

effet les derniers quand il s'agit de mettre les prophéties de la libération au service de nouvelles formes de domination.

**RESUMEN.** Parece como si la revolución feminista fuese un hecho consumado. Se enumeran las conquistas de las mujeres, las posiciones sociales hasta hace un tiempo inaccesibles que ellas ocupan ahora. Incluso semeja inquietar las amenazas que este nuevo poder hace pesar sobre los hombres, hasta el nivel de la fundación de movimientos de defensa de los intereses masculinos.

Los dominantes siempre tienen tendencia a sobreestimar las conquistas de los dominados, y a atribuirse a ellos el mérito, incluso cuando les han sido arrancadas. En la actualidad, el neomachismo sobreestima las transformaciones de la condición femenina y subestima las permanencias; incluso se puede servir de el pretexto de las amenazas que pesarian sobre las libertades (con el fantasma fóbico de lo "politically correct") para rechazar en principio incluso la reivindicación feminista, mientras que por otra parte pueden hacer de la "liberación sexual" un argumento o un instrumento de seducción imperativo. Los intelectuales, que se creen tan gustosos como libertadores, no son de hecho los últimos cuando se trata de poner las profecías de la liberación al servicio de nuevas formas de dominación.

Revista Mundial de Sociologia (The World  
Review of Sociology) No. 2 (1996)

## GENDER INEQUALITY IN CANADIAN POLICY CONTEXT: A MOSAIC

MONICA BOYD and SUSAN MCDANIEL\*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

As the twentieth century draws to a close, few would dispute its characterization as a century of enormous change. In Canada, a post-industrial society emerged with shifts in employment away from agriculture, mining, forestry and fishing, and manufacturing to services, in many but not all regions. A greater ethnic diversity also developed as immigration from Asia, and to a lesser extent Africa and Latin America, replaced nineteenth century flows from Europe. And, like most industrial democracies, the existence and persistence of gender inequality sounded a clarion call for analysis and action.

In Canada, public policy has created contradictory signals regarding the continuation and eradication of gender inequality. On the one hand, there has been an historical reinforcement of women's subordinate social status in family and social policy. On the other hand, labour market policies have sought to give women economic parity with male workers. Each policy perspective intersects with and feeds the other in both contradictory and non-contradictory ways.

In this paper, we review the mosaic of public policies in Canada, with particular reference to family and work. During the late 1800s and early 1900s,

\* Authors are listed alphabetically and have contributed equally to the paper. Comments may be sent to either author at: Monica Boyd, Department of Sociology, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2011, USA; Susan McDaniel, Department of Sociology, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2H4, Canada.

government legislation assumed and perpetuated female dependency on males. Such state action signified the transference of familial-based patriarchy to social patriarchy in which the power to distribute resources rested as much with state actions as with the family (Burt, 1993; Ursel 1992). After World War II, however, this dimension of state involvement was combined with state feminism, in which the state became the champion of gender equality. Under this new regime, government policy and legislation sought to reduce gender inequality, mainly in the marketplace (Heiting, 1993; Ursel, 1992).

In Canada as in many other western industrialized countries, public policies explicitly targeted at gender inequality take two forms: gender equality policy and women's policy (O'Connor, 1993; Hernes, 1987). The former consists of actions taken by governments to give women, as individuals, the same rights and entitlements granted to men, particularly with respect to status and power. Improving the position of women in the labour market is a major focus of this policy approach, with strategies ranging from increasing equality of opportunity, to removing systemic discrimination, to explicitly stipulating outcomes that are gender equal. The gender equality approach has been the dominant approach in Canada to date, and it is the approach found in state feminism. The women's policy approach encompasses social policy that improves the situation of women and children through the provision of government services and transfer payments. It goes beyond traditional discussions of social policy in two ways: a) by emphasizing childcare and family leave policies as logical outgrowths of connections between family and paid work; and b) by demanding gender sensitive analyses of the welfare state and the ways in which female dependency on males is assumed and sustained through state policies (Baker, 1994b; O'Connor, 1993; Orloff, 1993). It challenges, rather than supports, social patriarchy in which the state reconstitutes gender dependency relations. Juxtaposed to this visionary stance, however, is the ascendancy of conservative ideology in the 1990s and the theme of fiscal constraint. As we observe in the conclusion, preventing erosion of women's equality gains, rather than moving further forward, is likely to be the real challenge of the 1990s.

## 2. WOMEN AND SOCIAL/FAMILY POLICIES

In virtually all policy and law until very recently, women have been presumed to be familial, the financial responsibility of their fathers, their husbands, or their

adult sons. Only in cases of dire need, when family support is not possible or likely, were women to call upon the state for support. The state and state policy then become a substitute for the missing man in the family, enforcing women's dependency and reinforcing women's family roles (Baker, 1990; Fraser, 1987; Orloff, 1993).

Social and family policy and law have shaped women's lives and women's opportunities in Canada in fundamental ways, generally supporting the status of women as mothers, as dependents, as care-givers to others. The lack of possibility to earn a living wage outside the family and home, argued by Ursel (1986) to be a direct consequence of social and corporate policies, meant until relatively recently in historical terms, that marriage for women was their best economic option, and that marriage was inextricably interlinked with women's economic prospects for equality<sup>1</sup>. It was as family members that women were/are valued by society, and inequality of women was not only taken as a given, but reinforced explicitly by policies (Ursel, 1992; see McDaniel 1993b for the contemporary version of this). When women worked outside the home in the first half of the twentieth century, it was presumed by employers, by families and often by the women themselves, that their employment was temporary until they married, or had children. In many companies, women lost their jobs on the occasion of their marriages. Morton (1992) shows how company policies strongly supported marriage for their women employees, with employers hosting engagement showers, and often buying the "happy couple" an expensive gift for their wedding. The presumption clearly was that women's true destiny was to be married and at home rather than being in the paid workforce.

Families and women in families have been, and still are, held accountable, ideologically and practically, for social problems and social changes. If divorce increases, it is said that women are putting themselves, their careers and so called "selfish" interests, ahead of those of their families. If youth crime is a problem, it is thought that women are not adequately socializing children. If schools face problems with children, again it often comes back to women's family responsibilities not being taken seriously. In these terms, women are not only not equal

(1) Recently released Statistics Canada data (10 February 1995) reveals that it is mainly among married women that the gender gap is largest and most persistent. For single women, the gender wage gap is closing fast. Of course, that the vast majority of women are married means that the wage gap remains a serious and large challenge for women.

to men, but experience profoundly different pressures to be the solutions to social ills.

With women's lives being scripted as familial -- from the anticipation of adolescent girls for a handsome, and (of course) rich man to "sweep them off their feet" to women much more often being the ones to sacrifice career for family -- women's opportunities in the paid labour market tend to be curtailed. This is widely known and understood in sociology. What is less well known and understood is the role of social policy in this scripting. Fraser (1987) points out that women are defined by social policy as caring, as familial. This works in two ways, both of which disadvantage women: first, women are the first to be called upon (or expected to do without being asked) the caring for others -- young, old, infirm, needy (McDaniel, 1993b; McDaniel & Gee, 1993); second, women are most often entitled to the benefits of social policy through their family status rather than their individual or work-related status (Fraser, 1987; Heitlinger, 1991; Orloff, 1993; McDaniel, 1993a). Folbre (1988) suggests that the family and women as an extension of family, are exempt from the motivating self-interest of the market-place. This, says Folbre, both idealizes women in families (as selflessly caring for others ahead of themselves) and isolates women by compelling them to nurture the next generation of self-interested risk-takers while strictly limiting their own competitive inclinations (McDaniel, 1993b).

### 3. WOMEN AND PAID WORK

If state policies have situated women within the family, and have reinforced their dependency on men, how can this be reconciled with the development of state feminism in the second half of the twentieth century? As we suggested earlier, the two policy approaches - state patriarchy and state feminism - are not necessarily contradictory, and certainly can co-exist. In Canada, the labour force was the arena in which state feminism was most pronounced. But government actions to promote gender equality in the labour force tended to emphasize the first position on a polarity of possible approaches: a) androcentric models of equality versus woman centered models; b) equality of opportunity versus equality of result; and c) individual rights versus group rights (Heitlinger, 1993); and d) home or paid work versus home *and* paid work. As a result, even though some shifts in thinking have occurred, the consequences of female dependency frequently were unattended to by labour market policies, and remain so.

For the first 60 years of the twentieth century, most of the work that women performed was hidden in the household and certainly underestimated in the officially defined labour force<sup>2</sup>. Only 14 percent of Canada's women were in the labour force according to Canada's 1901 census. Half a century later, in 1951, approximately one quarter (24 percent) of Canadians women were in the labour force. However, during the second half of the century, female labour force participation rates accelerated, rising to 60 percent of all women age 15 and older in 1991. Most of these new "workers" were married women, often with young children.

Increased labour force participation of women occurred alongside a post World War II interest by the Canadian public and policy makers in issues of inequality generally. The *Canadian Bill of Rights*, passed in 1960 by the federal Parliament, guaranteed rights and freedoms to individuals without discrimination by race, national origin, colour, religion or sex. The 1965 report of the federally appointed Commission on Bi-Lingualism and Bi-Culturalism focused attention on the persistent inequalities between Canada's two "charter" groups - the British (or English) and the French. The report coincided with the publication of *The Vertical Mosaic* in which sociologist John Porter also examined the French-English disparities together with those of other ethnic groups.

Despite their roles as founding mothers of Canada, women were not explicitly discussed as part of the debate on French-English inequalities. Judicial application of the Canadian Bill of Rights also revealed its failures as a guarantor of gender equality with courts focussing on intentions rather than effects (Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues, 1991; Baines, 1993). Nonetheless, the issue of gender inequality was not dormant. In February 1967, the federal Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW) was established, following extensive lobbying by individual women and women's groups (Adamson, Bris-kin and McPhail, 1988: 51).

The mandate of the RCSW explicitly stressed gender equality within an "equality of opportunity" framework. As outlined in the minutes of the 16 February 1967 Privy Council meeting, the commissioners were instructed to "...inquire into and report on the status of women in Canada and to recommend

(2) At the turn of the century, home work such as food processing, taking in boarders, doing laundry or cooking for others for pay seldom was acknowledged as productive work. And as recently as 1971, the labour force domain defined by Statistics Canada's census excluded persons who were unpaid family workers or worked as farm labourers and did less than 20 hours of unpaid family work a week.

what steps might be taken by the Federal government to ensure for women equal opportunities with men in all aspects of Canadian society ...." As well, previous lobbying efforts, and the actual report of the RCSW, published in 1970, emphasized human rights as a basis of gender equality. Given the times, this focused attention on individual rights rather than group rights.

Considerable attention was paid by the RCSW to the situation of women in the Canadian economy, with 68 recommendations out of 167 in total having a labour market focus. Many of these 68 recommendations called for changing legislation to cover both men and women and eliminating discrimination based on sex and marital status. Other areas of attention were education (33 recommendations), women and the family (28 recommendations), taxation, and policies on immigration and citizenship, and criminal law and women offenders. One of the major achievements of the RCSW was the consolidation of extensive data on the economic activities of women (Griffiths, 1976:213-214), an effort that made it difficult to ignore either the economic activities of Canadian women and the obvious economic inequalities between men and women in the labour force.

In all, the language, objectives, and recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women place the report firmly in the camp of what Heilinger (1992: Chapter 1) terms the liberal notion of equality of opportunity characterized by abstract individualism, universal human rights, meritocracy and strategies of rational persuasion and legal reform. Imbued with a voluntaristic flavour emphasizing individual choices, the report argued that "married women should be free to decide whether to remain at home or to enter the labour force." The report also stressed that women and men shared the same employment interests, aptitudes and capacities (RCSW, 1970: 65). This argument is an important cornerstone of the doctrine of equal treatment of women and men. But as Heilinger (1993: Chapter 1) notes, from a liberal equality of opportunity perspective, equal treatment usually invokes an androcentric model of assimilation in which the male experience is set as the standard against which gains for women are judged. By the adoption of a male standard, this approach usually assumes independence, as opposed to interconnection, between the worlds of domestic and paid work.

The RCSW report proved an important catalyst for change during the 1970s and early 1980s, spawning the formation of a major lobby coalition in English Canada (The National Action Committee on the Status of Women), federal and

provincial advisory councils on the status of women, and countless administrative and legislative actions. However, the basic premise of the RCSW report - equality of opportunity - and its related emphasis on individual rights limited the scope of change. The equality of opportunity model prevalent in Canada at the time of the RCSW report was the means-regarding equality of opportunity. This approach assumes that individuals are given equal opportunities to achieving a goal but it does not assume that individuals have the same probability of succeeding (Faundez, 1994). In the metaphor of a race, in the means-regarding model, participants need not have the same training, abilities or chance of winning the race; what is essential is that they have the same opportunities to line up at the starting gate and run the course.

The equality of opportunity model prevalent in Canada in the 1960s and 1970s thus emphasized access, not results. Yet gender stratification ensured that considerable inequalities of condition existed between men and women. Not surprisingly, gender gaps continued with respect to occupations, decision-making powers, and earnings to the detriment of women. In its 1983 review of progress since the RCSW report, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (1983: 35) concluded that "... women workers are still ghettoized in the lowest paid and least protected sectors of the labour market."

State feminism meant that the federal government took action to at least partially remedy gender inequalities in the labour force. During the 1970s, a number of voluntary affirmative action programs were implemented in the federal government. However, the celebration of International Women's Year in 1975 revealed the "embarrassingly poor representation of women" in the upper levels of the federal public service. In 1976, a program was established to achieve a more equitable representation of women and men. By June 1983, a federal public service affirmative action program for women and other groups (e.g. persons with disabilities, aboriginal peoples) was in place as a result of actions undertaken after 1975 (see Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues, 1991: 33-34). As well, between 1979 and 1984, the federal Employment and Immigration Commission implemented a program of encouraging affirmative action in the private sector. The results documented the futility of relying on voluntary action. After EIC contacted over 1,400 employers in the private sector, only 71 employers had implemented affirmative action type programs as of June 1984 (Statistics Canada, Employment Equity Data Program, 1993: 15).

Consistent with the liberal philosophy associated with the equality of opportunity model of the 1960s and 1970s, much of this early action assumed that knowledge of gender inequalities would lead to corrective action and thus to the demise of inequalities. Further discrimination against women in the labour force was viewed as deliberate discrimination against individuals and thus as a problem of faulty information or of bad human relations (Burt, 1993: 223). However, by the late 1970s, emphasis on eradicating personal discrimination by employers was replaced by increased attention to systemic discrimination. Systemic discrimination occurs when different outcomes exist for men and women as a result of practices and regulations which are not sex-specific in their terms of reference, but which become so in their implementation.<sup>3</sup> For example, women often are the victims of systemic discrimination when hiring is based on height and weight requirements for jobs long since mechanized, or jobs for which these requirements are not essential.

Two state actions facilitated the policy developments that followed. The first was tabling in 1986 of a report *Equality Now* by the federal government in response to a review of discriminatory laws by a parliamentary task force. This report was seen by many as an benchmark of state feminism in which the federal government affirmed its commitment to legal equality rights for women (Burt, 1993:222). The second action was the incorporation of an equality guarantee into *The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* that differed from its predecessor *The Canadian Bill of Rights*. Section 15 of the Charter contained two subsections: the first guaranteed equality before and under the law to individuals without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability. Section 15(2) stated that "subsection (1) does not preclude any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability."

(3) In fact, diverse definitions of systemic discrimination exist with different emphases on individual and group outcomes. The report of the federally mandated Royal Commission on Employment Equity defines systemic discrimination as "institutionalized systems and practices result in arbitrary and extensive exclusions for persons who by reason of their group affiliation are systematically denied a full opportunity to demonstrate their individual abilities" (Abella, 1984:10). Alternatively, systemic discrimination can include class wide discrimination based on: 1) unequal treatment; 2) adverse impact; or 3) lack of accommodation of diversity (Agocs, Burr and Somerset, 1992: 116).

Although it did not stipulate a mechanism for remedying inequalities, subsection 15(2) was unique in that it emphasized the condition of disadvantage as a basis for ameliorative action. Actual discrimination did not have to be proved (Statistics Canada, Employment Equity Data Program, 1993; Abella, 1984:14-15). The focus was no longer on equality of access, but on equality of result. Further, subsection 15(2) permitted remedies targeted at specific groups, including women.

The Charter was part of the patriation of the Canadian constitution in 1982. Section 15 came into effect in April 1985, the three year delay being designed to allow the provinces time to change their own legislation to conform with the federal legislation. In 1983, a one person Royal Commission on Employment Equity was struck by the federal Privy Council with a mandate to review employment practices of Crown corporations and to assess possible voluntary and mandatory programs to redress inequalities. The October 1984 report written by Judge Rosalie Abella, *Equality in Employment* became a cornerstone of federal and provincial employment policies of the 1980s. Abella's report emphasized the role of systemic discrimination and documented substantial disadvantages experienced by women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, and visible minorities (a term used to describe persons of colour in Canada). The report noted that "affirmative action" often carried a pejorative connotation, and offered instead the term "employment equity" in which equality of results was emphasized.

Although the 1984 federal landslide election of a Conservative government heralded nearly ten years of a neo-conservative agenda, the initial Minister of Employment and Immigration was Flora McDonald. While not a feminist in the strict sense of the term<sup>4</sup> she was more liberal/left than ultra-conservative. As the Minister receiving the *Royal Commission Report on Equality in Employment*, she was responsive to its contents, and in June 1985, Bill C-62, *An Act Respecting Employment Equity* was tabled in the Canadian House of Commons. The purpose of the resulting 1985 *Employment Equity Act* was to achieve equality in the work place and to correct the conditions of disadvantage for the four groups discussed in the Abella report. The Act explicitly recognizes that "employment equity means more than treating persons in the same way, but also requires special

(4) The term "femocrat" refers to women in government and government regulated organizations who have gender equality as their agenda and work in variety of ways to advance the goal of gender equality.

measures and accommodating difference." These objectives were to be accomplished by employer actions in which they were to identify and eliminate employment practices that create barriers. Employers also were instructed to institute policies and programs that ensured that persons in designated groups were employed in proportion to their representation in the work force.

As a policy statement, the *Employment Act* was important for two reasons. First, it became the frame of reference for other governmental (provincial, municipal) and private industry employment equity policies. Second, it was symbolically and ideologically important. It reaffirmed state feminism and it indicated new directions in thinking about gender inequality in the labour force. The *Act* and the 1984 Abella report shifted attention away from equality of opportunity to equality of result, and from individual differences to group disadvantages. Both also emphasized the role of systemic discrimination in producing inequalities of results, rather than dwelling on the elusive concept of deliberate individual discrimination.

However noteworthy for its revisionary approach to inequality, the *Employment Act* did not have a widespread impact on the employment situation of Canadian women. It applied to only a small part of the Canadian labour force, and it lacked effective sanctions for companies that failed to show progress. Although augmented by federal and provincial programs that apply to government contractors or to the public service employees, by itself the *Employment Equity Act* applied only to employers and Crown corporations with 100 employees or more and who were regulated under the Canada Labour Code. In the early 1990s, this represented about 660,000 male and female employees (Canada, 1992), or approximately 4.5 percent of the 1991 Canadian labour force, mostly in banking, transportation and communications industries.

The *Act* and related documents did not signal a substitution of group rights for individual rights, and a meritocracy model remained. This was evident in the statement of purpose "... that no person be denied employment opportunities or benefits for reasons unrelated to ability." Further, the principle of rational persuasion prevailed. Under the *Act*, employers are required to file annual reports on the employment, occupations, and salaries of members of the four designated groups, but no sanctions are specified for non-compliance with the principles of the *Act*. Instead, public scrutiny, and thus public outrage are to provide leverage for employment equity in firms scattered across Canada. Not surprisingly, a 1992 Parliamentary committee review of the *Act* proposed a number of changes

including the provision of acceptable standards and requirements, the use of standardized reporting forms, and the strengthening of sanctions and monitoring agencies, and a national employment equity strategy that includes data gathering and dissemination as well as employment related training (Canada, 1992). Following the parliamentary review committee report, a bill for a new *Employment Equity Act* (EEA) was tabled in Parliament on December 12, 1994. It may be passed during 1995.

Additional changes in the new legislation consist of formalizing coverage already in place through special federal programs, including the federal public service, empowering the Canadian Human Rights Commission to conduct audits to verify compliance and using the Canadian Human Rights tribunal to ensure enforcement of the new *Act* after receiving royal assent. Whether such changes will dramatically alter the limited, if not listless, impact of employment equity legislation remains to be seen. Several provinces have voiced concerns about the new legislation. As well, the Canadian Human Rights Commission has been badly overloaded with cases and slow to proceed with them. Indeed, one of the real issues left unaddressed by recent provincial and federal legislation is what are the costs and what will be operating budgets for employment equity (and equal pay for work of equal value). In Canada's current fiscal climate of cost-cutting, the proposed new *Employment Equity Act* may have the same limited impact as the old, or even less impact.

In addition to growing concerns about fiscal constraints, both the original 1986 and the proposed *Employment Equity Act* focus solely on inequalities in the market place, and on employer-based remedies. This focus carries with it two implicit assumptions. First, removing gender inequality means that the employment situation of women was to be more like that of men, thus implicitly invoking a male-work standard. Second, other legislative initiatives required to deal with issues surrounding the home-paid work nexus, have so far been absent.

These two assumptions pose new policy challenges for the 1990s. In Canada as elsewhere, post-industrialism has meant a dramatic restructuring of the work force away from the standard male work world of full time, full year employment often accompanied by job security and fringe benefits. Industrial restructuring and employer accommodation to the recession of the early 1990s has increased non-standard work, including part time or part year employment, limited-term contract employment, self employment, and multiple job holding (Economic Council of Canada, 1991:71; Krahn, 1991). Additionally, the federal government

has been reducing the size of its workforce through massive budget cuts throughout the 1980s, culminating with a 5-30 percent department specific cutback initiated in the 1995 federal budget which could, according to many estimates, result in the loss of 45,000 federal public service jobs.

By downsizing and increasing its dependence on contract employment, the federal government has reduced the population covered by employment equity legislation and has contributed to the growth of non-standard work in the Canadian economy. Non-standard work and the federal government's downsizing have negative implications for removing women's labour force disadvantages. A 1989 survey shows that women are more likely to be employed in non-standard work (37 percent) than are men (25 percent) (Krahn, 1991:42). Yet, employment equity policies drafted in the 1980s assume a traditional work force and do not apply to contract workers or self-employed workers. Thus, employment equity policies predicated on employment in the 1980s are likely to be a blunt instrument for removing gender inequalities in the years to come. Indeed, a contradiction for the 1990s is likely to be the extension of "progressive" policies to an increasingly smaller sector of the economy.

Also left unaccounted for in this matrix of change, is the persistent tension between policies of gender equality and those claims on the government that demand the recognition of difference. Employment equity policies focus on improving the situation of women (and other disadvantaged groups) in government-regulated labour markets. They are not women's policies predicated on the different demands and obligations of women and men outside the labour force. Indeed, the Canadian government consistently has shied away from women's centred policies that would have in turn facilitated gender equality within the labour force. Following tentative promises and the striking of two parliamentary review committees on national childcare needs and programmes during the 1980s, the federal government failed to enact legislation establishing a national programme of child care on the grounds that fiscal considerations did not permit such expenditures. As a result, the family/work nexus remains implicit and largely unacknowledged in the policy arena.

#### 4. THE FAMILY/WORK NEXUS

State policies in Canada in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, as mentioned earlier, reinforced women as economic dependents (Morton, 1992; Ursel, 1986; 1992). Indeed, these policies have continued into the present, as

policies that provide to women equal or comparable pay have very slowly developed, in the face of persistent resistance, thus ensuring women's dependency on men in families out of sheer lack of other viable alternatives. Social assistance policies have also worked and continue to work, as Little (1994) compellingly shows, to control and contain women to the domestic sphere by moral regulation of single mothers and poor women, and by presuming that men in their fives will economically support them.

Yet, there is more to the family/work nexus in Canada's past. In many senses, work and family have always been intermeshed. Everyone able to work on the farms of Canada's agrarian past, worked. Although not official policy per se, the realities of the past were often that if several members of the family did not work, the family would not survive. There is little new about multiple earners in a family, nor in the combining of work and family for women. The binding together of women and work in Canada's history meant that women were seldom leisured. More often than not, women worked and worked very hard, to contribute to the welfare of the family rather than as independent participants in the labour market. Many of the entitlements of social policy, such as unemployment insurance, pensions, etc. never applied, and still do not apply, to women whose status was seen as familial first. The older concept is of women (and men and children) as part of family, all contributing to and benefiting from the overall well-being (or not) of the family as a group. Thus sharply with the individualistic premise of gender equality policy approaches.

Concern about women's situations in terms of difference with men emerged early in Canada, earlier than state feminist concerns. It arose first with the bifurcation of the work/entitlement linkage. Women, who tended to outlive men, also tended to outlive their capacities to work productively for the benefit of the farm and the family. So, women were seen, as one historian put it, as "wrinkly and old and still requiring food and care." Women, whose longevity exceeded their capacity to work, were perceived as outliving their usefulness and sometimes as blocking the "legitimate heir", the son, from taking over the family farm. The interesting aspect here is that the work/entitlement nexus was situated, historically in Canada, clearly and unequivocally in the family rather than in the market economy per se. Work was inextricably connected to entitlement, but through individual efforts but rather through the collective contribution made to the group's well-being. The modern individualistic connotation of entitlement

through work was not present. Work, family and entitlement to resources through family contribution were bound strongly together.

The invention of work and family as separate spheres took a long time, in historical terms, to catch on in Canada. Women, largely young farm girls, were among the first industrial workers, not because they were participating as individuals in the paid labour market, but rather because they were the ones who could be most readily spared on the family farm, and whose wages in the newly emerging industrial plants could be used to support the "real" economic enterprise of the day, the family farm. With mothers, fathers and older sisters all working, what happened to the children? Quite simply, once they were old enough (and old enough was often very young indeed), they went to work too. Until then, they bided their time in the fields with mother, or under her early factory table or sink. It was concern about children not being controlled rather than any concern about their minds or personal development, that led to the development of compulsory education in Canada. It was social policy based on control of children by state authorities that led the policy-makers of the mid to late nineteenth century to foster the idea of compulsory education for youth. This, among having the effect of solving the problem of caring for potentially errant youth, also freed women to participate more fully in the developing industrial sector. It further led to a homogeneity of experience among youth as they participated together in public schools. This concept is not insignificant for the emergence of basic concepts of equality and public support for this new concept. Corrigan and Sayer (1985) emphasize that the process of state formation (and certainly, we would add, of equality initiatives by states) is a dynamic mobilization of power of various sorts to translate assumptions about the world into a set of laws and regulations. Without the concept of equality in place, the translation into active policy is unlikely.

In the post World War II period, the separation of family and work was most sharp. This was a time of rapid economic expansion, the growth of the suburbs where families lived in isolation from the workplace, the times of the absent breadwinner father who often commuted long distances to work. The concept of family became one of a private refuge from the wider world (Baker, 1994a; McDaniel, 1994), an institution that articulated with the paid labour market by strict gender division of labour and responsibility. This was the period in which Parsonian functionalism became the guiding paradigm in North American sociology, where family and the occupational world were separate and at variance

with each other. Women, of course, were thought to and, for the most part did, specialize in family and home, while men specialized in the world of paid employment. Although heralded and mythologized now as a golden era for families, particularly by neo-conservative and neo-liberal thinkers and politicians who grew up in this period, this was the era that spawned the contemporary women's movement as well as massive subsequent dissatisfaction by men with the dominance of their breadwinner roles.

Much has been written on the private and public spheres, and the very public aspects of family and the work families do for society (Charles, 1993). What seems important to emphasize here is that although families of the post World War II period have been lauded as family-centered, it is now unequivocally recognized that women were seriously disadvantaged in families at that time. Women whose family roles eclipsed all else they might wish to be or do, found themselves often depressed, experiencing physical symptoms of stress, without job training or employment prospects should their marriages end, without support if they were abused, beaten or abandoned, and often without pensions in their older years. Day care, although it did indeed exist in Canada as early as 1880, was scant and costly. What was plentiful were "experts" on mothering and childrearing, mostly men, who proffered counsel and criticism of mothers and of children with considerable regularity. Women who did not fit the mould of wife and mother, or wife and mother par excellence, were often labelled and isolated as "old maids," as "wicked women," or as "loose women"<sup>5</sup>. It is this period and its confining characteristics for women that led to the 1970 Royal Commission and to the advent of state feminism. So, even though much of the early gender equality policy was focussed on women in the paid labour market, its impetus came in part from the ways in which women were dissatisfied and unequally treated in families.

Earlier, we mentioned the dramatic rise in women's participation in the paid labour force. By 1992, the majority of married women worked outside their homes. The largest increase in women's labour market participation over the 1981-1991 decade was among mothers of preschool children. Multiple reasons account for this change including the demise of the family wage, a wage given to a male breadwinner on which he could support a family. But policies and

(5) The concept "loose woman," although having a clear connotation of immorality, also connotes a woman without a man, a woman on her own, a woman on the loose and potentially endangering other women's marriages.

policy change have also been central players, as pointed out by Baker (1994:7) among others. Policies and laws enabling temporary maternity leaves have meant, for example, that women could work in paid employment and not leave their work to have babies, as they did in previous eras. Similarly, laws have been changed to prevent employers from forcing married women and women who are pregnant or have young children at home, out of the workplace. Educational policies have also played a central role -- as women sought and achieved parity in educational institutions with men, they increased their expectations to use that education to develop careers that would last over their family building years.

With the two earner family as normative in Canada in the 1990's, pressures have arisen for easing the family/work balance, particularly for women who are known to carry the largest responsibilities for housework, childcare and familial caregiving generally (Boyd, 1995b; McDaniel, 1995). This push led the theme of work and family to be declared a focus of the International Year of the Family (1994) in Canada. Several large conferences were held during 1994, involving policy-makers from various levels of government, academic experts on family and work, and importantly, corporate managers and human resources people. Why this concern in the 1990s? The short answer is that the short-lived and artificial separation of family and work of the post war period no longer works for most people, if indeed it ever did. Both men and women work outside the home in ever increasing numbers, and neither is satisfied with the family as a place of consumption of durables purchased with paycheques. Family and work are each imbued with higher expectations in the 1990s, expectations that involve fulfillment, satisfaction and pleasure. Policies, from the women's policy approach that promote opportunities for women to participate more fully in paid employment are increasingly deemed essential. In essence, "the Canadian economy clearly needs the earned incomes and contributions of women in the workplace, while the family needs of women include paid work" (McDaniel, 1993:175).

Heitlinger (1993), among others, suggests that preoccupation about women's family roles, particularly reproduction and mothering have continued into women's employment policies. She cites "the Mommy track" (1993:139), for example, whereby working women who are mothers are channelled into career tracks with less mobility. She also talks about employment policies that protect pregnant women (p. 186), maternity and child care leaves for women (p. 218), and childcare programs at the workplace (p. 224). It should be emphasized,

however, that these policies are double-barrelled: simultaneous to protecting women as mothers and reproducers, they can work, and Heitlinger compellingly argues that they do work, toward women's equality with men in the workplace. These policies are consistent with, but pre-date, the women's policy approach to equality. The family/work nexus in Canada is being challenged and transformed in the 1990s as job security, and subsequently family security erode. Employment increasingly seems a privilege more than a right (Maxwell, 1993). Canadian women have been particularly disadvantaged in job losses in the public sector, as well as in small scale manufacturing, and certainly in fish-processing on Canada's east coast. Women have differentially experienced access to good jobs, with employment prospects for immigrant, native, disabled, poor, or older women particularly bleak (Boyd, 1995a). Secure employment prospects for men have also eroded substantially, tossing into question the traditional divisions of labour in families, and how families articulate with paid work. Some of these challenges may be addressed in the current social policy review in Canada (Canada, 1994), others have impacts that have not been fully explored in research and certainly have not been even approached by existing social policies or current proposals for change. Judith Maxwell, the former Chair of the Economic Council of Canada, has written eloquently about the policy challenges posed by the contemporary economic restructuring Canada is experiencing. In her view, "[t]he way to build family security is to use the energy and skills of members of the family to learn, to adapt and to contribute to the community" (Maxwell, 1993:50). Restructuring of work has meant that children need early childhood "headstart" experiences in order to "upgrade human capital", that adult working people both men and women need to have the security of constantly learning new skills and to find outlets for the skills they have. These brief examples show that the existing policy apparatus, including the gender equality and the women's policy approaches, are on shifting terrain, in need of change and adaptation. The impetus to change is the shifting family/work nexus. Central to that change is women's equality.

Parallel challenges to change in the existing policy frameworks come from social shifts such as population aging, which can place older workers out of work with longer and longer periods left between work and paid employment. It can result in the middle generation having responsibility for both older and younger generations, with younger people floundering in the face of few job opportunities and rising costs of higher education, and older people floundering with job loss,

pension reform and a shrinking health care system (Gee & McDaniel, 1992; McDaniel, 1993b; 1995).

In Canada, it is Quebec that has come furthest in restructuring public policies to adapt to the new family/work nexus (LeBourdais & Marcil-Graton, 1994). Starting with an intense concern about a drop in the birthrate, about sharp declines in legal marriage, increases in marital instability, and working mothers, Quebec has moved systematically since the early 1980's to develop a policy framework that helps reduce family inequities at the same time as acknowledging and supporting women as primary caretakers of children. "The approach put forward by Quebec places the province at the forefront of family policy in Canada" (LeBourdais & Marcil-Graton, 1994:114). Quebec's policies "aimed at enabling men and women to reconcile employment with family responsibilities" (Heitinger, 1993:138) are leading the world in a new direction and are being acknowledged as such, more outside of Canada than inside (Baker, 1995).

##### 5. PRESENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

In vivid contrast to the rapid advancement of knowledge about gender in the welfare state and the multiple ways in which female dependency on males in social policy is presumed and encouraged (Baker, 1990; Boyd, 1995c; Boyd, Mulvihill & Myles, 1991; Clement & Myles, 1994; McDaniel, 1994; Orloff, 1993), there have been sharp erosions in Canada in the capacity of the state and state policy to address gender inequities in meaningful ways. This is occurring for several interconnected reasons. First, there is a discernible diminishing of faith in government and public institutions to enact policies that can change things for the good. The zeitgeist in Canada in 1995 increasingly is that the private sector may be better able to effect changes than governments at any level. This parallels the chorus that globalization is upon us and we must compete internationally, without attention to national differences and national agendas of public or social policy.

Second, there is resistance on the part of many governments in Canada, provincial, federal and municipal, to continue their public responsibility to citizens to offer protection and to reduce inequities. If Canada's social policies are built on the twin pillars of markets and politics, as many have argued, then the politics pillar is quaking while the market pillar strengthens. This is perhaps most apparent in the Province of Alberta which in the 1990's is undergoing a massive privatization of government services and a redefinition of the public not

as citizens, but as consumers of services. Government departments, hospitals, school boards, and universities in Alberta, all have in place business plans to guide them over the transition from serving the public interest to being imitative of corporate interests. This new approach to public policy, which is rapidly spreading across the country, diminishes the traditional role of social policy as redistributive of resources to reduce inequalities, to one of *laissez-faire*. The implications for women are likely to be large.

Third, there is the "dance of the deficit," which suggests that equity programs, like income redistribution programs, are no longer affordable. Whether real or not (and many have argued that it is not entirely real), the rhetoric of cost-cutting has been successful enough that many Canadians now believe that the fiscal troubles Canada faces are a function of overspending on social programs rather than ill-conceived priorities or policy misjudgments (McDaniel, 1993b: 171). Affordability in the present becomes all. Equity programs are costly and so increasingly thought to be unaffordable. The argument that equality for women pays off in the longer run is increasingly falling on deaf ears.

Related to deficit and cost-cutting is the growing tendency in Canada for interest groups to be pitted against one other as each contends for quickly diminishing resources and legitimacy provided by being defined as "genuine" by governments. While not the "war" among interests that some alarmist media pundits would have us believe is occurring, openings are being offered to groups to engage in public spats over who is the more "deserving." Seniors, for example, have argued that their demands are more legitimate than those of youth and families in poverty because of their long contributions to society. Women's groups are increasingly finding themselves fighting battles for legitimacy that were presumed won years ago. One example is the current situation faced by the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, which in February 1995, was declared dead by a prominent *Globe and Mail* (Canada's self-proclaimed national newspaper) woman columnist. The reason for this clearly exaggerated claim is that NAC is experiencing challenges on two fronts -- funding, and internal squabbles. While in earlier days, this would have been seen as routine, part and parcel of representing women's interests, now it is seen, with some glee, as the demise of a group that is not really representing women. The column spawned several letters to the Editor encouraging the demise of NAC and spelling out why it should not survive.

Fourth, there is the real and direct effects on women of the cutbacks to government programs that are already occurring. Women are the first ones to lose their jobs with cuts to the public sector. So, it is women in Alberta in hospitals, schools and the public service who have been laid off first and in greater numbers than men. It is women who comprise the bulk of social assistance recipients who lose most when their benefits are cut. If people are being discharged from hospitals earlier to save money, it is women at home who care for the sick person. And on it goes. This results in a defacto erosion of equality for women by social policy change. Fifth and last, there has been a public challenge to "special interest groups," particularly those who receive any measure of government funding. In part, this is the platform of the Reform Party and like-minded people, but it has gone far beyond one party. The abolition in the early 1990's of the Court Challenges program, which has now been partially reinstated, is only one example of public policy limiting the capacity of individuals and groups to contest laws and policies in court. Needless to say, the cut of this program differentially disadvantages women and women's groups, who less often have the means to fight a court challenge on their own resources. There is also the backlash against feminism and women generally, which may be only a small minority of people but has captured the imagination of the media, of writers, and of television producers, as well as politicians.

## REFERENCES

- Abella, Judge Rosalie Silberman. Commissioner. 1984. *Report of the Commission on Equality in Employment*. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services. Catalogue No. MP43-157/1-1984-E.
- Adamson, Nancy, Linda Briskin and Margaret McPhail. 1988. *Feminist Organizing for Change*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Ayco, Carol, Catherine Burr, and Felicity Somerset. 1992. *Employment Equity: Cooperative Strategies for Organizational Change*. Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada
- Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues. 1991. *A Backround Paper on Employment Equity: Gaining Acceptance*. Edmonton: Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues.
- Baines, Beverly. 1993. "Law, Gender, Equality." Pp. 243-278 in Sandra Burr, Lorraine Code and Lindsay Dorney (Eds). *Changing Patterns: Women in Canada* (second edition). Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.
- Baker, Maureen. 1990. "The Perpetuation of Misperceiving Family Models in Social Policy: Implications for Women," *Canadian Social Work Review* 7(2):169-182.
- Baker, Maureen. 1994a. "The Effectiveness of Family and Family Policies," Pp. 127-136 in Maureen Baker (Ed.), *Canada's Changing Families: Challenges to Public Policy*. Ottawa: Vanier Institute of the Family.
- Baker, Maureen. 1994b. "Thinking about Families: Trends and Policies," Pp. 1-9 in Maureen Baker (Ed.), *Canada's Changing Families: Challenges to Public Policy*. Ottawa: Vanier Institute of the Family.

- Baker, Maureen. 1995. *Canadian Families Policies: Cross-National Comparisons*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Boyd, Monica. 1995a. (forthcoming) "Female Migrant Labour in North America: Trends and Issues for the 1990s." In Alan Simmons (ed.) *International Migration in the Americas: the Impact of Free Trade and Economic Integration on Migration, Jobs and Democratization*. Toronto: Center for Migration Studies and Centre for Refugee Studies.
- Boyd, Monica. 1995b. (forthcoming) Gender Inequality. In Robert J. Brym (Ed.) *New Society: Sociology for the 21st Century*. Toronto: HBJ-Holt Canada.
- Boyd, Monica. 1995c. (forthcoming) "Migration Policy, Female Dependency and Family Membership: Canada and Germany." In Patricia Evans, Thelma McCormack and Gerda Wekerle (eds.) *Remaking the Welfare State*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Boyd, Monica, Mary Ann Mulvihill & John Myles. 1991. "Gender, Power and Postindustrialism," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 28(4):407-436.
- Burt, Sandra. 1993. "The Changing Patterns of Public Policy," Pp. 212-242 in Sandra Burt, Lorraine Code and Lindsay Dorney (Eds). *Changing Patterns: Women in Canada* (second edition). Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.
- Canada. Royal Commission on the Status of Women. 1970. *Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women*. Ottawa: Information Canada.
- Canada. Parliament House of Commons. The Special Committee on the Review of the Employment Equity Act. 1992. *A Matter of Fairness: Report of the Special Committee on the Review of the Employment Equity Act*. Ottawa: Queen's Printer.
- Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. 1983. *As Things Stand: Ten Years of Recommendations*. Ottawa: Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women.
- Canada. Human Resources Development. 1994. *Agenda: Jobs and Growth, Improving Social Security in Canada: A Discussion Paper*. Ottawa: Human Resources Development Canada.
- Charles, Nickie. 1993. *Gender Divisions and Social Change*. Boston: Harvester Wheatsheaf Barnes and Noble.

- Clement, Wallace & John Myles. 1994. *Relations of Ruling: Class and Gender in Postindustrial Societies*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Corrigan, Philip & Derek Sayer. 1985. *The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Economic Council of Canada. 1991. *Employment in the Service Economy*. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services.
- Faundez, J. 1994. *Affirmative Action: International Perspectives*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- Folbre, Nancy. 1988. "The Black Four of Hearts: Towards a New Paradigm of Household Economics." Pp. 248-289 in D. Dwyer & J. Bruce (Eds.), *A Home Divided: Women, Income and the Third World*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.
- Fraser, Nancy. 1987. "Women, Welfare and the Politics of Need Interpretation," *Hypatia* 2(1):103-121.
- Gee, Ellen & Susan A. McDaniel. 1992. "Social Policy for an Aging Canada," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 27(3): 139-152.
- Griffiths, N.E.S. 1976. *Penelope's Web*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Heitinger, Alena. 1991. "Pronatalism and Women's Equality Policies," *European Journal of Population* 7(4):341-375.
- Heitinger, Alena. 1993. *Women's Equality, Demography and Public Policies*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Hernes, Helga Maria. 1987. *Welfare State and Woman Power*. Oslo: Norwegian University Press.
- LeBourdais, Celine & Nicole Marci-Graton. 1994. "Quebec's Pro-Active Approach to Family Policy: 'Thinking and Acting Family'," Pp. 103-116 in Maureen Baker (Ed.), *Canada's Changing Families: Challenges to Public Policy*. Ottawa: Vanier Institute of the Family.
- Krahn, Harvey 1991. Non-standard work arrangements, *Canadian Perspectives*, Winter 35-45.
- Little, Margaret Hilliard. 1994. "'Manhunts and Bingo Blabs': The Moral Regulation of Ontario Single Mothers," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 19(2):233-247.
- Maxwell, Judith. 1993. "Globalization and Family Security," Pp. 19-55 in *Family Security in Insecure Times*. Ottawa: National Forum on Family Security.

- McDaniel, Susan A. 1993a. "Single Parenthood: Policy Apartheid in Canada," Pp. 203-211 in Burt Galloway & Joseph Hudson (Eds.), *Single Parent Families: Canadian Perspectives on Research and Policy*. Toronto: Thompson.
- McDaniel, Susan A. 1993b. "Where the Contradictions Meet: Women and Family Security in Canada in the 1990's," Pp. 163-180 in *Family Security in Insecure Times*. Ottawa: National Forum on Family Security.
- McDaniel, Susan A. 1994. "Families, Feminism and the State," Pp. 117-128 in Les Samuelson (Ed.), *Power and Resistance: Critical Thinking About Canadian Social Issues*. Toronto: Fernwood.
- McDaniel, Susan A. 1995. (forthcoming) "Family/Work Challenges among Mid-Life Canadians," in Marion Lynn (Ed.), *Canadian Families in the 1990's*. Toronto: Nelson.
- McDaniel, Susan A. & Ellen Gee. 1993. "Social Policies Regarding Caregiving to Elders: Canadian Contradictions," *Journal of Aging and Social Policy* 5(1 & 2):57-78.
- Morton, Suzanne. 1992. "The June Bride as the Working Class Bride: Getting Married in a Halifax Working-Class Neighbourhood in the 1920's," Pp. 360-379 in Bettina Bradbury (Ed.), *Canadian Family History*. Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman.
- O'Connor, Julia S. 1993. "Gender, Class and Citizenship in the Comparative Analysis of Welfare States Regimes: Theoretical and Methodological Issues," *British Journal of Sociology* 44(June): 501-518
- Olsen, Gregg M. 1994. "Locating the Canadian Welfare State: Family Policy and Health Care in Canada, Sweden, and the United States," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 19(1):1-20.
- Orloff, Ann Shola. 1993. "Gender and the Social Rights of Citizenship: The Comparative Analysis of Gender Relations and Welfare States," *American Sociological Review* 58(3):303-328.
- Statistics Canada. Employment Equity Data Program. 1993. *Systemic Discrimination and Employment Equity Programs: An Account of Evolving Statistical Definitions in Employment Equity*. Working Paper 1: 13. Ottawa: Statistics Canada
- Ursel, Jane. 1986. "The State and the Maintenance of Patriarchy: A Case Study of Family, Labour and Welfare Legislation in Canada," in James Dickin-

- son & Bob Russell (Eds.), *Family, Economy and the State*. Toronto: Garamond.
- Ursel, Jane. 1992. *Private Lives, Public Policy: 100 Years of State Intervention in the Family*. Toronto: Women's Press.

**SUMMARY.** Canada provides an interesting study of gender equality policy development, poised in the 1990's between the pull of individual responsibility and universal social programs. In 1994, with a social policy review in process, the equity policy machinery developed since the Royal Commission on the Status of Women tabled its report in 1970, is being rethought and possibly challenged. The evolving models of gender equity policies in Canada are discussed with reference to the salient events and turning points. Present and future challenges such as population aging, family changes, economic restructuring, changes in social policies, and immigration changes are considered.

**RESUME.** Le Canada est un cas intéressant pour l'étude du développement de politiques de promotion de l'égalité entre les sexes, alors qu'il balance entre le modèle de responsabilité individuelle et l'universalité des programmes sociaux. Une révision des politiques sociales, en cours en 1994, repense et remettra peut-être en cause l'appareil de promotion de l'égalité mis en place depuis le dépôt en 1970 du Rapport de la Commission Royale sur le Statut de la Femme. Les modèles changeant de politiques de promotion de l'égalité sont analysés en fonction des événements marquants et des points tournants. Des défis présents et à venir sont considérés, tels le vieillissement de la population, les changements familiaux, la restructuration économique, les changements dans les domaines des politiques sociales et l'immigration.

**RESUMEN.** Canada constituye un caso interesante para el estudio del desarrollo de políticas de igualdad de género, que en la década de los 90 se debate entre el modelo de responsabilidad individual y la historia de programas sociales de cobertura universal. Le maquinaria diseñada para implantar la igualdad de género desde que la Royal Commission on the Status of Women presentó su report en 1970 esta siendo analizada en la actualidad, y podría ser cuestionada en el contexto de la revisión de la política social que se lleve a cabo en 1994. Los diferentes modelos de políticas de igualdad género en Canada son discutidos en referencia a los eventos mas relevantes y las principales coyunturas. Se consideran retos actuales y futuros tales como el envejecimiento de la población, cambios en la familia, la restructuración económica y modificaciones de la política social y la migración.

## CONTINUIDAD, TRANSFORMACIÓN O RUPPTURA: LAS EXPERIENCIAS DE REFUGIADAS SALVADOREÑAS EN LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS DE AMÉRICA

CECILIA MENTIVAR  
Universidad de California

### 1. INTRODUCCIÓN

La primacía femenina entre las principales corrientes migratorias mundiales ha sido muy marcada en los últimos años: no obstante, en términos científicos, este fenómeno ha recibido inadecuada atención. Ya desde 1930, las mujeres predominaban entre los inmigrantes a Estados Unidos (Houston, Kramer y Barrett, 1984), y en la actualidad ellas comprenden al menos la mitad de los inmigrantes hacia la Argentina e Israel, así como también hacia los estados del Golfo Pérsico y el África Occidental (Tyree y Donato, 1986). Paralelamente, los análisis de selectividad por sexo indican que existe un predominio de la migración femenina frente a la masculina en las corrientes migratorias centroamericanas con rumbo a Estados Unidos (las cuales son mayoritariamente salvadoreñas) (U.S. Census Bureau, 1993).

Este artículo tratará sobre el papel de la mujer entre las corrientes salvadoreñas a Estados Unidos, contribuyendo no sólo a llenar un vacío de estudios sobre la mujer en la migración salvadoreña, y sobre la mujer refugiada en general, sino también a iluminar el efecto recíproco de factores estructurales y de género en procesos migratorios. El enfoque central en este trabajo será el de presentar la experiencia de la mujer enmarcada en las relaciones de género como un proceso, como relaciones sociales que se modifican de acuerdo a contingencias macro-