstruction of gender goes hand in hand with an important and exciting discourse on the dismantling of the gender hierarchy. But on the other hand, this discourse on the deconstruction of identity fundamentally calls into question the subcultures that have arisen through female identities (i.e., lesbians, women of colour etc.). Within the key concept of identities also lies a dilemma; in deconstructing identities, there is a danger of negating them. This discourse offers almost no real alternative courses of action or utopia, comparable to the ones that play a central role in classical theories. At this juncture, it must be observed that the self-evident way in which race, class and gender are taken into account in theory and empirical experience is less pronounced in Germany than, say,
in North America. As I see it, this state of affairs is an indication that there is still a great deal of political work to be done before people accept these dimensions into their awareness as “normal.”

For me as a student, redefining feminist thought and content, particularly in relation to sociology, seems unavoidable. What path is to be taken from here? A path that is relatively far away from women’s actual needs? Is it not the case that in a discipline that can look back on a small tradition of feminist studies (unlike many others where women have not done the same amount of pioneering work) an attempt needs to be made to use discourse to pursue political ends as well? Or have women’s studies been shunted onto a sidetrack to such an extent that it is little more than something to keep us occupied, without there being any real interest in the actual issues involved?
WE are only recently becoming cognizant about the close link between separation and divorce, and the increased propensity for male violence against women. My own recognition of the link coincides with interviews I conducted with separated and divorced women to understand their (and their children’s) adjustment after divorce (see Sev’er and Pirie, 1991a/1991b; Sev’er, 1992). Although violence was not the focus of the mentioned study, I was surprised by accounts of control, harassment, stalking and even physical and sexual assaults my respondents recalled during or shortly after their separation.

In this paper, my exclusive focus is on violence perpetrated by men against their female partners (Lupri, Grandin and Brinkerhoff, 1994; DeKeseredy and Hinch, 1991; Dobash and Dobash, 1979). I use the term “violence” within its broadest context as intentional acts to cause pain, injury or even death (Brinkerhoff and Lupri, 1988; Kennedy and Dutton, 1989). My definition also subsumes controlling and degrading behaviours (DeKeseredy and Hinch, 1991; DeKeseredy and MacLeod, 1997; Dobash et al. 1995; Kirkwood, 1993; MacLeod, 1987; Tifft, 1993). I use the term separation as an imminent or recent termination of any intimate relationship.
of some longevity. According to Crawford and Gartner (1992), recent separation rather than divorce per se is the crucial risk factor in violence against women. Moreover, I concentrate on woman-initiated separations since they challenge male hegemony the most. Within these boundaries, I will provide a review about intimate violence and termination of relations, apply a conceptual power and control model, and exemplify how this violence manifests itself. Examples are selected from the Canadian media as well as from interviews I conducted with separated/divorced women as well as with survivors of intimate violence. Finally, I will suggest ways to break the cycle of violence.

**REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

In the literature, marriage license is often called a “hitting license” (see Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1986, 1980, also see Gelles, 1987, 1994). Studies in Canada and the United States also show the existence of this socially repugnant aspect of intimate relations (WAC Stats, 1993; Canadian Panel, 1993). Sadly, anywhere from one in four to one in eight women report at least one incident of physical abuse in their long-term relationships (VAWS, 1993). Nevertheless, thinking about marriage as a hitting license is misleading in at least two ways. First, common-law or dating partners also engage in violence (Crawford and Gartner, 1992; DeKeseredy, 1989a; 1989b.) Second, even if the marriage (license) is terminated, violence may not cease. Often, it escalates, and sometimes it spreads outside of the home. Women report that partners who were not violent before sometimes become violent during or after a separation (Bean, 1992; Block and Christakos,
The link between violence and the break-up of marriages can be seen in at least three different bodies of literature: divorce statistics, victimization surveys and femicide data.

**Violence as a precursor to divorce**

Official statistics on interpersonal violence are often open to errors of underreporting—due to fear, shame, availability of no-fault categories such as a three-year waiting period etc.4 Probably, this underreporting also mars the reported grounds for divorce (see Rodgers, 1994 and Bain, 1991:i for underreporting problems). It is likely that the correlation between divorce and termination of marriages is even stronger than what official statistics show. Despite this minimization, statistics on grounds for divorce often reflect the existence of violence prior to the break-up, in legal marriages. For instance, divorce statistics prior to the 1985 Divorce Act5 show a clear link between violence and the break-up of legal marriages in Canada. Under the 1968 Divorce Act, physical and mental cruelty categories accounted for 60% of all alleged grounds for marital offences (see Sev’er, 1992: 84-90 for an analysis).

Statistics on divorce also glean over the gender of the victim. Nevertheless, since as much as 92-95% of violence among intimates is directed towards female partners (Statistics Canada, 1994; WAC Stats, 1993: 55), the fact that 60% of the alleged grounds for marital offences were in categories of violence is revealing. In the United States, 30% of divorced
adults cite physical violence as the reason for their divorce, again clearly linking violence and marital break-up (WAC Stats, 1993). However, divorce statistics alone do not explain how earlier violence may translate into further violence after separation. For these, we need to consult other sources, such as victimization surveys and femicide data.

Victimization surveys

Survey research furnishes a more direct link between separation and intimate violence against women. For example, Kennedy and Dutton (1989) found that while about 55% of separating/divorcing people reported physical violence, the percentage among still cohabiting partners was significantly lower (about 40%). Other findings also attest to the increased risk of victimization of separated women (Smith, 1990; MacLeod, 1980; also see Canadian Panel, 1993; DeKeseredy and MacLeod, 1997; Wilson and Daly, 1993). Moreover, a recent Canadian survey found that 19% of females who reported violence by a partner claimed that the violence occurred during or after separation. In one of three reported cases, the severity of violence had increased at the time of separation (Johnson, 1995; Rodgers, 1994; VAWS, 1993).

Femicide data

At an extreme, women are killed by their partners during or shortly after separation (Campbell, 1992; Daly, 1992). Crawford and Gartner (1992) claim that the number one risk factor in intimate homicides is
Separation, Divorce and Violence

separation. While Canada’s rate of woman killing is approximately half the rate in the US, it is twice as high as the rates in most other developed countries (1992: 38). Moreover, the rate Canadian women are killed by their intimate partners is increasing (1992: 44,51,57,101).

Wilson and Daly (1994) analyzed 1435 wife murders in Canada between 1974 and 1992, and observed that the risk of being murdered was not random. Married women were nine times more likely to be killed by their spouse than by a stranger. Separation presented a six-fold increase in risk to women in comparison to couples who continued to reside together. Wilson and Daly (1993) underscore the fact that the heightened risk is despite the estranged husband’s decreased access to his former wife.

Thus, in divorce statistics, victimization studies or intimate femicide statistics, the elevated risk for women during or after separation is irrefutable. The reasons behind this increased risk needs to be addressed.

THEORIES OF INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE

The existing theories of spousal violence range from psychological (which place the blame on deranged individuals, sadistic men or masochistic women) to social-psychological (which focus on behavioural/social deficiencies, alcohol/drug dependency, general aggression, inability to keep jobs etc.). Yet, there are also strong challenges to these explanations. For example, a vast majority of men who abuse their partners do not have clinical pathologies (Gelles and Straus, 1988; Gelles and Loseke, 1993). Neither do they randomly beat up on their bosses, friends or neighbours. Instead, they selectively and systematically target their female partners.
Moreover, although alcohol consumption is highly correlated with cases of violence against wives, alcohol is neither a necessary nor a sufficient cause for such violence (Crawford and Gartner, 1992; Gelles and Loseke, 1993; Lent, 1991; MacLeod, 1980; Rodgers, 1994). In sum, although intrapersonal or interpersonal factors may offer an explanation for a particular individual’s behaviour, they fail to explain while so many men abuse their wives or lovers. Therefore, I will briefly discuss theories which go beyond micro-level explanations and seek the roots of violence in socio-cultural dimensions.

As the name implies, social learning theories assert that violence is learned. Learning occurs through observation, modelling and reward systems. Learning can be direct (experience), or vicarious (through observing what happens to other perpetrators/victims). Generally, social learning theories accentuate the generational or peer transmission of violence. Transmission is extremely important when one considers the fact that many children witness violence against their mothers or are victimized themselves (Rodgers, 1994:1; also see Ney, 1992; Wolfe, Zak and Wilson, 1986). The Ontario Medical Association reports that one in three battered women and one in two abusers were either abused as children or witnessed domestic violence between their parents (Lent, 1991). In an extreme, children witness the murder of their mothers (Crawford and Gartner, 1992:87).

The transmission of violence could be vertical (such as violent fathers/sons, Levinson, 1989). Indeed, women whose fathers-in-law were violent report more frequent and more severe abuse than women with non-
violent fathers-in-law (Rodgers, 1994; VAWS, 1993). It could also be horizontal (violent peers, subcultures of violence, Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 1967). Although there is support for the latter in peer cultures and dating relationships (see DeKeseredy, 1988; 1989a/b and DeKeseredy and Kelly, 1993 for recent examples), there are also limits to such explanations (see Dobash and Dobash, 1979). In sum, learning theories have a substantial explanatory power in terms of general violence. However, they are not well-equipped to explain either the onset or escalation of violence during a separation. Therefore, I now turn to a discussion of feminist views about power and control.

**Power, control and challenges to control**

Despite differences in orientation, feminist theories seek the roots of violence in the intersection between social structures and interpersonal processes. In this interface, they emphasize the central role of gendered distribution of power (Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Kirkwood, 1993; Okun, 1986; Pence and Paymar, 1993; Yllo, 1988). Gendered power and its manifestation (control) are seen to determine work, politics, law, health, education, religion, and family relations (Dworkin, 1993; Firestone, 1970; Radford, 1987, 1992a/b; Russell, 1989). Although all men are not “all powerful” and all women are not “all powerless,” and certainly all men are not abusers, a large number abuse women in order to exert and maintain “coercive control” over them (Daly and Wilson, 1988, Ch. 9; also see Wilson and Daly, 1992; Kirkwood, 1993; Radford, 1987; Stets, 1988). Some even argue that all men benefit from keeping women in their place.
Another way of conceptualizing the position of feminist theories is through identifying what they are against. For example, mainstream theories derive from as well as reinforce the historical perception of male authority as an “earned and deserved” right (see the resource theory of Blood and Wolfe, 1960). Early research also indicates that men may resort to physical power when their privileges are challenged (Goode, 1971; Straus, 1974). Thus, while the traditional literature assumes the “legitimacy” of male dominance, feminists unequivocally challenge its legitimacy. Instead, feminist explanations locate the roots of intimate violence within the power and control a gender hierarchy spawns.

It is true that no theory has all the necessary components to adequately explain the underlying complexity of violence against mates. However, when one considers violence during the dissolution of relationships, feminist theories that focus on gendered power differentials offer unrivalled insights (Okun, 1986) precisely because women-initiated separations challenge the foundation of a historic male bastion: “his” power and control within “his” home. In light of these insights, I argue that when controlling men feel external or internal, real or perceived threats to their authority and power within the family, the propensity for violence escalates. More specifically, men who have routinely exercised dominance are likely to attempt to regain control and re-establish the status quo if they feel their control over their mates is threatened or diminished. To use Dutton and Browning’s terms (1988a/b), men who experience evasions of intimacy, anxiety and feelings of abandonment may attempt to reclaim control through increased psychological or physical pressure on their mates who have
challenged them (Renzetti, 1988). Probably the most complete package of challenge to men’s dominance unfolds in cases of women-initiated separations since any one or a combination of the following may be interpreted as a “dare.”

- Negation of his decision-making power and choice (when a woman decides to separate and escape from his day-by-day control (economic, social, sexual).

- Negation of his taken-for-granted roles (as husband/lover/provider/parent etc.). Enactment of some of these roles by another man will escalate the threat (a denial of his exclusive proprietary rights over his wife/children).

- Increased prominence of her new social support systems (friends/family/counsellor/police/lawyer/lover) that signals the dismantling of his earlier isolation efforts.

- Rejection of his resources (income/housing) or a more direct entitlement to these resources outside of his traditional control (alimony, child support, division of property).

- Restrictions to his free access (to home/belongings/accounts/visitation with children, etc.).

In Figure 1, we see the relationship between violence and power and control as articulated in Pence and Paymar’s (1993) groundbreaking Duluth Project Model. The power and control tactics subsumed in each slice of the wheel are already well-conceptualized and documented in recent works (see Tifft, 1993; Dobash et al., 1995). All eight segments of the power and
control model generally work in unison and determine the physical and sexual violence during the tenure of intimate relationships. However, I propose that four of the eight segments of the model are particularly relevant during separations triggered by women.

Attempts to reclaim power and control will concentrate on use of intimidation, use of children, use of economic resources, and use of coercion and threats. Moreover, I argue that during a separation, the rim of violence will expand beyond the partner/children and subsume friends, neighbours, other kin and even innocent bystanders. Another aspect which needs emphasis is the increased overlap among different control strategies, such as verbal intimidation, stalking, physical assault or rape.
Figure 1. Power and control model as conceptualized by Pence and Paymar (1993:31).

Control through escalated intimidation

In intimate relations revolving around male power and control, intimidation may take the form of looks, gestures, words, actions and ritualistic displays such as destroying property and belongings. During or shortly after a separation, these tactics may escalate to harassing calls,
threats, stalking, abducting and kidnapping. They may also involve major
destruction of property and violence towards the woman’s loved ones.

Some Examples

Laurette explained the crushing control on her life in the following
words: “Every morning, I woke up and felt that there was a thick layer of
cement on me. I did not want to get up, all I wanted was to go back to
sleep.” Moreover, when she obtained a court order against her abusive
husband and initiated divorce proceedings, he escalated the pressure. He
made relentless phone calls. Her husband broke into their house and
physically assaulted her and their teenage son. He instructed his lawyers to
subpoena her telephone bills so that he could scrutinize her contacts.
Another survivor, Sue, was also repeatedly stalked by her estranged partner.
She received harassing calls twenty to thirty times a day, dotted with serious
threats. She laid charges on several occasions. Ironically, a (male) judge said
“Oh no! Not you again!” as if her complaints rather than the partner’s
relentless stalking/harassment were the problems.

A young woman, whom I will call “Damian’s mother,” has changed
her own as well as her son’s names in order to escape persecution by her
estranged husband. When I met her, she was temporarily sheltered in a
friend’s house during the day. However, she and her five-year-old son spent
the nights among the massive garbage bins of the apartment building since
she (and her host) feared an unexpected raid by her persecutor. Damian
complained about the smell of garbage which kept him awake most of the
night. Although he was eager to talk about his nightmarish life, he
stammered profusely. Sadly, the neighbours who knew nothing about the
predicament of the mother and son complained about the “vagrants” sleeping among the garbage. Shortly after I met them, they left behind the meagre safety of their pungent refuge.

News reports abound with stories of terror. Mr. MacNeile was convicted for choking his wife’s female friend, whom he felt his (estranged) wife should not associate with. Although they were legally separated, “he felt he had a right to make decisions for her” (cited in Toronto Star, March 28, 1996: A28). Mr. Schmidt was sentenced to two-and-a-half years for terrorizing, stalking, threatening and swearing at his estranged wife because “he could not accept the fact that his marriage was over.” When he heard of his sentence he called out, “I might as well have killed her!” (Toronto Star, April 7, 1995: A20). Mr. Vellupuram kidnapped his former girlfriend at the point of a shotgun three months after she broke off their relationship (Toronto Star, May 30: 1995:A14).

Control through children and other loved ones

In controlling relationships, children may be routinely used to induce guilt, take sides, demean and threaten the woman, or they may serve as additional targets of abuse. It is also likely that men will escalate their control during the separation process and harass people closest to their estranged mates.
Sue’s estranged partner picked up her son (from an earlier marriage) from school, without her knowledge or consent. Although her son was returned unharmed, she was terrified about what else he would/could do to them. A perusal of kidnapping and murder cases reflected in the media justifies her fear. For example, Mr. Korzan drenched his children and his estranged wife with gasoline and turned his wife into a human torch. He also burned down their house awaiting sale after the separation (Toronto Star, May 31, 1993: A1/A4). Alan Gubernat fatally shot his three-year-old son in the head, and then killed himself. His murderous rage followed a judgment allowing the child to carry his estranged wife’s last name (Toronto Star, May 16, 1995: A21). Richard Brosseau killed himself as well as his two-and-a-half-year-old daughter. The murder/suicide took place six weeks after his wife left him (Toronto Star, May 26, 1994: A1). Eugene Banks abducted and killed his two children and himself by locking his parked car inside a rented storage unit and turning on the engine. The newspaper mentioned that he had taken his children to a pizzeria for their last supper (Toronto Star, November 4, 1995:A2). Fortunately, the above incidents are rare, but the terror they generate is debilitatingly real for most separated women.

After the dismantling of a controlling relationship, new partners, family and friends may also find themselves engulfed by violence. Mr. MacFie kidnapped his wife not once, but twice. He also stabbed her brother and beat up her sister (Globe and Mail, August 7, 1997: A11). Mr. Quance broke into his estranged wife’s boyfriend’s apartment. He doused them with
gasoline and set them on fire (Toronto Star, April 19, 1996: A28 and March 19, 1996: A8). One of the most vicious mass murders in Canadian history was also committed by a recently estranged husband when nine members of a British Columbia family were gunned down. The death toll reached ten when the assailant fatally shot himself (Toronto Star, April 6 and 7, 1996: A1; Globe and Mail, April 8, 1996: A4).

Control through economic and legal abuse

By now, it is a well-known fact that women’s standard of living sharply declines after a separation. Many women are left to fend for themselves and for their children under the auspices of equality in the eyes of the law. Others receive minimal and often non-reliable support, even if their partners may be economically secure (see Sev’er, 1992 for an in-depth analysis). Some men prefer to go to jail rather than make alimony payments (Toronto Star; February 5, 1998: A5). What is less well-known, however, is the fact that most controlling men block their partners’ economic self-sufficiency throughout their relationship. They may interfere with employment opportunities, usurp their income, refuse to share their own money and show reluctance to meet the most basic household necessities (DeKeseredy and MacLeod, 1997; Hoff, 1990; Kirkwood, 1993). During the separation process, these tactics may escalate and even involve the use or misuse of the courts.

Some Examples
Many women mentioned their estranged partners’ tightening grip on their economic well-being, but the following story is particularly noteworthy (also see Scutt, 1997). Because Laurette had no independent income, and because her estranged husband was refusing to pay alimony or child support (for four children), she often bought groceries with money she borrowed from her mother. To save Laurette from the humiliation of “asking” for grocery money, and to save herself trips to the bank, her mother gave her withdrawal privileges on her own bank account. When Laurette received a support payment, she paid her mother what she owed (deposits). However, her estranged husband used this joint account information to “drag” Laurette’s aged mother to court, as a “co-conspirator” in depriving his children of food by “stashing away money” from “his child support!” Laurette had to submit to the court (and thus to his scrutiny) every grocery bill during the last two years of their legal battles. In her own words: “He was so articulate and accomplished that the judge did not expect him to concoct these vicious lies. Even my own lawyer may have thought... that I was starving my own children!”

The day Iris separated from her husband of twelve years was also the day he took back all her credit cards. Her husband also cancelled her health and dental benefits (which required a modest coverage fee at the time), although his employer covered the fees. Iris had no established line of credit on her own. Losing her dental coverage also meant losing numerous teeth.

Control through coercion, threats, and explosive violence
In controlling relationships, simple threats often produce a docile acceptance. Conformity can also be attained through threats of reporting/exposing intimate information to family, friends or authorities. During the separation process, these tactics may not be seen as sufficient. The control-seeking man may increase the pressure on numerous people, not just the ex-partner. In an extreme, his tactics may spiral into physical and sexual assault, and even intimate femicide or murder.

Some Examples

According to Rodgers (1994:8), 35% of currently married but 59% of previously married women report some form of emotional abuse by their partner. Moreover, almost half of these women claim that, at some point, they feared for their lives. The research also indicates the bone chilling fact that when men kill their intimate partners, they often “overkill” by using much more force than it would have been necessary to end a life (Crawford and Gartner, 1992:97). Examples abound in the media reports: Suzanne Ferry was bludgeoned to death, then set on fire (Toronto Star, November 25, 1992: A22); a man believed to be despondent over his marriage breakup rigged an explosion which burned three houses down, including his estranged wife’s house. His wife’s life was miraculously saved through the heroic efforts of the neighbours (Toronto Star, June 12, 1995:A8). Nicole Mattison was killed then her body was cut into pieces and disposed of in Lake Ontario (Toronto Star, June 10, 1992: A5); Graciela Montants was viciously beaten, then strangled to death (Toronto Star, February 11, 1993: A7).
In all cases, the victims had recently left their partners. One had left her partner the day she was killed.

Threats and control can also be sexual. Mr. MacFie kidnapped his estranged wife twice. Each time, the abduction followed harassing calls, stalking, and a confrontation with family and friends who intervened. Each time, she was severely beaten and raped. Eventually, Ms Meredith’s mangled body was found in Mr. MacFie’s van (Globe and Mail, August 7, 1977:11).

Ann, a young woman I interviewed, is legally disabled as a result of repeated beatings. The frequency and the severity of abuse increased when she wanted to end the relationship. After an attempt to leave, Ann was driven to a remote nature conservation area under the auspices of “reconciliation.” She was violently raped, and forced to walk, totally exposed, for seven miles. He drove ahead, watching her from his rear-view mirror. Although he was convicted of assault, he served less than a month in jail, and only on weekends. He continued to make harassing calls, even when he was in jail. The night caretaker was his cousin.

The grip of control also expands to beloved belongings. Laurette and Sue talked about the shattering of their treasured heirlooms. Laurette’s husband burned her books when she decided to take a few university courses. Daisy’s husband slashed her favourite dress into ribbons, so that she would not look pretty and “run-away” with other men. There were no other men in Daisy’s severely isolated existence. Ann’s partner’s violence extended to the cat she loved (and still keeps). He would raise the cat closer and closer to the revolving blades of the ceiling fan, and demand that Ann
swallow large doses of sleeping pills. The partner liked to keep her drowsy and docile.

DISCUSSION

As the examples clearly show, the termination of a relationship is not a guarantee for the termination of control tactics or violence, regardless of the type of relationship. In contrast, the magnitude of control may even escalate and spread outside of the dyad. What also needs emphasis is the fact that in all of the cited cases, the abusers/killers were “normal” men in other aspects of their lives. Even more ironically, some were prominent men (such as Laurette’s ex-husband).

I must stress the fact that the examples I provided from my interviews and the media reports are too selective to lead to any generalizable conclusion. Nevertheless, all entail elements of control during the onset, continuation or escalation of violence against estranged female partners. It is not so infrequent that men kill their former partners or murder their/her children, family, friends and lovers. These acts are sometimes cold and calculated. At other times, they reflect frantic and explosive attempts to re-establish control, and to re-possess the woman who wants to get away.

Disgruntled male partner’s control tactics include attempts to make decisions for ex-wife/lover or in blocking the decisions she makes for herself/children; by psychological pressure such as harassment, stalking, kidnapping and even dispensing drugs (in Ann’s case) and making the woman vulnerable and docile; by menacing things/people she cares about; through economic deprivation or legal wrangling; through desecrating,
threatening, harming children, new lover, family members, friends, including meaningful belongings, house and pets; and by defiling her body through sexual assault, burning and maiming. At an extreme, men “achieve” the ultimate control through single or multiple murders.

Children are also used and abused. This may be because they are small, trusting and vulnerable. Men also use children to get back at the partner. During an inquest about the two-and-a-half-year-old daughter Richard Brousseau murdered (see above), his own mother said: “He vowed to make his former wife suffer for ever!” (Toronto Star, October 23, 1995:A6).

What can we do to break the link between separation and increased propensity for male violence? The answer to this question is intimately linked with what one considers to be at the root of violence. Feminists see violence towards women as a criminal offence and squarely place the blame on the abusers. Thus, an effective use of the criminal justice system combined with re-education of men are offered as a possible remedy (Burris and Jaffe, 1983; Stout, 1992). In this regard, the Duluth project in the United States and its offshoots remain promising (Pence, 1983; Pence and Paymar, 1993; Sherman, 1992; Dobash et al., 1995, see Snider, 1990 for conceptual difficulties). Yet, Dobash et al.’s (1997) meticulous analysis also shows that not all men are candidates for such intensive efforts, and from those who complete the program, a sizeable portion continue to inflict violence against their partners.

Another crucial task is to alter the perceptions and attitudes of law makers and enforcers themselves, since there are many examples of blatant
ignorance and sexism within the justice system itself. In 1954, G.H. Hatherill, a commander of Scotland Yard stated, “[t]here are about twenty murders a year in London and not all are serious—some are just husbands killing their wives” (cited in Toronto Star, December 11, 1995:A17). Lest we think this is dated, here is a more recent example. A Michigan court judge, Joel Gehrke, “told a man convicted of spousal abuse to roll up his shirt sleeve, then punished him with a three-finger ‘slap’ on the wrist” (Toronto Star, January 18, 1996:A13). How can women expect protection from a system that resonates with such archaic paternalism?

More easily and immediately attainable strategies are suggested by some of the women I interviewed (also see the resilience of women in Hoff’s (1990) interviews). Their suggestions revolve around breaking the control over their lives, preferably before it engulfs them. Survivors suggest prevention as the golden rule. Pointing out the link between early episodes and later manifestations of violent behaviour, they suggest avoiding abusive dating partners. If prevention is not possible, getting immediate help, or getting out of the relationship are advised. With the authority their often tragic experiences has given them, they argue that outbursts followed by reconciliations will only fuel explosions at the time of separation (also see Ellis, 1992; Kirkwood, 1993; Nielsen, Endo and Ellington, 1992). They recommend that women resist isolation and nourish a social network that can witness the events and offer help when needed. The goal is “to reclaim oneself” psychologically, socially, economically and sexually, from the talons of the partner’s control. They also demand more sensitivity towards women from the political and most particularly, legal systems.
Allen, Craig M. and Straus, Murray A.

Bain, Joan

Bean, Constance

Block, Carolyn R. and Antigone Christakos

Blood, Robert O. and Wolfe, Donald M.

Bograd, Michelle.

Brinkerhoff, Merlin and Eugen Lupri

Burris, C.A., and Jaffe, P.

Campbell, Jacquelyn C.


DeKeseredy, Walter 1988 *Woman abuse in dating relationships: The role of male support.* Toronto: Canadian Scholars’ Press.


Dobash, Russell, Rebecca Dobash, Kate Cavanagh, and Ruth Lewis. 1995 *Research evaluation of programmes for violent men.* Manchester: Violence Research Unit.


Dutton, Donald and James J. Browning. 1988b Power struggles and intimacy anxieties as causative factors in wife assault. In G.W. Russell (ed.) Violence in intimate relationships. New York: PMA.


Gelles, Richard J. and Murray A. Straus

Goode, William J.

Hart, Barbara

Hoff, Lee Ann

Johnson, Holly

Johnson, H. and P. Chisolm

Kennedy, L. and Donald G. Dutton

Kirkwood, Catherine

Lent, Barbara

Levinson, D.

Lupri, Eugen, Elaine Grandin and Merlin B. Brinkerhoff

MacLeod, Linda
1980  

MacLeod, Linda

1987  

Ney, Philip G.

1992  

Nielsen, Joyce, Russell K. Endo and Barbara L. Ellington.

1992  

Okun, Lewis

1986  

Pence, Ellen

1983  

Pence, Ellen and Paymar, Michael

1993  
*Education groups for men who batter: The Duluth model.* New York: Springer.

Phillips, Roderick

1988  

Radford, Jill

1992a  
Radford, Jill

Radford, Jill

Renzetti, Claire M.

Renzetti, Claire M.

Rodgers, Karen

Russell, Diana E.H. (ed.)

Scutt, Jocelynne A.

Sev’er, Aysan
1992 Women and divorce in Canada: A sociological analysis. Toronto: Canadian Scholars’ Press.

Sev’er, Aysan and Marion Pirie
198 Frontiers in Women’s Studies


Stout, Karen D.

Sherman, Lawrence W.

Smith, Michael D.

Snider, Laureen
1990 The potential of the criminal justice system to promote feminist concerns. Studies in Law, Politics and Society. 10: 143-172.

Statistics Canada
1994 Processing of sexual assault cases. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Justice.[Cat. 85-538E].

Stets, Jan E.


Tiffet, Larry L.


Wilson, Margo I. and Martin Daly.


Wilson, Margo I. and Martin Daly

1993 Spousal homicide risk and estrangement. *Violence and Victims* 8:3-16.

Wilson, Margo I. and Martin Daly


Wolfe, D., L. Zak, and S. Wilson


Wolfgang, Martin E. and Franco Ferracuti


Yllo, Kersti, and Michelle Bograd (eds.)

NOTES

1 Since the presentation of this paper during the Humboldt University and the University of Toronto Exchange, a conceptually and theoretically expanded version has been accepted by the Violence Against Women Journal.

2 Same-sex relationships can also be violent. The power and control processes I discuss in this paper may be relevant to violence in same-sex relationships (see Hart, 1986; Renzetti, 1988, 1992).

3 This paper provides a conceptual overview rather than report results from a particular study. The examples I use are drawn from three different sources: interviews I conducted with eighty-seven divorced women, between 1985 and 1988 (see Sev’er, 1992; Sev’er and Pirie, 1991a/b); interviews with twelve survivors of long-term abuse from an ongoing study supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC); and mass media reports of intimate violence collected between 1990 and 1996 from the Toronto Star and The Globe and Mail, which have the largest circulation in Canada. Although none of these sources are random or representative, they nevertheless provide clarity to the conceptual links I explore here.

4 Under the 1968 Divorce Act, Canadian law allowed a number of “marital offences” such as adultery, physical cruelty, mental cruelty and others (i.e., sodomy, bestiality, homosexual acts, etc.). The law also allowed a number of “marital breakdown” categories such as addiction to alcohol, separation not less than three years, desertion not less than five years, etc. In 1985, the Divorce Act was liberalized by eliminating “marital offences” terminology as well as reducing the waiting period from three to one year. Under the revised act, more than 95% of divorcing couples now use the no fault category of separation not less than one year (see Sev’er, 1992).

5 The stated duration is prior to the 1985 liberalization of the Divorce Act (see note 4, above).

6 For examples, see Allen and Straus (1980) in status inconsistency situations where the husband’s contribution is seriously deficient (i.e., unemployed) or inferior to his wife’s (lower income/education, etc.). For the severe punishment of adulterous wives who have “transgressed” their husbands’ exclusive proprietary rights over their bodies, see Phillips (1988). For shifts in the status quo (i.e., pregnancy), see Lent, 1991; MacLeod, 1980 and VAWS, 1993).

7 According to Pence and Paymar (1993), the power and control model is also applicable to violence in same-sex relationships.

8 I use pseudonyms to refer to the survivors I interviewed.