

Differences in the Response of Women's Voluntary Organizations to Shifts in Canadian Public Policy

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Executive directors of 351 women's voluntary organizations and 294 "other" (gender neutral) organizations were surveyed to gauge their responses to changing public policy in Canada. Findings indicate that although all organizations are unhappy with the current environmental shifts and pessimistic about the future, women's organizations are more critical of policy changes and their implementation. They also feel more vulnerable and pessimistic about the future. Strategically, they are less likely to adopt a business-like competitive orientation, focusing more on fostering cooperation and collaboration. These findings support evidence in the literature that suggests that women's organizations seek solutions that are more consistent with a collaborative model than a competitive one. They also underline that women's organizations, often serving more marginal niches, have unique concerns and thus respond differently to environmental changes. Furthermore, the data suggest that both ideological orientation and organizational composition may play a role in differentiating between women's and other organizations.

Keywords: *nonprofit; women's voluntary organizations; Canada; public policy*

There are an estimated 200,000 nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations in Canada today offering a wide array of services to all segments of the population

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(Browne, 1996). A significant, but unknown, percentage of these organizations are led by women and governed by boards that are predominantly made up of women.¹ Despite the pervasiveness of these organizations, there has been little research focusing on them. We seek to redress this neglect by comparing 351 women's voluntary organizations to 294 "other" (gender neutral) voluntary organizations. Specifically, this article investigates whether there are differences in attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions between the leaders of women's voluntary organizations and the leaders of other voluntary organizations with regard to the following: (a) perceptions of the environment, (b) outlook for the future, (c) perceptions of the effect of the external environment on the organization, (d) organizational changes made in response to environmental pressures, and (e) collaborative behavior and attitudes.

SETTING THE CONTEXT: CANADIAN SOCIAL POLICY AND THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Canada's voluntary sector became an economic force only in the past 35 years, as it grew in tandem with the emerging welfare state forged following World War II, reaching its peak of growth in the 1970s and 1980s (Tucker, Singh, & Meinhard, 1990). During this time, voluntary organizations became part of an elaborate social welfare system that involved a matrix of programs and services delivered by both the public sector and nonprofit organizations. Not only did voluntary organizations receive approximately 64% of their funding from government sources (Hall & MacPherson, 1997) but, more important, they also gained legitimacy to represent and serve their various constituencies (Tucker et al., 1990). Thus, voluntary organizations became allies of the state, extending specialized services that the government was uninterested in or unable to provide. This collaborative infrastructure provided a munificent and stable environment, encouraging the rapid growth of the sector.

Since the mid-1980s, the social welfare liberalism of the postwar era is being replaced by a neoconservative philosophy that espouses "small government" and embraces competitive market forces, even in the third sector (McBride & Shields, 1997). One manifestation of this is the state's withdrawal from direct service provision by devolving their responsibilities onto third parties (Pal, 1997). This has been accompanied by a decrease in both federal (Tester, 1996) and provincial support (Torjman, 1996). Expected to pick up the slack even as their budgets are being cut, voluntary organizations in Canada are in turmoil (Rice & Prince, 2000; Scott, 1992).

In this research, we investigate the responses of leaders of different types of voluntary organizations to the changes in Canada wrought by this neoconservative shift in policy. Although the effect of the new social and fiscal reality may be pertinent to all organizations, we propose that leaders of women's organizations will react differently and choose different strategies

when responding to the new situation. The reasons for this expectation are elaborated below.

THE UNCHARTED COHORT: WOMEN'S VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS

In recent years, there has been growing attention focused on women's voluntary organizations—their history, their prevalence, their role and position in the various societies they serve, their difficulties and challenges, and their structure and governance. However, there is no consensus across studies as to exactly what a women's organization is. If, as articulated in organization theory, organizations are vehicles for the achievement of individual and/or collective goals that can be attained more efficiently and effectively through group rather than individual action (e.g., Abrahamsson, 1993; March & Simon, 1958), then women's organizations could be defined in one of several ways: (a) as entities in which a number of women get together for the purpose of achieving goals; (b) as entities in which a group of individuals, regardless of sex, get together for the purpose of achieving goals related to women's issues and/or causes; or (c) as entities in which a group of women get together for the purpose of achieving goals related to women's issues and causes. Riordan (2000), for example, defines women's organizations as "specific sites for the articulation of women's needs and the application of women's solutions" (p. 64). Generally speaking, the terms *women's organizations*, *women's associations*, *women's clubs*, and *women's nonprofit (or voluntary) organizations* are loosely used in the literature to refer to organizations run by women, for women. In some studies, they refer specifically to organizations that are part of the women's movement—groups concerned primarily with the status of women and their rights (e.g., Clemens, 1999; Minkoff, 1995, 1997). In others, they encompass both feminist organizations and nonfeminist organizations (e.g., Bordt, 1997; Tyyska, 1998). Some researchers include only "separatist" organizations such as radical feminist groups in this category (e.g., Staggenborg, 1995) or organizations that serve women exclusively (e.g., McPherson & Smith-Lovin, 1986). Others include organizations that are not exclusive to women but are predominantly made up of women (e.g., Selle, 2001).

In our study, we categorize any organization with a female executive director and a governing board whose composition is at least two thirds female as a women's organization. We do not stipulate that the organization's goals must be to serve women or advance their causes, thus not all the women's organizations in our sample are "run by women, for women." Approximately one third of them do not deal specifically with women's needs and issues (e.g., Child Life Enrichment, Outreach for Hunger). Of the remaining organizations, roughly half identify as feminist in orientation (e.g., Communities Against Sexual Abuse, County Women's Centre), whereas the other half do not (e.g.,

Professional Women's Network, Women's Musical Club). More detail about the sample is provided in the Method section of this article.

Women's voluntary organizations have long played an important role in women's lives as a window on broader public issues, a source of skills development, and a vehicle for contributing to society (Clemens, 1999). Until the turn of the 20th century, a woman's domain was almost exclusively in the domestic realm.² Voluntary association was one of the few socially sanctioned extradomestic activities available to women. Thus for many, volunteering played a liberating role in their lives, giving women their only experience in the public realm (McCarthy, 1990).³ However, as long as decision making and funding remained in the hands of men, these voluntary activities continued to keep "women in their place." Participation was encouraged, but control was withheld (Kaminer, 1984). Frustrated, women in North America began forming their own associations, and by the mid-1800s, they were administering organizations in the fields of philanthropy, the arts and sciences, and social reform (Clemens, 1999).

Recent historical studies in North America point to the importance of women's voluntary organizations both for the achievement of women's rights and for the benefit of society as a whole (Lewis, 1994; Odendahl, 1994; O'Neill, 1994; Scott, 1990). The social history of Canada is replete with examples of women organizing to help the needy in their communities. During early Canadian settlement, women in religious orders provided for the needy, establishing hospitals for the sick and housing for the poor and for orphans. Later, lay women in parishes across Canada organized into sisterhoods to raise funds for the provision of food and medicine and the construction of schools and hospitals (Martin, 1985).

In the years following Canadian Confederation in 1867, women's organizations dedicated to social reform realized that without representation in Parliament their reform agendas would never be a high priority. This gave rise to organizations devoted to the cause of women's suffrage (Cleverdon, 1978). By 1918, nonnative women of all provinces, save Quebec, were enfranchised. (The women of Quebec had to wait until 1940, and Native women until 1960, for the privilege to vote.) Whatever societal power women had in the 19th and early 20th centuries was largely achieved through participation in voluntary organizations: They gave voice to their concerns and needs at a time when they were still disenfranchised (Clemens, 1999; Cleverdon, 1978; O'Neill, 1994).

Even after they gained the vote, women's groups continued to agitate for societal and legislative changes in women's status. However, it was not until the early 1970s that women's concerns were officially recognized by the Government of Canada. In 1972, the federal government gave the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) its first grant, in support of a conference dedicated to "effecting change in the status of women in Canada" (http://www.nac-cca.ca/about/his_e.htm). A year later, the government

created the office of Status of Women Canada with a mandate to support women's organizations and others "seeking to advance equality for women" (<http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/wmnprog/guidtxte.html>). In 1985, the long struggle for equality finally bore fruit. A clause guaranteeing equal rights for women and men in Canada was enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, a part of Canada's Constitution (http://www.infocan.gc.ca/facts/women_e.html). These legitimating actions by government further spurred the proliferation of women's organizations. The end of the 20th century bore witness to a multitude of women's organizations representing the ethnic and cultural mosaic of Canada as women from different ethnic and racial groups also organized to address issues in their communities⁴ (National Action Committee on the Status of Women, 1996, personal communication).

Recently, national voluntary organizations have opened their doors to women, to the extent that 16% of them have women executive directors (O'Neill, 1994); however, women still favor joining women's organizations. McPherson and Smith-Lovin (1982, 1986) found that half the organizations studied were exclusively female as opposed to only 20% that were exclusively male. In a more recent study, Popielarz (1999) found that women are less likely than men to belong to integrated organizations: 67% of women volunteers are members of women's organizations. In a sample of 233 voluntary groups, 68% were gender segregated, with women's organizations outnumbering men's by two to one (Popielarz, 1999).

Women's preference for participating in women's groups can be explained in part by the literature investigating voluntary affiliation. Although "helping others" is the most frequently cited reason given for voluntary affiliation (Carter, 1975; Duchesne, 1989; Masi, 1981), research suggests that many women, in fact, use the experience gained from voluntary activity as a stepping stone for acquiring jobs (Flynn & Webb, 1975; Kaminer, 1984; Masi, 1981). Involvement in exclusively female organizations also provides women with experience in leadership and management (Clemens, 1999; Popielarz, 1999). Such opportunities are seldom available to them in mixed settings, as evidenced by the absence of women in top administrative positions, even in organizations in which they are a majority (Kaminer, 1984; Masi, 1981; Shaiko, 1997; Zane, 1999). A recent study of a cross-section of nonprofit human service organizations confirmed the continued existence of the glass ceiling phenomenon (Gibelman, 2000). Not only do women in all-female organizations have the opportunity to fill leadership positions, but they also do not feel constrained by a need to adopt male, hierarchical, task-oriented leadership styles, as women in mixed settings so often feel forced to do (Eagly, 1987; Kanter, 1977). In all-female organizations, they can practice a more inclusive and process-oriented leadership style.

CONCEPTUAL PERSPECTIVE

The overarching purpose of this article is to determine whether women's organizations are different from other (gender neutral) organizations in their perceptions and reactions to the changing environmental situation in Canada. There are several reasons to expect women's organizations to be different. First, women's organizations operate in different environments, both in terms of funding and of services provided. Thus, they may be affected by changes in different ways. Second, women's socialization experiences are different from men's. This may affect not only how women leaders perceive the environment but also how they react to the new, more competitive demands placed on their organizations. Third, there is evidence that women's organizations are structured differently, and this may have an effect on both organizational and interorganizational strategies.

ENVIRONMENTAL DIFFERENCES

The thousands of diverse women's organizations that have emerged across the world in the past 20 years have been a "driving force in local action" (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions [EFILWC], 1992, p. 86) and "have changed the face of social service provision" (Riordan, 2000, p. 65). However, women's organizations often find themselves in a precarious situation because they are chronically underfunded, understaffed, and marginal to mainstream economic and social development (Karl, 1995; Perlmutter, 1994; Riordan, 2000). Summarizing Moser's (1991) observations, Riordan (2000) writes that "because the work which genuinely seeks to empower the powerless is potentially challenging to those in power, women's organizations which aim to empower women remain largely unsupported both by national governments and bilateral agencies" (p. 67).

This is exacerbated by the fact that women's organizations are not perceived to be prestigious targets for donors (Bradshaw, Murray, & Wolpin, 1996). Women's needs rank low in the "establishment's" evaluation of what is important (Useem, 1987). The tendency of women and women's groups to place a higher priority on benevolence and social issues (Myry & Helkama, 2001; Riordan, 2000; Smith & Schwartz, 1997) means that they give voice and aid to the marginalized and excluded members of our society, such as Aboriginal women, women of color, immigrants and refugees, single mothers, and the poor in general (NAC, 1996; Stewart & Taylor, 1997; Yasmin, 1997). These are all groups that are not high in the consciousness of major donors, who concentrate their efforts on the more prominent health, educational, and cultural organizations (Useem, 1987). Even large philanthropical gifts made by women are not directed to women's organizations (Nonprofit World, 1999). Capek (as reported in Nonprofit World, 1999) suggests several reasons for the failure of women's organizations to attract funding. First, their nonhierarchical,

experimental structures may seem risky for donors. Second, their general failure to stake out niches that differentiate them from other organizations espousing similar causes creates confusion in the eyes of potential donors. And finally, having to deal with chronically meager budgets detracts from an organization's energies to invest in fundraising strategies. Furthermore, women board members have fewer overlapping board memberships (Moore & Whitt, 2000). This may disadvantage their organizations in the quest for resources. In a Canadian study, Bradshaw and her colleagues (1996) found that with fewer funding sources available, women's organizations were highly dependent on government grants. Such dependence makes them more vulnerable in times of governmental cutbacks. Thus, we expect leaders of women's voluntary organizations to experience the current environmental changes more deeply, be more severe in their judgments of the current situation, and be more pessimistic about the future.

DIFFERENT SOCIALIZATION PATTERNS OF WOMEN LEADERS

Much has been written about differences between male and female behavior. It is not uncommon to read that men and women are socialized in and inhabit different worlds. According to researchers, males are taught to be competitive, hierarchical, and independent (Harragan, 1977; Henning & Jardim, 1976; Lever, 1978; Tannen, 1990), whereas females are encouraged to be nurturing and relationship oriented (Grant, 1988; Rosener, 1990; Tannen, 1990). Although socialization differences are often superseded by situational exigencies when males and females enter the workplace (Kanter, 1977), there is evidence to indicate that these socialized behaviors carry over to the organization (Fondas, 1997).

Studies indicate that although there are no differences between men and women on several management measures, there is one area in which women are consistently different. Women are more likely than men to be democratic, process-oriented, transformational leaders who value information sharing and collaboration (Bass, Avolio, & Atwater, 1996; Helgesen, 1990; Rosener, 1990, 1995). When it comes to relationships, they are more inclined to deal fairly with their clients (Dawson, 1997) and to consider the common good and the needs of others, even those whom they don't represent (Halpern & Parks, 1996). Recently, Walters, Stuhlmacher, and Meyer (1998), in a meta-analysis of the role of gender in negotiations, found consistent results to indicate that women are more cooperative in negotiations. Although the differences were often smaller than expected, "it is clear that men and women share information differently, and research needs to acknowledge that fact, rather than simply assuming that there is one general way that information is shared in groups by all human beings" (Deal, 2000, p. 722). Thus, we expect that leaders of women's voluntary organizations will be more collaborative in their orientation.

DIFFERENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

In an intriguing article, Fondas (1997) identifies the new management strategies touted in textbooks as reflections of "feminine qualities" (p. 257). The textbooks argue that because of the changing nature of work and the workplace, today's managers need to be coordinators, facilitators, and coaches, "supporting and nurturing their employees" (p. 258), qualities identified as distinctly feminine. These qualities stand in direct contrast to the hierarchical, mechanistic, technically rational, controlled approach of traditional management science. Fondas's article, following in the tradition of others (e.g., Deal, 2000; Helgesen, 1990; Rosener, 1990, 1995), recognizes that women's management styles are more collaborative and digress from the more structured, hierarchical, authoritarian manner of traditional management.

Even in mixed-gender technology-based companies, the higher the proportion of women in the organization's founding period, the lower the formalization and bureaucratization evident in later years (Baron, Hannan, & Burton, 1999). Historically, women's organizations tried to distance themselves from hierarchical structures (Clemens, 1999) and were early adopters of collectivist organizational structure (Bordt, 1997). However, over time, strong forces of institutionalization led to the evolution of traditional hierarchies in many women's organizations (Bordt, 1997; Clemens, 1999; Odendahl & Youmans, 1994). Despite this, it seems that a majority of women's organizations, although not fully embracing the collectivist model, are desisting hierarchical structures for hybrid forms that are less formalized and more inclusive, consensual, and empowering (Bordt, 1997; Lott, 1994). This is in contrast to observations by Marsden and Cook's (1994) finding that nonprofit organizations have more formalized structures. Open, inclusive, and decentralized structures allow for greater information sharing and collaboration. Such internal structures may predispose members to favor external collaborations as well. Thus, we expect that in terms of collaborative behavior and attitudes, women's organizations will be more open to collaboration and will be more involved in interorganizational activities.

METHOD

DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

A team of trained interviewers set up appointments and conducted telephone surveys of approximately 45 minutes in duration, with 645 presidents or executive directors of nonprofit organizations located in every province of Canada.⁵ Organizations were screened for eligibility according to organizational definitions and quotas set for province, size, and mandate (see Meinhard & Foster, 2002b, for more detail).

SAMPLE

The sample was drawn from three separate population pools:

Women's organizations affiliated with the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC). NAC is an umbrella organization that represents the concerns of women and women's organizations, espouses a feminist ideology, and is deeply concerned with issues of equality and social justice. (In the tables, this group is referred to as NAC.)

Women's organizations not affiliated with NAC. The reason for differentiating between groups of women's organizations is that although NAC is the largest coalition of voluntary organizations in Canada, it does not represent all women's organizations. In fact, some women's organizations are vocal opponents of NAC's advocacy of abortion rights, its antiwar/antinuclear stance, and its criticism of neoconservative economic policies. (In the tables, this group is referred to as non-NAC. Collectively, the NAC and non-NAC groups are referred to as women's voluntary organizations [WVOs].)

Other (gender neutral) organizations that did not fall into the defined category of a women's organization. In the tables, this group is referred to as OVO.

To qualify for inclusion in the sample, organizations had to fulfill the definitional requirements of a voluntary organization: (a) that the organization does not owe its existence to statutory authority but is made up of a group of people who have come together voluntarily; (b) that the organization is self-governing and decides its own constitution and policy; and (c) that the organization is nonprofit-making (Johnson, 1981, p. 14).

To be classified as a women's voluntary organization, the executive director of the organization had to be a woman and two thirds of the board members had to be women. Because men outnumber women on boards by approximately 55% to 45% (Moyers & Enright, 1997; Pynes, 2000), boards with a two thirds majority of women are indicative of a female-dominated organization. To validate our definition of women's organization, we compared the percentage of female paid staff serving women's organizations with female paid staff in other organizations. Ninety-six percent of all staff were female in women's organizations as opposed to only 73% in other organizations. A Mann-Whitney U test confirmed the significance of this difference (Mann-Whitney U = 18242.00, $p < .001$). This is slightly higher than the 60% to 70% average reported in other studies (Moyers & Enright, 1997; Pynes, 2000).

Sampling targets were 300 women's voluntary organizations, equally divided between NAC organizations and Non-NAC organizations, and 300 other organizations. The sample was further stratified on the basis of organizational size and mandate to ensure adequate representation of the variety of organizations. An effort was made to include First Nations groups, lesbian and gay groups, and minority ethnic and racial groups. They are all part of the

sample but not in large enough numbers to analyze them separately. The final sample includes 167 NAC organizations, 184 non-NAC organizations, and 294 other organizations for a total of 645 organizations. A detailed description of the sampling framework and procedure as well as the distribution of the final sample according to organizational type, organizational size, mandate, and province is available from the authors on request.

We feel that our final sample is fairly representative of the nonreligious voluntary sector in Canada.⁶ A caveat is in order: Other organizations were included in the sample based on their matching the characteristics of women's organizations on size, mandate, and province. Because women's voluntary organizations tend to be smaller, our sample of other organizations may not be fully representative of the range of organizational size existent in the sector. Despite this, we are still confident in the generalizability of the results.

QUESTIONNAIRE

A 120-item questionnaire, made up mostly of 5-point Likert-type scales, was constructed on the basis of in-depth interviews with 35 executive directors of nonprofit organizations (Meinhard & Foster, 1997). These interviews served to delineate the key issues facing voluntary organizations and provided the basis for developing answer categories for the questionnaire. The questionnaire contained eight sections of close-ended questions as described in Meinhard and Foster (2002b).

DATA ANALYSIS

SPSS Version 9 was used to create scale scores and analyze the data. Some scales were simple additive scales based on the sum of individual item responses. For most scales, factor analysis was used to identify clusters of related variables that were then combined into indices. Comparisons between women's and other voluntary organizations were analyzed using one-way analyses of variance, then similar comparisons were made among NAC, non-NAC, and other. The effect of control variables was measured using univariate analysis of variance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We investigated differences between women's voluntary organizations and other organizations in five distinct areas: (a) perceptions of the environment, (b) outlook for the future, (c) perceived effect of the environmental changes, (d) responses to the environmental pressures, and (e) interorganizational behavior and attitudes toward collaboration. All measures are the self-reports of organizational leaders, not behavioral observations. We present

findings both for individual scale items and for global indices that were constructed on the basis of variable extractions by factor analysis. All significant differences were controlled for (a) organizational size, as measured by annual revenue, categorized as small (less than \$100,000), medium (\$100,000-\$799,999), and large (\$800,000+); (b) mandate, grouped into three categories—social services (e.g., Elizabeth Fry Society), health services (e.g., Women's Health Clinic), and a cluster labeled education/advocacy/lobbying (e.g., National Anti-Poverty Organization); (c) age as defined by four categories—less than 10 years, 10-19 years, 20-29 years, and more than 30 years; (d) community size, grouped into six categories, ranging from village (population less than 10,000) to metropolitan area (population more than 800,000); (e) number of revenue sources (from government, foundations, corporate and individual donors, United Way, member/user fees, special events, and commercial activities), grouped into three categories—fewer than 3 sources, 4 to 5 sources, and 6 to 8 sources; and (f) province.⁷

PERCEPTIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The first series of questions focuses on how voluntary organizations perceive the changes taking place in their environment. Respondents were asked to rate the extent of their agreement with seven items on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Table 1 lists the statements, the mean scores for each statement by total sample, WVOs and OVOs, and the results of the one-way analysis of variance testing the differences between WVOs and OVOs. Women's organizations are significantly more critical of the environmental changes than other organizations on four of the seven statements listed in Table 1. An additive index was constructed from the seven items, reversing the score where necessary. The range of possible scores was 7 to 35. The higher the score, the more negative the perception. The overall mean score on the index, 27.2, is well above the scale midpoint of 21, indicating a general dissatisfaction with the changes taking place. Women's organizations, as expected, score significantly higher on this general index. The differences remain significant for all control variables; however, a significant interaction was revealed for age, where WVOs between 20 and 29 years are most negative, and in two of the smallest provinces where the trend is reversed.⁸

From the results, it is clear that all organizations in our sample are unhappy with the changes taking place. However, women's organizations are more critical of both the devolution of services and the way in which it had been implemented. They are also more sensitive to the growing gap between the haves and have-nots in society and more adamant than others in their beliefs that Canada can afford to continue paying for the social safety net.

These findings are not surprising. Through their lobbying, women's organizations have laid the foundations of the modern welfare state (Clemens, 1999; O'Neill, 1994) and the voluntary sector as we know it (Lewis, 1994;

**Table 1. Perceptions of the Environment:
Mean Scores for the Total Population and the Two Subsamples**

<i>Statements About the Environment</i> ^a	<i>Total</i> (N = 645)	<i>WVO</i> (n = 351)	<i>OVO</i> (n = 294)	F	df	p
It is a positive move that the responsibility for the provision of social services is being shifted to the local community level. (a)	2.8	2.6	3.0	17.33	1/624	.000
The provincial government is not obtaining community support as a necessary condition before implementing major policy changes. (b)	3.9	4.0	3.8	4.80	1/620	.029
In the province, the differences between those who have benefited from the current economy and those who have not is becoming more marked. (c)	4.5	4.6	4.4	7.70	1/629	.006
The provincial government continues to be committed as it always has been to its role as the major funder of social services. (d)	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.00	1/630	.159
Canada can no longer afford to pay for all the services that have traditionally been part of its "social safety net." (e)	2.1	2.0	2.2	6.52	1/631	.011
People in the province see voluntary organizations as an essential component of the social safety net. (f)	4.0	4.0	4.1	.06	1/633	.813
Corporations in the province are not making donating to the voluntary sector enough of a priority. (g)	4.0	4.0	3.9	1.01	1/620	.315
Index (with items a, d, and e reversed)	27.2	27.8	26.5	18.10	1/585	.000

Note: WVO = women's voluntary organizations; OVO = other (gender neutral) organizations.
a. Measured by a 5-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Odendahl, 1994). It stands to reason, therefore, that any policies perceived to jeopardize these hard-fought achievements would be viewed negatively.

OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE

The second series of questions investigates how respondents view the future. Fourteen items describing various future scenarios were presented. Respondents were asked to indicate their extent of agreement on a 5-point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*.

The items were factor analyzed to give a more comprehensive picture. Five factors, explaining 59% of the variance, were identified using principal components analysis with varimax rotation converging in seven iterations. We created additive indices by combining the variables extracted for each of the factors and labeled them according to the sentiment described by the variable clusters, specifically, Pessimistic Outlook, Community Activism, Optimistic

Outlook, Partnership, and Management Strategy. The composition of each index and the eigenvalues of the factors are presented in the appendix, A.

The deviation of the mean scores from the scale midpoints of these indices indicates that our respondents (a) are pessimistic about the future ($\bar{x} = 14.2$, midpoint = 12); (b) believe that in the future, there will be greater community activism ($\bar{x} = 10.9$, midpoint = 9); (c) disagree with the optimistic statements ($\bar{x} = 5.9$, midpoint = 6); (d) think that partnerships will be more prevalent in the future ($\bar{x} = 7.1$, midpoint = 6); and (e) believe that voluntary organizations will adopt more business-like behaviors ($\bar{x} = 10.0$, midpoint = 9). One-way analyses of variance on each of the indices revealed that only on the pessimism index do WVOs score significantly higher than OVOs ($\bar{x}_w = 14.9$, $\bar{x}_o = 14.0$, $F = 33.2$, $df = 1,615$, $p = .000$). The difference is sustained when controlling for mandate, community size, organizational size, revenue sources, and province.

PERCEIVED EFFECT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

A third series of questions explores how organizational leaders perceive the effect of these environmental changes on their organizations. One of the consequences of the changes in the environment is increased competition for ever scarcer resources (Meinhard & Foster, 1997). Eleven areas of competition were identified—competition for donations, from individuals and corporations; grants, from government and foundations; contracts, from government and corporations; human resources including staff, board members, and volunteers; media attention; and local community support. Respondents were asked whether the amount of competition in each of the areas increased, decreased, or remained the same. Although initially we found that OVOs report significantly more areas of increased competition than do WVOs ($\bar{x}_o = 4.90$, $\bar{x}_w = 4.48$, $F = 4.12$; $df = 1,643$; $p = .043$), the difference is not sustained when controlling for revenue sources, organizational size, and community size. Large organizations in large communities and with more revenue sources are more likely to experience an increase in competition.

When asked about the effect of devolution and funding cuts on their organizations, respondents indicated that the most strongly felt effect (measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale) is an increased demand for services from client groups ($\bar{x} = 4.0$), followed by increased demands for accountability ($\bar{x} = 3.9$), a need to make better use of staff skills ($\bar{x} = 3.8$), and an increased sense of vulnerability ($\bar{x} = 3.6$). As expected, women's organizations are significantly more likely to report an increased demand for services ($\bar{x}_w = 4.2$, $\bar{x}_o = 3.9$, $F = 9.03$, $df = 1,636$, $p = .000$) and an increased sense of vulnerability ($\bar{x}_w = 3.8$, $\bar{x}_o = 3.3$, $F = 19.81$, $df = 1,641$, $p = .000$).

The three items that are ranked lowest reveal differences between WVOs and OVOs not only in intensity but also in direction. OVOs, by scoring below the midpoint on all three of these items, indicate the following: They do not feel forced to collaborate or amalgamate ($\bar{x}_w = 3.1$, $\bar{x}_o = 2.7$, $F = 11.37$, $df = 1,637$, $p = .000$), they do not feel a need to cover service areas that were once the

purview of other organizations ($\bar{x}_w = 3.2, \bar{x}_o = 2.8, F = 11.45, df = 1,625, p = .000$), and they do not feel that their clients are a low priority in the eyes of funders and donors ($\bar{x}_w = 3.2, \bar{x}_o = 2.8, F = 10.40, df = 1,625, p = .000$). However, women's organizations, by scoring above the scale midpoint on all of these variables, indicate that they are experiencing these issues.

All but one of the five significant findings are upheld in the control runs. Forced amalgamations was not sustained when controlling for province. There are interactions between province and organization type, and age and organization type, on several of the items, as reported in Table 3.

In today's climate of retrenchment, it is not surprising that many nonprofit organizations in our sample are feeling vulnerable and experiencing competitive pressures. Not only has there been a 6-year trend of funding decreases for nonprofit organizations in 9 of the 10 Canadian provinces (Meinhard & Foster, 2002a), but also multiyear operating grants in many provinces have been replaced by project grants and service contracts, all contributing to growing environmental uncertainty. Furthermore, competition is increasing with the tendering of contracts to for-profit firms in areas previously the sole domain of nonprofit organizations. Another source of competition comes from decreases in government funding to large institutional players such as universities and hospitals, who were forced to enter the fundraising field in a more serious way. With their large campaigns and attractive causes, they are muscling out the smaller players in the fundraising game.

Although all organizations report feeling vulnerable, women's organizations, already in a weak position because of their strong reliance on government funding and their lack of attractiveness to many donors, feel even more vulnerable. Women's social, economic, political, and personal needs have never been adequately represented in the power structures of most nations (Stein, 1997; Women's Communication Centre, 1996). Their roles and responsibilities in society continue to be undervalued and their priorities in caring for both the young and the old are taken for granted by governing bodies (Waring, 1999). With the cutting of services, expectations increase that women, the "natural nurturers," will step into the breach. It is estimated that more than 70% of the care for older persons is provided by women family members (Montgomery & Datwyler, 1990). In Ontario, for example, the Premier prefaced his budgetary slashing by invoking communities and families to become more involved in caring for the young and the elderly and by suggesting that daycare can be worked out among neighbors. Devolution and the restructuring of the welfare state "affects women in a double sense: it threatens their paid care-giving work and increases their unpaid care giving work" (O'Connor, 1996, p. 104).

As government programs are being withdrawn, voluntary organizations are, predictably, experiencing an increased demand for services by client groups. Women's organizations are more likely to experience an increased demand for services, as well as a need to cover additional service areas. Unfortunately, in many cases the increased demand for services is not accompanied

by a commensurate increase in funding (Meinhard & Foster, 1997). Although in this study, we did not probe for explanations for the increase in demand, information from in-depth interviews in an earlier study points to two possible reasons for this increase. Our respondents speculated that (a) in times of recession and hardship, women and children are increasingly targets for violent outbursts by disaffected men, and (b) many small women's organizations, totally dependent on government funding, failed to survive the cut-backs, and their clients had to be served by the remaining organizations (Meinhard & Foster, 1997).

Women's organizations are also more likely to complain that funders do not view their clients' needs as a priority. This supports previous findings by Bradshaw and her colleagues (1996) and Useem (1987) that women's causes do not have high prestige for corporate funders making decisions about supporting charitable endeavors. The more pessimistic attitude of women's organizations about the current situation and future opportunities appears to be a combination of a real difference in the effect of recent policy changes and historical disadvantages resulting from championing certain causes and groups.

All organizations in our sample report an increased demand for accountability and an increased need to make better use of staff skills and to improve organizational inefficiencies. With fewer slack resources available, governments and private donors want more control over how their money is being spent. Thus, increased accountability has become the newest canon in the nonprofit sector. To increase accountability, an organization has to demonstrate that the money it receives is spent on furthering its cause effectively and not misspent through organizational inefficiencies and poor use of staff. It is not surprising, therefore, that organizations rank these items highly. There are no differences between women's and other organizations on these measures.

RESPONSES TO ENVIRONMENTAL PRESSURES

This fourth series of questions investigates actions that have been taken as a result of perceptions about the environment. Respondents were asked to indicate, on a 5-point scale from *not at all* to *substantially*, whether they had undertaken any strategic or organizational changes in the past 2 years in response to the environmental shifts. Significant differences between WVOs and OVOs are revealed on all but 4 of the 14 individual items. To achieve a more meaningful analysis, the 14 scale items were factor analyzed to determine underlying relationships among the variables.

The factor analysis, using principal components analysis and varimax rotation, converged in eight iterations to reveal four factors explaining 50% of the variance. Four indices describing different organizational actions were created: Strategic Staffing, Downsizing, Business Orientation, and Revenue Strategies. See the appendix, B, for the composition of these indices. By looking at scores falling above or below the scale midpoint in Table 2, we see that, overall, organizations are engaging in strategic staffing and are adopting a

Table 2. Organizational Changes Made in Response to Environmental Shifts: Mean Scores for the Total Population and the Two Subsamples

<i>Organizational Changes</i>	<i>Total</i> (N = 645)	<i>WVO</i> (n = 351)	<i>OVO</i> (n = 294)	F	df	p
Strategic Staffing Index ^a	12.5	12.4	12.5	.00	1/594	.874
Downsizing Index ^b	3.8	4.1	3.5	10.29	1/610	.000
Adopting Business Orientation Index ^c	9.7	9.3	10.2	14.89	1/625	.000
Developing Revenue Strategies Index ^d	5.6	5.3	5.9	10.80	1/626	.001
Individual items loading equally on three factors ^e						
Increasing the time spent on political action	2.8	3.0	2.6	13.56	1/638	.000
Keeping a low political profile because you fear reprisals from funders	1.8	1.9	1.8	1.24	1/626	.266
Increasing the number of full-time staff	1.8	1.6	2.2	3.91	1/610	.000

Note: WVO = women's voluntary organizations; OVO = other (gender neutral) organizations.

a. Range: 4-20; midpoint = 12.

b. Range: 2-10; midpoint = 6.

c. Range: 3-15; midpoint = 9.

d. Range: 2-10; midpoint = 6.

e. As measured by a 5-point scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*substantially*).

business orientation. We also see that downsizing is not an option for most organizations and revenue strategies are not being pursued.

Although not frequently resorted to, women's organizations are significantly more likely to downsize. They are also significantly less likely to adopt a business orientation and to pursue new revenue strategies. There are no significant differences between WVOs and OVOs in propensity to engage in strategic staffing. Table 2 also indicates that WVOs are increasing the time spent on political action, whereas OVOs are not, and WVOs are less likely to be increasing their staff complement. The significant differences between WVOs and OVOs are sustained for all of the indices in the control runs.

At first, we were surprised to find that, even though downsizing is not a preferred strategy for any organization, women's organizations are more likely to downsize. We expected that, given their focus on inclusiveness, they would be more reluctant to lay off staff. In another paper that investigated revenue diversification, we ascertained that women's organizations in our sample have fewer alternative sources of funding than other organizations (Foster & Meinhard, 2000b), a finding consistent with other Canadian research (Bradshaw et al., 1996). In the absence of alternative sources to substitute for lost government funds, it is not surprising that a larger number of women's compared to other organizations downsize. Given their lack of alternatives, one would expect that women's organizations would pursue new revenue-generating strategies, but our data indicate they have not been as successful at diversification as OVOs. For example, they rarely venture into commercial activities at all. Although this is not a major focus of most organizations in the sector at this time, it is even less evident among women's organizations.

Women's organizations are also less likely to adopt a business orientation, which includes working more closely with corporations, seeking members with business skills, and focusing on marketing activities. They are particularly unlikely to interact with corporations. This may be because they associate the business world and business practices with male, hierarchical power and do not seek out these kinds of relationships. Indeed, as the results reported in the next section indicate, women's organizations perceive that collaborations are easier with less hierarchically structured organizations and with organizations run by women. On the other hand, the dearth of relationships with corporations may be, as the literature suggests, because the causes women's organizations espouse have little appeal to corporations. So even if they were interested in partnerships with corporations, they may not succeed in attaining them. Failure to adopt business-like strategies can further disadvantage women's organizations; as Galaskiewicz and Bielefeld (1998) point out, organizations adopting business-like strategies are more successful in increasing income.

There are some business-like behaviors that are embraced by all organizations, such as marketing and seeking board members with business skills. This is similar to results reported in other studies (Alexander, 2000; Foster & Meinhard, 2000a). Strategic staffing and volunteer recruitment are also priorities for all organizations.

INTERORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR AND ATTITUDES TOWARD COLLABORATION

The last series of questions explores collaborative behavior and attitudes. Respondents were asked a series of questions about whether they engage in interorganizational relationships ranging from occasional discussions, regular meetings, membership in an umbrella organization, participation in a network, short-term coalitions, long-term joint ventures, and finally, mergers. A count was taken of all the different kinds of interorganizational activities reported by each organization. A higher score on this variable indicates not only that organizations are engaging in more collaborations but also that these relationships are more interconnected and formalized. Chi-square and Mann-Whitney U^9 tests confirm a significant difference in interorganizational relationships between WVOs and OVOs (Chi square = 12.62, $df = 6$, $p = .049$; Mann-Whitney $U = 44917.50$, $p = .007$). Figure 1 clearly illustrates the differences. Sixty-nine percent of women's organizations compared to only 58% of other organizations report engaging in more than five types of interorganizational activities. Thus, other organizations tend to engage in fewer and less formalized relationships, whereas women's organizations report more frequent collaborative activities, in more complex relationships. The differences are sustained when controlling for organizational size, community size, revenue sources, mandate, and province.

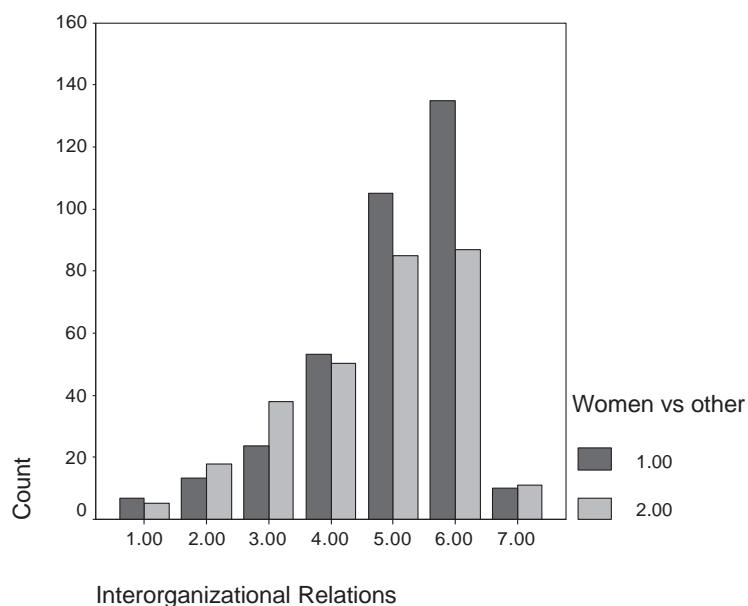


Figure 1. Interorganizational Activities by Organizational Type

Note: WVO (women's voluntary organizations) = dark bar; OVO (other [gender neutral] organizations) = light bar.

What motivates organizations to seek collaborations and partnerships? Out of a list of eight items presented to the respondents, the three key motivating factors for both groups are the same: gaining attention for causes through strength in numbers, achieving greater community involvement, and providing more integrated services. The item, becoming more independent of government, is ranked lowest as a motive for collaboration for both groups. Sharing the risk of start-ups with others and keeping all organizations solvent are more important to WVOs than OVOs. On the other hand, reducing current operating costs and satisfying government requirements for funding are more important to OVOs than WVOs. The discrepancies in ranking are insightful. The two items that WVOs consider more important are related more to communal strategies for survival, whereas the two that are more important to OVOs are related more to individual, instrumental strategies.

We were also interested in how respondents perceive collaborations. To find out, we asked them to rate a series of 11 statements about various aspects of collaboration on a 5-point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Factor analysis was used to find underlying commonalities. Principal components analysis using varimax rotation converged in six iterations, identifying four factors that explain 58% of the variance. As with the other sets of variables, additive indices were created from the extracted variables: Predisposing Conditions for Collaboration, Structural Bias, Collaborative

Complementarity, and Beneficial Effects of Competition. The indices and their items are presented in the appendix, C.

Two of the four indices differentiate between WVOs and OVOs. There is a significant difference between WVOs and OVOs on the Structural Bias index ($\bar{x}_w = 9.1$, $\bar{x}_o = 7.8$, $F = 34.10$, $df = 1,583$, $p = .000$). WVOs agree that it is easier to collaborate with women's organizations and to partner with collectives. Perhaps this is not surprising because 51% of women's organizations (as opposed to only 39% of other organizations) define their structure as nonhierarchical or collective. WVOs score above the scale midpoint of 9, indicating general agreement with the statements, whereas OVOs score below, indicating that they were in general disagreement. The difference on the index is sustained under all controls.

Women's organizations score significantly lower on the index measuring the beneficial effects of competition, a difference sustained under control ($\bar{x}_w = 6.2$, $\bar{x}_o = 7.1$, $F = 30.60$, $df = 1,622$, $p = .000$). Whereas other organizations agree that competition can have a positive influence, women's organizations are focusing on collaborative relationships. This confirms observations that point to the embeddedness of women's organizations in a network of community agencies (Stewart & Taylor, 1997; Yasmin, 1997). Collaboration has served women's organizations well in the successful achievement of their causes. For example, collaboration with other organizations, both men's and women's, was integral to achieving suffrage (Clemens, 1999), and Tyyska (1998) reports that establishing a network of relations was a major determinant of success in the campaign of women's organizations to establish a national day care program in Finland.

This having been said, collaboration is a strategic choice for all organizations. Along with the adoption of business strategies, voluntary organizations in Canada are exploring the advantages of collaboration and partnerships. There is a realignment taking place between the state and civil society (Pal, 1997). New federal initiatives for strengthening the third sector involve creating a web of interlocking networks that include all three sectors (Seidle, 1995).

Increasingly, researchers are advocating the importance of creating permeable organizational boundaries to allow an increased flow of interorganizational communications (Kanter, 1994; Wheatley, 1992). Collaboration may even provide a competitive edge. "The ability to create and sustain fruitful collaborations gives companies a significant competitive leg up" (Kanter, 1994, p. 96). Rosener (1995) claims that America's competitive secret lies in hiring more women to lead organizations in order to foster collaborative relationships.

Table 3 summarizes the results, indicating which variables are significant; how leaders of OVOs and WVOs respond; whether the significant findings are sustained after controlling for organizational size, revenue sources, community size, mandate, and province; whether there is an interaction with controlling variables; and whether non-NAC organizations differ significantly from OVOs.

Table 3. Summary of Results

<i>Variable</i>	<i>OVOs' Response</i>	<i>WVOs' Response</i>	<i>Effect of Control Variables</i>
Perceptions of the environment**	Negative	More negative	Significance sustained. Interaction—in 2 provinces trend is reversed. Interaction—WVOs aged 20-29 years most negative.
Pessimism about future**	Pessimistic	More pessimistic	Significance sustained.
Experienced increased competition	Reported increases	Reported fewer increases	Significance not sustained. Large organizations, organizations with more revenue sources,† and those in larger communities report greater increases.
Experienced increased demand for service	Yes	Stronger yes	Significance weakened. Interaction—in 3 provinces WVOs report less increase than OVOs. Interaction—WVOs over 30 years experience decreased demand.
Experienced increased demand to cover for other organizations	No	Yes*	Significance weakened. Interaction—in the same 3 provinces WVOs report less increase than OVOs.
Experienced increased sense of vulnerability**	Yes	Stronger yes	Significance sustained. Interaction—in one province OVOs feel more vulnerable. Interaction—WVOs aged 20-29 years report most pronounced increase in vulnerability.
Experienced pressure to collaborate**	No	Yes*	Significance not sustained. Provincial differences greater.
Felt clients' needs not a priority for funders	No	Yes*	Significance sustained.
Response: downsizing**	Not very much	A bit more	Significance sustained.
Response: adopting business orientation**	Yes	Less	Significance sustained.
Response: developing revenue strategies**	Somewhat	Less	Significance sustained.

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>OVOs' Response</i>	<i>WVOs' Response</i>	<i>Effect of Control Variables</i>
Response: political activity**	No	Yes*	Significance sustained.
Interorganizational activity	Fewer	More	Significance sustained.
Attitude: structural bias with respect to collaboration**	No	Yes*	Significance sustained.
Attitude: Complementarity of organizations important for collaboration**	Agree	Agree more	Significance not sustained. Large organizations and those from large communities do not think complementarity is important.
Attitude: competition can be positive**	Agree more	Agree	Significance sustained.

Note: WVO = women's voluntary organizations; OVO = other (gender neutral) organizations.

* Difference in direction, not only degree.

** Non-NAC organizations differ significantly ($p < .05$) from OVOs.

† Although the control variable revenue sources wiped out the effect of organization type in only one instance—experiencing increased competition—it had independent significant effects on nine of the variables in this table. Clearly, the number of revenue sources available to an organization is an important factor in how it perceives and reacts to its environment. This is the focus of another paper by the authors (Foster & Meinhard, 2000b).

NAC VS. NON-NAC ORGANIZATIONS

In this study, we deliberately sampled for two types of women's organizations: those belonging to the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), a feminist umbrella group, and those not belonging.¹⁰ We found that the non-NAC organizations fall somewhere between the NAC and other organizations on all significant measures. Moreover, non-NAC organizations differ significantly from other organizations on all but four of the variables that remained significant after controls. Three of the four variables that fail to show significant differences measure perceived effect of the changes on organizations and their constituents. Non-NAC organizations do not differ significantly from other organizations in reporting an increased demand for service, a need to cover other service areas, and the feeling that client needs were not a priority for funders. Thus, it seems that the more feminist NAC organizations experience the effect of the changes more keenly than nonfeminist ones. It is surprising that when it comes to interorganizational activity, the non-NAC organizations, although still reporting more activity than other organizations, do not differ significantly from them.

This finding contradicts our expectations that the more open, relationship-oriented attitudes of women are the primary causal factors in interorganizational activity. Leaders of non-NAC organizations do differ significantly from leaders of other organizations on attitudinal measures of collaboration. It appears, therefore, that the determinants of interorganizational activity are more complex and involve more than just attitudes. In a paper investigating interorganizational collaborations, we found that perceived environmental effect is a powerful intervening variable in explaining interorganizational behavior (Foster & Meinhard, 2002). Because perceived environmental effect is a predictor of interorganizational activity, and non-NAC organizations are less sensitive to environmental changes, it follows that they would report fewer interorganizational activities.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study was designed to address the paucity of research on women's voluntary organizations in Canada. We deliberately sampled 351 women's organizations and matched a sample of other (gender neutral) organizations to it on the basis of size, mandate, and provincial location. The data were obtained by interviewing the executive directors or presidents of the organizations, thus the measures are self-reports and not behavioral observations.

The findings paint a portrait of a sector that is unhappy with current policies and pessimistic about the future. The sector's organizations find themselves contending with the challenging combination of intensified competition for increasingly scarce resources and growing demands made by clients and funders. In response to these challenges, organizations are adopting

business-like strategies while recognizing the importance of intrasectoral and intersectoral collaborations. Responses of women's voluntary organizations are, on the whole, similar in direction to those of other organizations but different in degree. Compared to other organizations, women's organizations are more critical of current policies and more pessimistic about the future. Although they are more inclined to collaborate, they are less likely to embrace a business orientation, develop new revenue strategies, or see competition as positive.

In addition, there are some differences that are more than just differences in degree. Women's organizations are more likely to report having to take over the delivery of services from defunct organizations and to feel that the needs of their clients are not a funding priority. One of the most interesting differences to emerge from this study is that women's organizations spend time engaging in political action, whereas other organizations, on the whole, do not. This follows in the long tradition of women's organizations agitating for their own rights as well as those of the needy and downtrodden.

Our findings imply a complex relationship between ideology and organizational composition and how they influence both perceptions and responses. Close to one third of all women's organizations in our sample do not serve women directly; their primary clients are children, families, the general public, or other groups. Despite this, there are still significant differences between women's and other organizations. This suggests that organizational composition, and the cultural dynamic it engenders, may be an important contributory factor, in addition to ideological disposition, in explaining the differences between women's and other organizations. Using the NAC/non-NAC differentiation as a proxy for ideological versus compositional subgroupings (see Note 10), we see that the distinction between NAC (representing a feminist ideology) and other organizations is more marked than that between non-NAC (nonfeminist) and others. This partially confirms findings by Thomas (1999) that indicate that feminist ideology is the single most important factor in determining the direction of organizational change. Further research into the relationship between ideology and structural composition would be instructive.

We also found some interesting provincial interactions when running our controls. Are these interactions a result of current policy or provincial history? In a separate analysis, we looked at provincial differences and noted the significant role that provincial history plays in organizational responses in general (Meinhard & Foster, 2002a). However, we did not compare women's to other organizations in that study. It is a topic for future analysis.

In summary, we set out to investigate whether women's organizations are a distinct subset of the nonprofit sector. We conclude that, despite strong shared sectoral trends, there is evidence to affirm that they are. Even though many of the differences we found are in intensity only, they need to be acknowledged because they corroborate both women's different societal perspectives and the

different realities facing their organizations. These differences have added weight in a sector that holds many of the same values attributed to women: compassion, concern for the welfare of others, and a relationship orientation (Clemens, 1999).

As the first large-scale comparative study investigating women's voluntary organizations in Canada, the findings add new information to the growing body of knowledge about women's organizations in general and women's voluntary organizations in particular. They raise interesting questions for future exploration. For example, what is the role of feminist ideology versus the role of organizational composition in determining perceptions and responses? Most research does not separate these two issues, yet they have implications for gaining a deeper understanding of gender differences in organizations. Kanter (1977) discussed the role of situational context in explaining gender differences in individual behavior within the organization. How does working in a women-dominated organization affect organizational attitudes, culture, and behavior? Does ideology drive organizational and interorganizational differences or are observed differences the result of different ways of behaving based on socialization? The voluntary sector is a fertile site in which to examine these issues because it has a larger number of women-dominated organizations to provide data.

From a practical perspective, this study may help leaders of voluntary organizations to identify the issues that have to be addressed for survival and success in the current environment. It may also inform policy makers and persuade them to consider the position of women's organizations separately in their deliberations.

Appendix Composition of Indices

Indices were created by combining items identified in the factor analyses as clustering together. The eigenvalues for the factor extractions are reported in brackets. Mean scores reported are the total sample means for each item.

A. INDICES MEASURING FUTURE OUTLOOK

Pessimistic Outlook (eigenvalue = 2.63)*

- there will be fewer small organizations ($\bar{x} = 3.3$)*
- the situation for marginalized groups will become worse ($\bar{x} = 3.9$)*
- more organizations will be merging ($\bar{x} = 3.4$)
- governments will try to exert more control over the actions and priorities of the voluntary sector ($\bar{x} = 3.6$)*

Community Activism (eigenvalue = 2.13)

- organizations will take on a more active role on behalf of the sector ($\bar{x} = 3.8$)*
- clients will be more involved in the decision-making aspect of the voluntary organizations ($\bar{x} = 3.6$)
- voluntary organizations will devote more time toward building a civil society ($\bar{x} = 3.7$)

Optimistic Outlook (eigenvalue = 1.35)

- as the economy gets better, governments will revert to their previous levels of support ($\bar{x} = 2.3$)
- in the future, there will be greater appreciation of the voluntary sector ($\bar{x} = 3.6$)

Partnership (eigenvalue = 1.04)

- in the future, there will be more organizations working together in the voluntary sector ($\bar{x} = 3.9$)
- there will be more partnerships between corporate and nonprofit organizations ($\bar{x} = 3.2$)†

Management Strategy (eigenvalue = 1.02)

- more voluntary organizations will be involved in commercial ventures ($\bar{x} = 3.5$)
- there will be a greater focus on management control, marketing, and entrepreneurship ($\bar{x} = 3.7$)†
- there will be a narrowing of focus toward serving their own constituents ($\bar{x} = 2.8$)

B. INDICES MEASURING ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSE STRATEGIES

Strategic Staffing (eigenvalue = 3.07)

- reassessing hiring criteria ($\bar{x} = 2.7$)
- putting greater emphasis on performance evaluations ($\bar{x} = 3.1$)
- putting greater emphasis on volunteer recruitment ($\bar{x} = 3.0$)
- working more closely with other organizations ($\bar{x} = 3.7$)* (Although this last statement is not directly about staffing, working more closely with other organizations can be seen as reducing the need for staffing.)

Downsizing (eigenvalue = 1.75)*

- reducing full-time staff ($\bar{x} = 2.0$)*
- reducing services ($\bar{x} = 1.8$)*

Business Orientation (eigenvalue = 1.13)†

- increasing focus on marketing ($\bar{x} = 3.7$)
- working more closely with private sector organizations ($\bar{x} = 2.8$)†
- seeking board members with business skills ($\bar{x} = 3.2$)†

Revenue Strategies (eigenvalue = 1.06)†

- engaging in commercial ventures ($\bar{x} = 2.0$)†
- diversifying funding sources ($\bar{x} = 3.6$)†

C. INDICES MEASURING ATTITUDES TOWARD COLLABORATION AND COMPETITION

Predisposing Conditions for Collaboration (eigenvalue = 2.29)

- collaborative arrangements are less appealing to organizations when times are good ($\bar{x} = 3.3$)
- collaborative enterprises are less important for organizations that are financially independent ($\bar{x} = 3.4$)

Structural Bias (eigenvalue = 1.63)*

- the perception that it is easier to collaborate with a women's run organization ($\bar{x} = 2.7$)*
- organizations with a collective structure are easier to partner with ($\bar{x} = 3.1$)*
- large organizations use partnerships to build empires ($\bar{x} = 2.7$)*

Collaborative Complementarity (eigenvalue = 1.49)**

- shared purpose ($\bar{x} = 4.5$)*
- common values ($\bar{x} = 3.6$)
- complementary skills ($\bar{x} = 3.2$)

Beneficial Effects of Competition (eigenvalue = 1.07)†

- competition can have a positive effect ($\bar{x} = 3.0$)†
- organizations need a competitive edge to survive ($\bar{x} = 3.6$)

* WVOs score significantly higher ($p < .01$) as determined by one-way analyses of variance.

** WVOs score significantly higher ($p < .05$) as determined by one-way analyses of variance.

† WVOs score significantly lower ($p < .01$) as determined by one-way analyses of variance.

Notes

1. Fifty-four percent of volunteers in Canada are women, and they contribute 51% of the total time spent volunteering (Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 2000). There are no readily available data to determine the percentage of organizations that can be defined as women's organizations. The Government of Canada Information page estimates that "there are almost 70 national women's organizations in Canada and thousands of provincial, regional and local women's groups" (http://www.infocan.gc.ca/facts/women_e.html). In our study, we had no difficulty finding organizations that met the requirements of our definition.

2. At the turn of the 20th century, there was a sharp increase in the number of young, unmarried female workers in teaching, nursing, secretarial, retail, and factory work (Bates, 2001). Still,

the percentage of women in the labor force in Canada was only 14.4%. By the middle of the century (1951), it increased to 24.4%. It was not until the 1991 census that the percentage of women in the labor force broke the 50% mark (<http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/whm/whm2000/whmstats-e.html>). Today, 55% of women in Canada work outside the home (<http://www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/People/Labour/labor20b.htm>).

3. Whereas this statement is true for the majority of women in Canada in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the experience of immigrant women and women of color was different. Many of them came to Canada as domestic workers with few rights. They too were relegated to the domestic realm, but with even fewer public privileges. The groups they organized fought for fair treatment in their communities (Wharton-Zaretsky, 2000).

4. In southern Ontario and Nova Scotia, as early as 1840, Black women formed all-female benevolent societies to help fugitives from slavery (Sadlier, 1994). Later, they organized for fair treatment in their communities (Wharton-Zaretsky, 2000). Today's Black women's organizations provide a myriad of services including educational, legal, and financial aid (Hill, 1996; Spencer, 1998). In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Jewish women formed all-female organizations to support Jewish schools, summer camps, and orphanages. Later, they formed their own Zionist organizations to bolster the social, educational, and health-care infrastructure of the fledgling Zionist enterprise (Hadassah Organization of Canada, 1927; Karinsky, 1979; Vineberg, 1967). With successive waves of immigration, women of all ethnic backgrounds have formed their own organizations.

5. The reported findings represent the perceptions of the respondent and may diverge from the perceptions of other members of the organization. However, because they are the leaders of their organizations, they are privy to the most accurate information and would be familiar with presenting an organizational perspective on issues. In reporting the results, we often simplify by comparing organizations; however, we are always referring to the perceptions of the leaders. The organizational strategies and responses described in this article are also based on the leaders' reports rather than on observation.

6. We deliberately omitted religious institutions and their affiliate branches such as sisterhoods youth groups because of a paucity of women-led places of worship. These make up about 35% of the Canadian voluntary sector. However, we did not exclude organizations with a religious affiliation such as the YWCA, Catholic Women's Society, or Jewish Child Enrichment Program. We also excluded large institutional nonprofits from our sample such as hospitals and universities because in Canada they are quasi-public institutions.

7. All of these variables can have an effect on organizational perceptions and responses. Work by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) clearly indicates that size affects organizational dependency on the environment and their strategies for reducing that dependence. According to resource dependence theory, extent of resource diversification, measured in our study as the number of revenue sources, would affect an organization's relationship to the environment. Mandate is an important control variable because the funding environment is different for different organizations, depending on their mandate. For instance, in Canada, the health sector consistently receives more money from both government and donors than the social services sector (Hall & Macpherson, 1997). Community size was added as a control variable because organizations in small communities operate under different conditions, which could affect several variables such as competition, collaboration, and resource acquisition. Province was added as a control variable because of differences in social and fiscal policies in the various provinces. These differences and their effect on the responses of voluntary organizations are reported in Meinhard and Foster (2002a).

8. Interactions with province occur with several of our variables, whereas main effects are sustained. These interactions pose interesting questions about the historical relationship of the different provinces to their third sectors and are the subject of another paper (Meinhard & Foster, 2002a). In this article, we report only the results, without speculation as to why different trends are occurring in some provinces.

9. ANOVA results also presented significant differences; however, the assumption of homogeneity of variance was rejected.

10. This is considered to be a crude proxy measurement for organizations with a feminist ideology versus those without. Organizations that are members of NAC are assumed to identify with NAC's policies, which are explicitly feminist. Not belonging to NAC doesn't necessarily rule out an organization's self-identity from being feminist. However, almost 50% of non-NAC organizations state that their primary clientele are not women, compared to 10% of NAC organizations. In other words, almost half the non-NAC organizations are women's organizations by composition only, run by women but not necessarily for women.

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