

WOMEN AND THE REFORM PARTY

by

Stephanie L. Montgomery
Department of Political Science

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Abstract

This thesis explores some of the attitudes toward women found within the Reform Party. The thesis questions how the Reform Party looks at Canadian women and what it would mean for Canadian women if their party were to become the next federal government. Four chapters are contained in this thesis and they explore: the Reform Party ideology, the policies of the Reform Party, the organization of the Reform Party and the electoral base of the party. All chapters are written with gender as the main focus. Various theoretical frameworks are used throughout the first three chapters and important new findings on the gendered aspects of Reform Party supporters are reported in the final chapter. The thesis concludes by confirming the androcentrism or male-centeredness of the Reform Party in its ideology, policies, organization and electoral base.

Keywords: Reform Party, women, women and parties, sexism and political parties

Dedication

This master's thesis is dedicated to my four graduate professors, Drs. Janine Brodie, Paul Nesbitt-Larking, Sid Noel and Richard Vernon who all enriched my understanding of political science in different ways.

To Stephen for all his discussions about my research.

To my parents Garry Montgomery and Joan Montgomery Rose, because I love them.

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Introduction

This thesis will investigate hitherto little explored territory regarding the Reform Party and women. Very little is known about the party so far except for a few brief academic investigations and some popular interpretations of the party. As a populist party committed to broad egalitarianism among the people, the Reform Party has acquired a reputation of being anti-woman. "The people" is presumably a group which includes women. What little we do know about the Reform Party suggests that it is a party which is unsympathetic toward, ignorant of, or even hostile toward women. However, few substantial conclusions can be drawn with accuracy since we currently have only fragmentary and impressionistic evidence. This thesis is an attempt to resolve the paradox of this populist party. While the Reform Party may claim a certain kind of equality in its words and actions, it is my contention that it is also informed by an underlying androcentrism. Androcentrism is not merely another word for overt sexism or misogyny. If it were just this, the Reform Party might easily be able to claim that it is free from such obvious discrimination.

Androcentrism is a concept that will be further developed within this thesis: androcentrism means male-centered. When something is androcentric, "the subject matter reflects only male concerns, deals with male activity and male ambitions [exclusively] and is directed away from issues involving or of concern to women."¹ Androcentrism is particularly problematic because women's concerns become marginalized and their contribution to society is trivialized within an androcentric discourse; women are eliminated from the central focus of the theory, text or the discussion. The limited knowledge we do have about the Reform Party

¹ O'Brien in Beverley Thiele. "Female Invisibility in Androcentric Sociological Theory" The Insurgent Sociologist. 11(2), Spring 1982., p.99.

suggests that Reform is unsympathetic toward, unaware of, or even inimical toward women. The term androcentrism was therefore chosen to explore some of the contradictions within the populist Reform Party. When we say the Reform Party is an androcentric institution, it means that the implicit origin of its ideology and the premises on which its policies are elaborated, are based upon male experiences, interests and perceptions of the world. As the thesis unfolds and we explore the ideology and policies of the party as well as the women who are members of the party and its support base, we will come to develop a fuller appreciation for the term.

A brief review of the literature is useful to appreciate existing understandings of gender issues in the context of the existing publications on the Reform Party. Trevor Harrison and Harvey Krahn, Tom Flanagan, Steve Patten and David Laycock put forth some of the first academic insights into the nature of gender and the Reform Party. Trevor Harrison and Harvey Krahn's "Populism and the Rise of the Reform Party in Alberta"² is the only publication to date that deals with some of the attitudes of Reformers toward women. Harrison and Krahn set up a gender equality index³ to unveil some of the attitudes Reformers have about women. They discover in their sample that "Albertans less in agreement with statements about gender equality were more likely to vote Reform."⁴ They couple this finding with the average age of the Reform voter and conclude that "older Albertans may have supported the Reform Party because of their traditional attitudes toward the family and the role of women in society".⁵ We are presented

² Trevor Harrison and Harvey Krahn. "Populism and the Rise of the Reform Party in Alberta." Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology. 32(2), 1995.

³ The survey was done using 1345 randomly selected residents of Alberta over the age of 18 by telephone in February and March 1991. The items used in the gender equality index were "Men should take more responsibility for taking care of children", "More should be done by governments to promote equality for women in Canada", "The government of Alberta should legislate a pay equity policy, that is, equal pay for work of equal value" and "It is time Alberta had a woman premier". Ibid., p.133-4.

⁴ Ibid., p.143.

with this crucial fact about Reformer's attitudes but it is not investigated further. The reader is left wondering how the attitudes of Reformers compare to supporters of other parties; how these attitudes are manifested in Reform Party discourse and policies; and how many women do, in fact, vote for the Reform Party when such views are held by party supporters. The thesis will refer to this research data later as a point of departure in the further investigation of what the support base of an androcentric party looks like.

Tom Flanagan's Waiting for the Wave: The Reform Party of Canada and Preston Manning⁶ is an all-inclusive examination of the Reform Party. Flanagan picks up where Harrison and Krahn stop. He is the first scholar to draw attention to the gender imbalance among Reform supporters. The highlight of this book is the analysis of the Canadian National Election Study which gives the reader a detailed profile of the 'typical' Reform supporter. Demographically, Flanagan refers to Reform Party membership as "the four M's" and by this he means "married, middle-aged, middle-class, men."⁷ He does a quantitative analysis using the 1993 Canadian National Election Study and notes that men are a group that gave especially strong support to Reform.⁸ It is disappointing that no further analysis is given to why the large gender discrepancy exists in Reform support. Instead, Flanagan merely concludes that the skewed gender outcome is not "surprising or sinister."⁹ Flanagan continues that "all parties are skewed in different ways."¹⁰ It is important to note that no other Canadian federal party is similarly imbalanced by gender. When the women of the Canadian electorate are proportionately

⁵ Ibid., p.140.

⁶ Tom Flanagan. Waiting for the Wave: the Reform Party and Preston Manning. Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Company, 1995.

⁷ Ibid., p.35.

⁸ Ibid., p. 158-160.

⁹ Ibid., p.35.

¹⁰ Ibid.

represented in the other four Canadian parties. as will be noted in chapter four, we can observe that something in the Reform Party is not resonating with Canadian voters. Flanagan's methodology merely subsumes women within the degendered category of 'voter' and thereby limits the exploration of some fascinating data which might have become the basis for fruitful research about the Reform Party and women.

Likewise, David Laycock's "Reforming Canadian Democracy: Institutions and Ideology in the Reform Party Project"¹¹ does not explore the implications of the beliefs and values of the Reform Party with regards to women. Laycock's article mentions that the Reform Party sees its agenda as antithetical to the goals of some women's groups. For instance, Laycock says the Reform Party perceives "feminist lobby groups, native organizations, organized labour, multicultural, linguistic and ethnic groups as the 'elite' special interests who are the beneficiaries of market restrictions."¹² Laycock continues that there are groups "...who receiv[e] favours from a self-perpetuating bureaucratic class in government whose employment is dependent upon expansion of programs to meet the demands of special interests."¹³ Laycock also examines Reform ideology to reveal what lies behind their populist agenda. He notes that the Reform Party wants better representation in parliament. But by "better representation" the Reform Party does not mean "...that underrepresented groups like women....will have special seats [or initiatives put forth in an effort at improved representation]."¹⁴ Instead, its focus on representation is concerned with the elimination of votes on government bills as confidence votes and a call for the relaxation of party discipline. Laycock explicitly says the Reform Party is not

¹¹ David Laycock. "Reforming Canadian Democracy: Institutions and Ideology in the Reform Party Project." Canadian Journal of Political Science. 27:2. June 1994

¹² Ibid., p.217.

¹³ Ibid., p.217.

¹⁴ Ibid., p.233.

interested in feminist groups or the increased representation of women in parliament. What he does not tell us however, is how the Reform Party can reconcile calling itself representatives of the people yet exclude women from its agenda.

Steve Patten continues the study of Reform's populism in his "Preston Manning's Populism: Constructing the Common Sense of the Common People."¹⁵ In deconstructing the Reform Party's definition of the "common people" Patten observes, as did Laycock, how women are addressed: "women are appealed to simply as citizens, implicitly encouraged not to identify their own interests with those of special interest groups."¹⁶ Patten hints at the exclusively masculine undertones of the Reform's construction of the common people. He questions whether the Reform Party's conception of the common people even includes women.¹⁷ Patten talks about how those (special interest) groups that have valorized differences and pushed for the extension of social citizenship rights are cast outside the illusory community which is set up within Reform's populist discourse.¹⁸ Interest group members are not the common people to whom the Reform Party wishes to speak. Patten's work is interesting since it unveils the exclusively masculine referent inherent in the Reform Party's appeal to the common people. Still, he does not delve into the full implications of the Reform Party's androcentrism.

All of these academics - Harrison and Krahn, Flanagan, Laycock and Patten - state that the Reform Party is hostile toward women. Harrison and Khran demonstrate the propensity of those with sexist attitudes to vote for the Reform Party. Flanagan notes the gender imbalance in votes but dismisses this central problematic as "politics as usual". Laycock also hints at the fact

¹⁵ Now published in Studies in Political Economy, 50, Summer 1996.

¹⁶ Ibid., p.19.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.20.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.25.

that the Reform's agenda is not in agreement with the causes of many Canadian women's groups. He notes that although the Reform Party is concerned with issues of representation, this does not include increased representation of women. Patten hints that the Reform's 'common people' is a masculinist construction exclusively. All of these academics provide clues that lead one to see the Reform Party as antipathetic or even as antagonistic to the concerns of Canadian women but none of them explicitly investigates how or why this is the case. Nor do any of these scholars deconstruct the paradox of populism and androcentrism in the party.

To examine this paradox within the Reform Party, four different aspects of the party will be examined. This thesis will examine the ideology, the policies, the party hierarchy and the support base of the Reform Party. The focus of chapter one on ideology explores what kind of populism the party espouses and looks at the ideological contradictions within this conservative and populist party. Chapter two looks at Reform Party policies, details the androcentric character of these and looks at the implications of such policies for Canadian women. It is important to know if women are mentioned in an androcentric discourse and if they are, how 'women's issues' are dealt with. Chapter three explores the organization of the Reform Party and focuses upon the structure of the party and the position of women within this structure. The third chapter on the party hierarchy provides explicit examples of how the Reform Party works to the detriment of women. On the one hand the party claims to want to empower people but when given the opportunity to empower women, it works to their detriment. The final chapter of this thesis concentrates upon the support base of the Reform Party. A profile of 'typical' female and male Reform supporters is presented to examine any significant gender differences in party support coupled with other significant variables that might be likely to affect voting behaviour.

Throughout the thesis, five distinct methodologies are employed: review of the literature, discourse analysis of party materials, qualitative in-depth interviews, quantitative survey analysis and the search of existing data. The review of the literature has already been used to evaluate the work of other scholars and their interpretation of the party. This review has revealed some interesting findings. The adverse attitudes of the Reformers toward women have been hinted at but not explored in an in-depth manner. In particular, the literature review illuminated the urgent need for some exploratory work to be done on the paradoxical nature of the Reform Party's populism for Canadian women. Another methodology employed in this thesis is the discourse analysis of party materials which helps to deconstruct the meanings behind the Reformer's rhetoric when we look at their ideology and their policies. Discourse analysis allows an in-depth reading of party materials and looks at what the party means when it refers to specific ideas and people. A close look at tone, language choice and context reveal a great deal about the meaning behind the party's political language. We learn about attitudes and values of Reformers as we uncover what is highlighted in party rhetoric and what is ignored. Priorities, concerns and beliefs of the members are discovered using this methodology. Discourse analysis provides a more quantifiable conclusion to explain what people may intuit about the party but could not quite articulate. The qualitative in-depth interviews are a fascinating component that greatly enrich the research in this thesis and facilitate a better understanding of women and the Reform Party. To be fair to the party, it is extremely useful to look at the experience of women in the party and how those women have reacted to it. Interviewing women Reform MP's proves to be useful in giving personal accounts and perceptions of their party that could never have been revealed in research data alone. The results of these interviews also add depth and nuance to the

portrayal of the Reform Party as androcentric. Additionally, using the results of the Canadian National Election Study, this thesis incorporates a quantitative survey analysis. Such a method permits the reader to discover what kind of support base Reform has among women. This important aspect of the thesis illustrates how women are responding to an androcentric party. It picks up where Harrison and Krahn's analysis ended by hypothesizing the causes, and the outcome of a party that has negative attitudes toward women.

The Reform Party and Women

Chapter One: Ideology

This chapter will explore the character of the Reform Party ideology and the implications of its ideological orientation for the party's position on women. Methodologically, this chapter is informed by a search for ideological material in the following sources: the party constitution, Preston Manning's book The New Canada, Manning's speeches, and the Reform Party's monthly newsletter, The Reformer. This method of discourse analysis involves the systematic and intensive reading of each resource and the rereading and subsequent analysis of each pertinent statement. Discourse analysis is meant to unveil underlying attitudinal structures and unstated assumptions in the Reform Party. This discourse analysis will serve to guide the reader through a deconstruction of the Reform Party's ideology and their attitudes toward women.

First, we must define what ideologies are. Ideologies¹ are those interested and invested partial appropriations of culture, which systematize knowledge and understanding in a manner which justifies and underpins the interests of particular social groups. Ideologies often serve to mobilize people toward greater solidarity, stronger morale, more urgent advocacy or more vehement exclusion of "outgroups". An element of utopia is often present in ideologies.

An approach to discover the explanation of the Reform Party and women through ideology will be explored in this discourse analysis. Herein, we shall uncover the knowledge and understanding that the Reform Party has of women. We will discover what means are used by the party to achieve solidarity; who constitutes the "outgroups" and the "ingroups" in Reform

¹ Paul Nesbitt-Larking. "Methodological Notes on the Study of Political Culture." Political Psychology. 13(1), 1992., p.81.

vernacular; who is the "we" in Reform Party discourse; to what kind of populism does the Reform Party subscribe; and what other ideologies are exhibited in the Reform Party's ideology?

Goran Therborn, in his book The Ideology of Power and the Power of Ideology, puts forth a useful definition of ideology. "Ideologies qualify subjects by telling them what exists, what is good and what is possible".² Ideologies help to explain what exists in society and what society is like. People's identities are established by subscription to certain ideologies because ideology sets the guiding outline of what is actually 'out there' in society. In telling us what exists, ideologies tell us how we should understand society and how we should understand ourselves within it. The second function an ideology serves is to tell us what is "good" and what is "bad" in society. This is how our desires become structured and how we learn what it is we want. In this way, ideology constructs and limits what people perceive as choices. Finally, ideologies tell us what is both possible and impossible. Ideologies tell us how the world ought to be and serve to exclude from our consideration what is deemed to be 'impossible'. Ideologies offer alternatives to the way things are. Therborn's three-part approach will serve as a broad guide to the analysis undertaken in this chapter.

The Reform Party is populist in its ideology. This chapter will examine the full meaning of this ideology but let us begin by defining populism. According to David Laycock, the "core notion underlying populism is that of 'a people' defined by its historic, geographic, and/or cultural roots."³ Populism involves the notion that 'the people' are one; that divisions among them are not genuine conflicts of interest but are manufactured by a few men of ill will; that

² Goran Therborn., The Ideology of Power and the Power of Ideology. London: NLB, 1980., p.18.

³ David Laycock in Trevor Harrison. Of Passionate Intensity: Right-Wing Populism and the Reform Party of Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995., p.5.

parties are merely self-serving factions; and that the people will be best looked after by a single unpolitical leadership that will put their interests first."⁴ Unlike any other Canadian federal party constitution, the constitution of the Reform Party of Canada states "...we believe in the common sense of the common people..."⁵ The new right-wing populism is anti-system, anti-bureaucracy, anti-elite and stresses the idea that any kind of politics resembling the familiar is dysfunctional. Populist movements stress the value of the 'common people' and validate their political supremacy to elected officials.

Populism is an attempt to create a mass political movement around issues and symbols relevant to people within a particular culture. More specifically, populist movements often direct their critique at those who lie outside of their region.⁶ This may help to explain the often geographically specific focus inherent in populist movements. The Reform Party began as a Western protest party with a critique directed at what the party perceived to be a federal government that pandered to central Canadian concerns: hence their first slogan 'The West Wants In!' Populism refers to a notion of 'the people' in a concept Paul Taggart calls "the politics of the heartland".⁷ By this he explains that 'the people' to whom populists refer are generally a self-labelled 'outgroup' while the 'ingroup' or those who the party calls 'the elites' are juxtaposed with the 'common people' in the 'outgroup'. The populist is more concerned with who is excluded rather than who is included in the 'outgroup'. Politicians, bureaucrats, intellectuals, welfare recipients and immigrants are always on the excluded list,⁸ they are not the 'common

⁴ Margaret Canovan in Tom Flanagan, Waiting for the Wave: The Reform Party and Preston Manning, Toronto: Stoddart Publishing, 1995., p.49.

⁵ The Reform Party of Canada, Constitution: Schedule A - Statement of Principles, p.2

⁶ Peter Sinclair in Trevor Harrison's Of Passionate Intensity, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995., p.5.

⁷ Paul Taggart, "New Populist Parties in Western Europe," Western European Politics, 18(1), January 1995., p.37.

people'. They are the 'ingroup' who seemingly are themselves either part of 'the elite' or have more access to the elites than would the common person.

An important aspect of populist movements involves an attempt to re-define understandings of the individuals, groups, or social forces that constitute the powerful interests.⁹ Successful populist movements will influence popular conceptions of what it means to be a citizen and the definition of what is in our national interest.¹⁰ It must also be noted that the construction of the 'powerful interests' in a populist discourse like that of the Reform Party may not coincide with the definition of the powerbloc as defined by political scientists. Preston Manning successfully redefines the common-sense of the common people in such a way as to entrench neo-conservative politics as that of the Canadian mainstream.¹¹ It is noteworthy that the Reform Party sees some of the least powerful groups as the most threatening and refers to them in an almost conspiratorial way. In a 1996 Reform Party flyer on tax reform, the Reform Party says "...your money's been sunk into every program, service, study and special interest under the sun....."¹² Although populists may not necessarily aim to revolutionize the dominant ideology and relations of domination, they do actively construct the nature of the players.

The Reform Party speaks a great deal about the 'Canadian people' but never fully defines these people. What we do know is that when the party speaks of 'the people', it means those who are not members of, or represented by 'special interests'. The cover of a 1992 Reform Party pamphlet reads "In Ottawa, every special interest group counts except one: Canadians."¹³

⁸ Ibid., p.37.

⁹ Steve Patten. "Preston Manning's Populism: Constructing the Common Sense of the Common People".. Studies in Political Economy. 50, Summer 1996.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Reform Party of Canada. "Tax Relief Easing the Load." Flyer to solicit membership. February 1996.

Statements like the former show how Reform Party rhetoric sets up a dichotomy of special interests against those of 'Ordinary Canadians'. Manning believes that policies dealing with affirmative action, bilingualism and multiculturalism create a special status for certain groups at the expense of equality. When the Reform Party labels groups 'special', by implication it is naming them as unrepresentative. Those who are seen as 'special' (*extra-ordinary*?) are marginalized since it is no longer legitimate to claim special rights or needs based upon history or culture.¹⁴ By labelling interest groups as self-interested special interests, the Reform Party delegitimizes them by suggesting that their interests (gender equality, affirmative action, recognition of Native and linguistic groups) are not of interest to the 'Ordinary Canadian'. As Janine Brodie so rhetorically asks "why is it not in the common interest of all to promote, educate and advocate for the equality of the majority of Canadians who are women?"¹⁵

There are many kinds of populist movements and the typology that best fits the Reform Party is what John Richards calls hybrid populism.¹⁶ It is a kind of populism that articulates the anomalous element of the party: namely, that despite being a movement 'of the people', the party is elite driven. The composition of the elite in the hybrid populist party is a well educated group, generally not in touch with the party members. Also, in light of the lip service paid to the common sense of the common people, hybrid or quasi-populists have little faith in the political ability and aptitude of the common person to make competent political choices on their own behalf. Hybrid populist movements contain a conscious strategy pursued by the leadership

¹³ David Laycock. "Reforming Canadian Democracy? Institutions and Ideology in the Reform Party Project" Canadian Journal of Political Science. 27(2), June 1994., p.219.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Janine Brodie. Politics on the Margins: Restructuring and the Canadian Women's Movement. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1995., p.70.

¹⁶ John Richards. "Populism: A Qualified Defence." Studies in Political Economy. No.5, Spring 1981.

which could be conceived of as a methodology. Manning himself describes how powerful the force of a populist movement can be "...if a politician, a party or a government can tap into [the Canadian "reform tradition"] and harness that power to the formulation and implementation of public policy, there is no more potent political force on the face of the earth."¹⁷ The party constitution also mentions this "reform tradition" in their constitution as the "dynamic and constructive change...in Canadian politics."¹⁸ Hybrid populism, as a movement, works to mobilize and organize support while claiming to empower the people. Unlike 'pure' populism which is more grassroots, and in which the leadership is not significantly different from its support base in terms of education, class and ethnicity, some members of the hybrid populist Reform Party are more professional and cosmopolitan. This results in a more socially-removed elite from its support base than one may at first expect of the party.

An example of the hybrid populist tendencies of the Reform Party were revealed in an interview with Calgary West MP, Jan Brown.¹⁹ As a self-professed atypical Reformer with some feminist leanings, Brown reported that she was initially attracted to the Reform Party because of the populist element she believed it possessed. Liberal democracy sets up the main mechanism through which we can voice our needs and interests through voting yet voting alone does not allow people to make significant political transformation or change. Direct democracy, therefore, appealed to Brown. The high correlation between how much one participates in politics and political efficacy²⁰ is well known and Brown's understanding was that populism would empower people to make effective use of their MPs and this, in turn would make the MP's more

¹⁷ Preston Manning., Op.Cit., p.25.

¹⁸ Reform Party of Canada, Constitution: Schedule A - Statement of Principles, p.1.

¹⁹ Telephone interview with Jan Brown, MP, Calgary South - East, March 5, 1996.

²⁰ Anne Phillips., Op.Cit., p.39.

accountable to their constituents. Despite her aspirations, Brown reported that by the time of the interview, she found her initial hopes of the party's commitment to populism waning. She describes the focus on the leader as 'unpopulist' and reminiscent of the 'brokerage' style of politics she believed the party contested.

The 'we' in Reform Party politics is profoundly gendered. Reform Party ideology exhibits elements of neo-liberal statism in its "New Canada," for example, with unhyphenated Canadianism, and specifically, with degendered citizenship. Manning's own response to dealing with systemic disadvantage is to avoid "ghetto[izing] society by putting people into categories of gender, race, ethnicity or other such characteristics".²¹ By conceptualizing women as degendered citizens as the Reform Party does, we do not make women equivalent to men: instead we simply change the language we use to describe them. The degendering process makes it appear that there is gender blindness and equality of opportunity in public policies, when, in fact, this degendering process involves an erasure of women's lived experience of discrimination. Instead of blatant sexism in policies, the party's degendered policies provide a more subtle form of sexism: androcentrism. This is the practice that collapses representations of the two sexes into a single model when, in fact, the model is only congruent with the masculine.²² In other words, when the Reform Party speaks of 'us' rather than 'them' or speaks of who 'we' are, the terms are delimited conceptually by falsely universalizing one particular group (men) to represent everyone.²³ If we do not name gender, we cannot comprehend sex specific analyses.

²¹ Preston Manning., The New Canada. Toronto: MacMillan Publishers, 1992., p.315.

²² Elizabeth Grosz. "Philosophy" in S. Gunew, Feminist Knowledge: Critique and Construct. London: Routledge, 1990.

²³ Kathleen B. Jones. "Citizenship in a Woman-Friendly Polity" Signs. 15(4), 1990., p.784.

In trying to understand the degendering process that leads to the marginalization of women, Beverly Thiele provides an examination of the exclusion of women in political theory that is useful to the gendered analysis of the political practice of the Reform Party. In particular, Thiele mentions (active) exclusion²⁴ of women as one of the ways women are marginalized. Men, as the biological referent, are the centre and the norm in terms of the political citizen in Reform Party ideology. In keeping with this definition of exclusion, women are not considered a relevant category of examination, so data on gender are not collected by the party. Reform Party women do not believe in women's issues, they only subscribe to "people's issues" or "social issues." At the Reform Party's 1990 special seminar on women's issues, it was decided that there really were none and so dismantled the project.²⁵ Granted, statements on women and public policy taken in isolation do not necessarily mean the party is androcentric. It is possible that the Reform Party is rejecting the marginalization and ghettoization of issues that primarily concern women like equality rights, divorce reform, reproductive technology, employment and child care. Reform Party women could be making efforts to bring these issues to the forefront of Reform policies by explaining that men must take an interest in issues that affect women in their lives. However, this is not the case. The party is silent on the first three issues, namely equality rights, divorce and reproductive technologies and it is strongly against employment equity and subsidized day care.

²⁴ Beverly Thiele, "Vanishing Acts in Social and Political Thought: Tricks of the Trade," Feminist Challenges: Social and Political Theory, Carole Pateman and Elizabeth Gross (Eds.) Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1986.

²⁵ This comment was made in Storming Babylon by Sydney Sharpe and Don Braide and in Trevor Harrison's Of Passionate Intensity, but was completely denied by Jan Brown who said no such project ever existed to be dismantled.

An important part of ideology is that not all perspectives are equally valid and some opinions are not heard. Therborn says "visibility of the world is structured by darkness and spotlights."²⁶ The Reform Party shines its spotlight on a specific conception of "the good woman."

Women are not mentioned in the constitution of the Reform Party, they are absent in policy statements and mention of women cannot be found in Manning's speeches nor in The Reformer. When asked why there is no mention of women in Reform Party documents, three women Reformers, Diane Ablonczy, Deborah Grey and Val Meredith, stated in separate interviews that it is because there are no differences between women and men.²⁷ The first mention of women by the Reform Party is in Manning's book, The New Canada. Preston Manning devotes only one sentence to women explaining the kind of woman he wants in his party:

The Reform Party of Canada is a potential political home for women with traditional values and for those who want more fairness in male-female relationships, but not for those who carry any of these values and concerns to extremes.²⁸

Let us examine the implication of these *traditional values* to which Manning refers. Manning calls his own home *traditional*. His wife is a full time home maker and has "worked outside the home from time to time when extra money [was] required to support the children's many activities".²⁹ This statement could mean Manning and the Reform Party want to attract women

²⁶ Goran Therborn., Op.Cit, p.18.

²⁷ Interviews with Reform Members of Parliament Diane Ablonczy, MP., Calgary North, Deborah Grey MP., Beaver River and Val Meredith MP., Surrey - White Rock - South Langley on April 23, 1996.

²⁸ Preston Manning. The New Canada. Toronto: MacMillan, p. 354.

²⁹ Ibid., p.112.

who are homemakers exclusively, and that homemakers are women with the appropriate traditional values which Manning and the Reform Party want to attract. One could understand the statement to mean the Reform Party is not a party for women with *non traditional values*, who are those women who opt to work in the public sphere. More importantly, we need to examine what more fairness in male-female relationships might mean. Fairness may be limited to the context of a traditional family exclusively, alternately, Manning's reference to 'fairness' might mean a commitment to equal opportunity for men and women within the workplace. A call for more fairness might mean the continuation of private roles for women and public roles for men, but with a new emphasis on women's contribution. Alternatively, fairness may be a recognition of the severity of the problem of wife assault. What 'fairness' likely means is women can enter the public sphere but should not expect gender-specific policies to promote the representation of their sex. Furthermore, we need to ask what Manning means by carrying these 'values and concerns' of fairness to 'extremes'. Manning himself defines what is reasonable fairness and what is *too much* fairness. Since he has called feminists "secular fundamentalists,"³⁰ all concerns of feminists or even of women's groups generally may be *too extreme* or untraditional according to the party. It is important to explore further the implications of the traditional family since it surfaces not only in Manning's book but in the party constitution and party rhetoric. The traditional family has been traditionally an androcentric institution.

When the Reform Party speaks of 'traditional values' what exactly does this mean? A tradition is the handing down from generation to generation the customs, beliefs and thoughts that belong to a particular country, people or family over a long period. Many feminists have pointed to the family as a concrete example of patriarchal relations.³¹ The family has been seen as

³⁰ Ibid., p.103.

a site of both economic and ideological oppression that is protected from scrutiny by the very privacy that family life enjoys. The traditional family, in particular, is organized in such a way as to limit women's position in the paid labour force. Women do not negotiate their waged work on the same terms as men because much social labour is organized with the assumption of the (male) worker having a domestic caretaker for his children. Women cannot easily escape being seen as wives and mothers in the workplace.

The undervaluation of women's domestic labour within patriarchal family arrangements carries over into waged work as well. For example, the career choices women have made 'traditionally' have been based on the flexibility to leave and re-enter the workforce around their childbearing. This has ultimately ghettoized women into low pay, low commitment jobs as women's lives are structured to meet the role expectations of the traditional family. When a woman relies solely upon the wage of her partner, she is increasingly vulnerable, which becomes evident upon the break-up of the family.

Most important to Canadian women is how the ideology of traditional family values surfaces in policy issues. An interesting fact that makes the Reform Party unique is that its constitution addresses the family as an institution worthy of mention and special protection. "We affirm the value....and the importance of strengthening and protecting the family unit as essential to the well-being of individuals and society."³² It is significant that the Reform Party sees the traditional family as threatened.³³

³¹ Carole Pateman, The Sexual Contract, California: Stanford University Press, 1988. Carol Smart, Law, Crime and Sexuality: Essays in Feminism, London: Sage Publications, 1995 and Catherine A. MacKinnon, Toward A Feminist Theory of State, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989.

³² Reform Party of Canada, Constitution: Schedule A - Statement of Principles, p.1.

³³ At their most recent assembly in June 1996, delegates voted to affirm that family involves only those related by blood, marriage or adoption and that 'marriage' must be exclusively

Perhaps traditional gender roles are also threatened in the perception of some Reformers. Naturalism is one of the most common techniques used to deny women's experiences.³⁴ Naturalism illustrates the ideological propensity to declare 'what exists.' Things that are deemed 'natural' like gender, like the sexual division of labour, like women as *necessarily* mothers, do not seem to require social or political explanation; instead, some ideas are simply a given, and taken for granted. Initially, it seems Reform's political ideology is naturalistic, with men as the political representatives of the household and women as the bearers of the hearth. The Reform Party is the only party that does not make efforts to ensure the equal representation of women; it does not believe in affirmative action to correct systemic barriers to inequality; and it does not see the gendered wage gap as politically significant. From these examples, it would appear that the Reform Party has no interest in encouraging women in public roles. Upon speaking with female Reform Members of Parliament, it became clear that to understand Reform Party naturalism, a more sophisticated and subtle analysis was required. Another paradox appeared in Reform Party ideology - between the attributed social conservatism of the party and the strong role of Reform Party women within the party. In her book Women of the New Right,³⁵ American scholar Rebecca E. Klatch cites a subtle but very important distinction, often overlooked in discussions of the Reform Party, between two kinds of conservatism: social conservatism and laissez-faire conservatism. Klatch's analysis can be transported into the Canadian context to help further our understanding of the Reform Party. Although social

heterosexual in that only a man and a woman can be married.

³⁴ Beverly Thiele. "Vanishing Acts in Social and Political Thought: Tricks of the Trade." Feminist Challenges: Social and Political Theory. Carole Pateman and Elizabeth Gross (Eds.) Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1986.

³⁵ Rebecca E. Klatch. Women of the New Right. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987.

conservatives and laissez-faire conservatives are both groups on the right end of the political spectrum, they are often at odds with one another on fundamental issues; yet, at the same time, both kinds of conservatism are evident in the Reform Party. Diverging ideas between the two groups on gender, family and natural roles will help to explain the differences between the groups.

Social Conservatism is rooted in religious sentiment whereby religious values colour one's perception of the world. The *heterosexual* family exclusively is the sacred unit of society and all forms of family outside the heteropatriarchal are understood as morally decayed. In Canada, strict Catholics, Orthodox Jews, Muslim fundamentalists and Evangelical Christians are good examples of religions which support the social conservative viewpoint. A number of critics have attributed the Reform Party's socially conservative ideas to Preston Manning's upbringing in a Christian evangelical home. In a 'Back to the Bible Hour' radio show in 1967, Manning preached the literal truth of the Bible and talked about the "moral bankruptcy" of modern society. He pointed to "juvenile delinquency, adult crime, drug addiction, drunkenness, adultery, divorce, prostitution, homosexuality and general moral laxity"³⁶ as evidence for his case. This is undoubtedly the ideological stuff of which social conservatism is made. This social conservatism continues in the Reform Party today in discriminatory comments made by Reform Members of Parliament, Ron Chatters and Bob Ringma about gays and ethnic minorities.³⁷ The Reform Party appears to be a socially conservative party for a number of reasons. Policies Reform convention delegates have proposed and passed, comments made publicly denouncing

³⁶ Tom Flanagan. Waiting for the Wave: The Reform Party and Preston Manning. Canada: Stoddart Books, 1995., p. 6.

³⁷ Derek Ferguson. "End Infighting: Manning." Toronto Star. June 9, 1996., A1.

homosexuals, lesbians, Black, and Jews and anti-affirmative action policies are examples of the elements of social conservatism within Reform.

Some critics have unfairly extrapolated from both Manning's upbringing and the impolitic statements of his caucus members that Manning is still a radical social conservative. In his newer book, The New Canada, Preston Manning reveals he was raised in the evangelical Christian tradition. He adds that he does not like "to use traditional labels to categorize people's religious beliefs, and...would today simply describe [himself] as a practising Christian."³⁸ Revealing of who Manning wants to attract to the Reform Party however, is his pointed statement "...public opinion studies indicate that faith in the existence of God is still a part of the worldview of the *common people*."³⁹

When we look at family as defined by social conservatives, the order is God/Christ, man, woman. There is a strict division of gender roles as decreed by the scriptures and male and female roles are respected as essential and complementary; women exist to support men in their roles of higher authority. Social conservatives are decidedly anti-feminist. They believe in the divinely ordained 'natural' hierarchical ordering of men over women. Women are 'naturally' wives and mothers while men are 'naturally' the breadwinners. This ideology also paints a disturbingly reductionist picture of men and masculinity. Men are passion-driven masters of the home who need the civilizing influence of a morally superior wife. Ideas that were furthered in Canadian history at the turn of the century by women's groups such as the Christian Women's Temperance Union, and ideas that are held today by groups such as REAL (**R**ealistic, **E**qual, **A**ctive, for **L**ife) Women are examples of a maternalist philosophy within social conservatism.

³⁸ Preston Manning, The New Canada. Toronto: Macmillan Canada, 1992., p.96.

³⁹ Ibid., p.98.

These groups champion the heteropatriarchal family as the normative socializing agent of society. This traditional understanding of women pigeonholes them into pre-determined category - women are mothers by nature and this is the 'natural' role of all women. This problematic valorization of motherhood and family life does not recognize the choices women have been empowered to make about whether to have children or not. When motherhood is assumed and idealized like this, one does not recognize the home as a place of violence for 29% of Canadian women⁴⁰ nor does it reflect the fact that most of Canadian women are in the paid workforce full or part time.

Despite the social conservatism of some of their male colleagues, Reform women Members of Parliament obviously set an example that does not support a socially conservative philosophy. A socially conservative political woman can reconcile the role tension however and step into the male world of politics by acting to protect women's interests within traditional bounds as a sort of housekeeper of the public sphere. Clearly, despite many publications linking the Reform Party to social conservatism both by implication and by accusation, this is not the case for every MP. It seems then that the key to understanding how these conservative women reconcile the tension between the valorization of the traditional family with their obvious public roles is their belief in laissez-faire conservatism. These laissez-faire conservative Reform Party women do not discuss 'nature' or 'natural roles'. Both women and men are seen as self-interested, capable and responsible for autonomous action and each individual has a right to

⁴⁰ As of 1993, 29% of all women living married or common law had *reported* being physically or sexually assaulted by a partner on at least one occasion. This figure breaks down as follows: 16% of the above mentioned women reported being kicked, hit, beaten up or choked, use of a gun or knife by partner or sexual assault. 11% reported being grabbed, pushed, shoved or slapped. 2% reported being threatened or having something thrown at them. Women in Canada: A Statistical Report. Statistics Canada, 1995., p. 104.

self-determination. Contrary to those in favour of gender specific policy and analysis, Reform Party women do not see their gender identity as politically relevant at all. Reformers do not believe in gender as a relevant cross cutting cleavage as confirmed by Diane Ablonczy who said that "every policy impacts all people."⁴¹ The irrelevance of gender to these women was confirmed by Val Meredith's insistence that "all issues are women's issues!"⁴² A lack of discussion of natural roles evidently does not mean a gendered analysis however. Rather, a degendered outlook is what follows from Reform Party ideology: ".....the fact that there are 18% women in the House of Commons does not reflect [sexual] discrimination" according to Meredith, instead it is "women [who] do not want to make the necessary sacrifices"⁴³ This kind of reasoning is the logical outcome of individualistic and androcentric argumentation.

A critique of individualist philosophy may be of use in understanding the implications of a focus on the individual rather than the collective. Degendered policies stress individualism rather than the collectivity. The ideology of individualism in the neo-liberal state prompts people to focus on their individual ability to change themselves. Personal change is seen to come through determination, will, effort, and discipline. Structural limitations like gender, class and ethnicity are not factored into this analysis. Instead, there is an assumption that equality of opportunity exists and that all women have to do is try. This equality of opportunity means each individual is assumed to have the options and resources necessary to make this individual change. Further, when inequality is acknowledged, it is attributable to individual prejudice rather than structural inequalities of power and privilege. Within this discourse, failure to advance is a result of a deficiency in the individual herself. If we locate the problem in the individual when it

⁴¹ Interview with Diane Ablonczy, MP., Calgary North, April 23, 1996.

⁴² Interview with Val Meredith, MP., Surrey - White Rock - South Langley, April 23, 1996.

⁴³ Interview with Val Meredith MP., Surrey - White Rock - South Langley, April 23, 1996.

is, in fact, a larger social problem, the result is disempowering and demobilizing for the individual.

For this reason, women as a group need specific policies implemented with this understanding of political economy. Women need policies that reflect the 'real life' situations of women in the workplace and the barriers they will encounter. Instead, the Reform Party is largely silent on gender issues. In fact, says Manning, about "so-called 'women's issues'":

The problem's not going to come from evangelical, fundamentalist Christianity. In the States it might....But in Canada you have to worry about secular fundamentalism - feminism and a certain strain of ideological environmentalism.⁴⁴

Another pertinent issue that feminism and social conservatism cannot generally reconcile are their respective understandings of the family. The battle over the definition of the family is at the heart of social conservative concern. Only blood, marriage and adoption are legitimate relations. Thus lesbian, homosexual and common law families are deemed illegitimate. Laissez-faire conservatives, on the other hand, see issues like the acceptance of homosexual families as private issues and believe that to legislate in these areas is an invasion of individual liberty. Social Conservatives see the ideal society as one in which individuals are integrated into a moral community bound together by faith, by common values, and the dictates of the family, the church and God. Laissez-faire conservatives conversely, tend not to focus on social concerns to the same extent. Economic issues take precedence over all social issues and there is less importance given to moral or spiritual roots for the laissez-faire conservative.

⁴⁴ Preston Manning., Op.Cit., p.103.

Despite Reformers claims of absolute similarity between the genders on all relevant political issues, there may be reason to believe populism is more suited to women politicians. It has been greatly theorized and overwhelmingly reinforced in interviews with Reform women Members of Parliament that women are consensus-oriented in politics whereas men tend to be more confrontational. Although such claims initially sound essentialist or biologically determined and in line with social conservatism, this may not be the case. The four Reform Party women interviewed in this thesis despite their initial claims of the party line of gender blindness called the House of Commons a 'male environment'. They also all claimed women MP's are more team-oriented and less ego-driven than their masculine colleagues. There was constant reference to the non-hierarchical approach to decision making that women politicians tend to have. If this is true, women legislators have the potential to change both the style and substance of debate in politics. Realistically however, it will require more than the current 18% of women politicians currently occupying seats in the House. Ironically, if the Reform Party had affirmative action policies to increase the number of women within the party, there could very well be a more non-hierarchical, grassroots, populist element to the Reform Party to strengthen the appeal upon which they initially gained such strong support.

An important question to ponder is Goran Therborn's assertion that ideologies define what is "good" and what is "bad" in society. It is useful then, to ponder who might be considered a 'good woman' by Reform and whether she exists at all in her own right. As earlier sections explained fully, the degendered policies of the party subsume women within masculine categories and deny women a much needed sex -specific analysis. Perhaps we could say a 'good' woman does not call attention to her gender. She does not want affirmative action programs

implemented because her individual merit is what she wishes to be the basis of her assessment. All of the Reform women interviewed stated that it would be an insult to have affirmative action policies to suggest they needed help to beat male politicians. Deborah Grey called such actions "degrading" and said "gimmee four guys to run against and I'll cream 'em".⁴⁵ Perhaps the 'good woman' does not 'see' systemic barriers. After all, Reformer Val Meredith said that a lot of the barriers women encounter in politics are "self-imposed" and that women are generally not prepared to make the sacrifices necessary to be successful in politics.⁴⁶ Like the good (degendered) citizen mentioned earlier, the 'good' Reform woman does not make claims on the state based upon her gender, ethnicity or ethno-cultural group: she is an unhyphenated, degendered Canadian. When this woman speaks publicly, she speaks in an androcentric voice that reaffirms the patriarchal nature of politics and political conflict. She has to continue to discuss an agenda set and prioritized without the concerns of her gender in mind. This is not to suggest a male conspiracy theory but to emphasize that women are not seen as political and that their political and social interests are not taken into account. Since as a woman she cannot specifically address women's concerns (because there are none), she speaks in the androcentric language of politics that has always been spoken and in so doing, she mutes the concerns of women.

When a woman steps into the public sphere as a good woman MP, she cannot be unaware of her gender because men always let women know they are in a man's world; a scarcity of women's washrooms in the House of Commons, the derogatory language directed at female parliamentarians, and the belittling of 'women's issues' when raised in Parliament, specifically the

⁴⁵ Interview with Deborah Grey, MP., Beaver River, April 23, 1996.

⁴⁶ Interview with Val Meredith, MP., Surrey - White Rock - South Langley, April 23, 1996.

inappropriate responses by MP's on issues like the Montreal Massacre and workplace sexual harassment;⁴⁷ even Reform women with their androcentric notions of "equality" notice these circumstances as masculine. The sheer numerical inequality in the House of Commons makes women constantly aware of their femaleness and they cannot help but notice it yet 'good' women cannot mention it. Since feminist consciousness and womanhood can be mutually exclusive, it is unrealistic and visionary to suggest that women's presence alone will bring women's issues into parliament. However, concern for women's health, fertility and safety cannot be ignored when enough women are willing to recognize concerns of their gender and reinforce them as legitimate policy issues. Of course the Reform Party - in Therborn's terms - would regard these women as 'bad'. This homogenizing category that collapses difference into one unrepresentative group is not the potentially unifying factor the Reform Party would have us believe. Rather, such ideologies wholeheartedly discredit the valorization of difference that recent social movements have sought to obtain.

This chapter has considered both the populist and conservative elements of Reform ideology. Discourse analysis has proven to be a meaningful resource to begin to understand the androcentric position underlying Reform Party ideology. These two elements of Reform Party ideology, namely populism and conservatism, orient the party in a male-centered discourse. The Reform Party's populism is paradoxical in that it claims to be populist - which supposedly means equality among "the common people"; and yet androcentrism makes women disappear. The juxtaposition of two mutually exclusive groups, "the people" and "special interest Canadians" illustrates the manner in which specifically women's issues are marginalized. An examination of tensions within the party, between laissez-faire and social conservatism, has

⁴⁷ Sydney Sharpe. The Guilded Ghetto. Toronto: A Phyllis Bruce Book, 1994.

explained how Reform Party women can navigate themselves within an androcentric ideology. While some subscribe to the social conservatism and consequent maternalist values this supplies, many are laissez-faire conservatives, whose reconciliation of social conservatism rests on their propensity to individualize and radically degender issues which confront them. Having looked at the party's ideology, we now turn to look at what Reform policies might mean for Canadian women.

Chapter Two Reform Party Policies

Policies are guesses about the true nature of political problems. Designing new policies depends upon recognizing and defining specific public concerns. Policy creation is not a benign process, however, as it is highly subjective and reflects the ideology of the governing party at a given time. Policy creation is a highly subjective process because it reflects the values and concerns of a particular government. Policy silences can indicate a strong objection to a certain policy such as pay for housework or it can simply mean something is not seen by the government as a priority or as worthy of consideration. Defining a problem is a process that requires the gathering of facts, values, causal statements and norms yet is never conclusive in an objective sense since it always depends upon value judgements.¹ Having explained the androcentric nature of the Reform Party's populist-conservative ideology in the last chapter, it makes sense to look at policy statements to get some insight into how the Reform Party prioritizes certain issues of concern to Canadian women. Once again a discourse analysis and review of the literature will help to uncover the nature of Reform Party policies for women.

Leslie Pal points to three areas of concern that he believes ultimately underlie the eventual structure in any policy decision.² First and foremost is one's view of human nature; for example, is it wild and unruly and in need of strict regulation or are citizens generally highly disciplined and self-regulating? Second, it is necessary to question the ends or goals that are being sought; for example, what are the ultimate ends of the polity? what is permissible to strive for through the policy arena? and what is a legitimate jurisdiction of government? Finally, the

¹ Leslie Pal, Public Policy Analysis. Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1992., p.210.

² Ibid., pp.210-215.

underlying theories or frameworks being applied to the policy arena need to be examined; what is the guiding ideology in the policy field?

In summary, Leslie Pal points to three areas of concern that he believes ultimately underlie the eventual structure in any policy decision: one's view of human nature, the ends or goals that are being sought and the theories or frameworks being applied to the policy arena.³ An exploration of the policies of the Reform Party provides a better understanding of how its policies might affect women. If the Reform Party has an androcentric conception of human nature then women will be invisible and marginalized by their policies. Women may, in fact, discover that an issue is not on the policy agenda. If an issue is on the agenda, the ends of the legislation may be androcentric as may the structures through which the policy is formulated.

In this chapter, the Reform Party's policies toward women will be explored by examining a range of gender-relevant policies individually. Of course policies interact and overlap in real women's lives and cannot be artificially divided into economic, social and familial categories as readily as will this chapter on Reform policy. For example, the issue of violence against women in the home is intrinsically tied to affirmative action and the economic empowerment of women. Similarly, women of colour cannot easily divide their lives into one of multicultural policy or women's issues as their life experience does not allow such false divisions. For the sake of simplicity and accessibility, this chapter will examine some policies individually and some as part of groups that represent a general tendency in Reform thought. The most pertinent policy groups to the lives of Canadian women include: first, violence against women; second, equity issues including employment equity, multiculturalism, same sex couples, and child care; third,

³ Ibid., pp.210-215.

MP accountability including citizens initiatives, recall, and referenda; and fourth, women's health.

Violence Against Women

All women are vulnerable to and very aware of sexual abuse and physical assault. The United Nations' defines violence against women as:

..any act of gender based violence that results in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether in public or private life.⁴

This all encompassing category of violence against women includes stranger sexual assault, spousal sexual and/or physical assault, incest, ritual abuse and date rape. Since in 1993, 72% of all violent incidents committed against women were by acquaintances or relatives, compared with 37% of violent crimes committed against men,⁵ this section will focus on spousal assault.

Wife assault⁶ occurs when men kick, hit, beat up or choke women, use a gun against their partners or sexually assault them. As of 1993, 16% of ever-married women were in this category.⁷ At the same time, 11% of Canadian women reported being pushed, grabbed, shoved or slapped, while 2% had experienced non-physical assaults such as being threatened or having something thrown at them. This adds up to 29% of women ever married or who lived in a common law relationship had been physically or sexually assaulted by their partner on at least one occasion since the age of sixteen.⁸ Evidently, when we couple the fact that just under one third of women in domiciled relationships experienced violence from their partners with the fact

⁴ United Nations. Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women., 1993., p.6

⁵ Statistics Canada. Women in Canada: A Statistical Report. Third Edition., 1995., p.102.

⁶ Ibid., p.104.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., p.104.

that in 1993, 69% of all personal victimizations experienced by women were not reported to the police.⁹ we see there is a huge and underreported problem in Canada. Further, when we realize that although women make up a third of all homicide victims, they are the majority of those killed by a family member, we see a problem that needs to be addressed. In 1993, women comprised 59% of all homicide victims killed in a domestic relationship.¹⁰ Clearly, wife assault is a major problem in Canadian households. These high numbers warrant a public policy concern.

Since the Reform Party clearly wants to strengthen the family unit, we might expect a strong statement from them with regards to wife assault. In a section of a Reform brochure entitled "Family Violence", the Reform Party tells us that violence within the family attacks the foundation of society and therefore must be dealt with severely by the criminal justice system.¹¹ It is a "top priority" of Reformers to ensure effective programs to prevent "family violence" and to treat both "victims" and "abusers".¹² In his book, Manning notes that the Reform Party assembly called for "the enactment, communication and enforcement of such [family violence] laws to protect family members against such acts".¹³

The first and most important observation to make about this policy statement however, is that the language is gender neutral. Rape is overwhelmingly a crime of male aggression towards women which means degendered language is simply unsuitable and inaccurate. Gender neutral language like "family violence" or "spousal assault" locates the problem in the family rather than

⁹ Ibid., p.102.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.103.

¹¹ Reform Party of Canada. "63 Reasons to Support the Reform Party of Canada." Undated., p.3

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Preston Manning. The New Canada. Toronto: MacMillan Canada, 1992., p.273.

within a gendered societal arrangement.¹⁴ For example, although individual men make choices to be violent or not, explanations that focus solely on individual characteristics and traits cannot account for the scope, proportion and dimensions of violence against women both today and historically.¹⁵ Violence against women is linked to sexism in society that devalues the public and private work women do and that historically has ignored violence in the home by calling it a 'private' issue. For example, some men have interpreted their 'private conjugal rights' to mean unlimited sexual access to daughters, nieces and granddaughters.¹⁶ Violence is not a problem in a particular "family" or "spouse" nor even in a particular man; violence is too pervasive to be individualized to that extent. Hence, degendered policies are insufficient to address the problem of violence against women. Likewise, violence needs to be understood within an overarching framework that looks at the problem as a societal as well as an individual issue: something laissez-faire conservatism cannot do .

Here, Pal's suggestion that we examine the underlying framework of a policy proposal is a useful tool in understanding Reform policy. Reform's emphasis on individual responsibility and punitive action on the abusers, though responsive to a serious problem, does not focus on the issue but rather on the symptoms. Reformers are looking at the issue as a problem of one individual, particularly violent man, not at the larger culture that legitimates violence against women in the broader media and turns a blind eye to violence against women by pushing wife assault into the private realm. If we see wife abusers as demonized, psychopathic men, or if we think wife assault is concentrated in a particular ethnic or religious group with "backward" values

¹⁴ Andrea Levan. "Violence Against Women" in Women in Canadian Public Policy. Ed. Janine Brodie. Toronto: Harcourt, Brace and Company., 1995., p.330.

¹⁵ Canada. Changing the Landscape: Ending Violence - Achieving Equality.. 1993., p.6.

¹⁶ Ibid., p.18.

instead of seeing our upstanding community members as abusers also, we falsely associate violence against women with a class or race of men when the problem spans all races and all classes.

A potentially positive aspect of the Reform Party's plans with regards to wife assault is its claim to promote "effective programs to prevent family violence."¹⁷ This seems to imply public education on the issue. If school children were to learn that violence is wrong, it would empower little girls to refuse to accept violence in relationships and it would give them the tools to assess the situation at home should their mothers be abused by their fathers. We live in a culture that has ignored violence against women by labelling it a 'private' issue, or by defining rape as a crime against public morals rather than a crime against the person as was the case in Canada prior to 1983.¹⁸

The Reform Party ignores the social causes of rape in their policy plan. Pornography, media portrayal of women, women's roles in educational resources, the attitudes of the criminal justice system and a woman's right to control her fertility are linked to violence against women. Likewise, initiatives for social and economic equality like child care, access to good jobs, pay and employment equity are all part of empowering women while putting an end to violence¹⁹ - yet none of these concerns are on the Reform Party's policy agenda. Within the family, power imbalances can be seen in the sexual division of labour, and the unequal division of housework and childcare. In the legal system, gender inequality is seen by police treatment of women and

¹⁷ Reform Party of Canada. "63 Reasons to Support the Reform Party of Canada." Undated., p.3.

¹⁸ Levan. Op.Cit., p.323.

¹⁹ Marie-Claire Levesque. "The Panel on Violence Against Women: Strategy or Smoke Screen?" Canadian Women's Studies. Volume 12, Number 1. Toronto: York University Publications, Fall 1991., p.117.

sentencing practices that do not hold men accountable for their violence.²⁰ Although the Reform Party seems to take family violence seriously, it lacks a gendered perspective and provides only a superficial solution to a deeply rooted problem.

Employment Equity

One of the most dramatic changes in the composition of the labour force in the last two decades is the number of women participating in it. In 1994, 52% of all women aged 15 and over had jobs, compared with 65% of their male counterparts.²¹ Even women with children under three are in the labour force, 56% of such women in 1994.²² Despite the efforts of employment equity legislation, women still occupy the same jobs as they did at the turn of the century. In 1994, for example, 70% of all women working were in teaching, nursing and health-related occupations, clerical positions, or sales and service occupations, compared to 30% of all men.²³ Moreover, it is interesting to note that women's work in the paid sector is very much an extension of the work they do in the home. Little girls are socialized to learn caring, repetitive jobs that translate into low pay, low benefit jobs in the workplace. These 'female' skills emphasize the belief that such abilities are 'innate' in women. The result is that 'women's work' has come to be understood culturally as easier, less demanding and less skilled.

The result of this occupational segregation is a gendered wage gap. The average earnings of a woman working full-time, full-year were \$28,400, which constitutes 72% of the figure earned by their male counterparts.²⁴ (The average earnings of an immigrant woman who worked full-time, full-year were 65% of her male counterpart or \$26,500).²⁵ The male-to-female earnings

²⁰ Canada. Changing the Landscape: Ending Violence - Achieving Equality.. 1993.. p.8.

²¹ Statistics Canada. Women in Canada: A Statistical Report. Third Edition.. 1995.. p.64.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., p.67.

²⁴ Statistics Canada.. Op.Cit., p.86.

ratio was less than 70% in all non-professional occupations filled by women.²⁶ Obviously, women's, like men's earnings, increase substantially with educational attainment, however, at all levels of education, women's earnings are less than those of men. For example, in 1993, the earnings ratio for women and men employed full-time, full-year was 79% among teachers, 78% among those in artistic/recreational jobs, 76% among those in the natural sciences, 71% among women in the social sciences and religion, 67% among managers and administrators, and 60% for those women employed in medicine and health. Even when women do non-traditional jobs, they are paid less than their male counterpart. This issue dramatically affects all Canadian women, indeed, all Canadian families with working women are affected.

The Reform Party has an obvious policy silence in the area of employment equity. The party believes that the recognition of difference in terms of gender amounts to 'ghettoization'.²⁷ Although Manning acknowledges that government has a role to play in working women's lives, he notes that "working women" meaning women in the paid labour force, "face many obstacles to their careers"; therefore, the party wants to deal with "disadvantage" by "diagnosing the problem and devising measures to enable people to take greater control of their own lives".²⁸ Presumably, this means empowering people in low skill jobs to upgrade or retrain. Perhaps this even means an approach such as increasing the minimum wage, an act which would target women most in need, those at the bottom of the female wage ghetto.²⁹ Women in the professions who have already "taken control of their lives" are left out of the equation. The responsibility for ensuring

²⁵ Ibid., p.123.

²⁶ Ibid., p.87.

²⁷ Preston Manning, The New Canada, Toronto: MacMillan, 1992, p.315.

²⁸ Preston Manning., Op.Cit., p.315.

²⁹ Lorraine Mitchell, "What Happens On the Way to the Bank: Some Questions About Pay Equity." Resources for Feminist Research, Volume 17, Number 3, September 1988, p.65.

their pay is equal to that of their male counterparts is put back onto the individual woman rather than the employer. Issues of job security, unfair labelling of complainants and uncertainty regarding guaranteed fair treatment often keep women from complaining to their employers.

Now that women are in traditional male jobs, we can see the gendered wage gap has not closed significantly and we need some kind of initiative by the federal government to generate the incentive to promote women. It will not be done by itself since those in positions of power are not willing to give up their status! We need not see employment initiatives or quotas as a compromise of efficiency - this is a reflection of our tendency to expect less quality work from women. Stereotypical inaccuracies about a woman's low commitment to her job, her eventual 'biological urge' to reproduce and the ingrained belief in the intellectual and psychological passivity of women keeps them from being seen as promotable. Canadian women need employment equity legislation initiatives from Canadian federal parties; they do not need policy silences on such an important issue.

Multiculturalism

There is a widespread resistance to multicultural policy both among Canadian born and immigrant Canadians. There is a belief that the entire moral burden of tolerance is borne by the majority group, which we tend to think of as white, Anglo-Saxon Canadians.³⁰ Condemnation of multicultural policy enables parties like the Reform Party to tap into an underlying sentiment of resentment towards immigrants. In its Blue Book of policies, Reformers oppose multiculturalism on purely economic grounds. They claim to "uphold the rights of each citizen and private group to preserve their cultural heritage" but it must not be done with federal government funds.³¹

³⁰ Christina Gabriel. Op.Cit., p.181.

³¹ Reform Party of Canada. Blue Book, 1995., p.4

These cultural groups are the same groups Reformers label "special interests" and so vehemently oppose. In principle, Reformers may believe immigrant Canadians are entitled to retain their cultural heritage in Canada but they do not seem to promote the idea and are certainly not willing to pay for it.

The Reform Party emphasizes privatization and private sector growth. A seeming urgency and inevitability surrounds all discussion of social spending and economic choices. This is the lens through which Reform assesses social policy generally, and multicultural policy specifically. On another level, Reformers oppose multiculturalism because any recognition of difference is seen by the Reform Party as a kind of granting of special status. Once again, dealing with what the Reform Party calls 'disadvantage' by recognizing it as a systemic problem, serves only to put people into legal categories and does not further equality.

Like those who disagree with multiculturalism, Manning wants the federal government to focus on the common elements of Canadians. This argument assumes that a focus on ethnic difference, as multiculturalism necessarily does, is divisive. Strong anti-Quebec sentiments, the 'Heritage Front' take over of an Ontario constituency and a Reform candidate's racist statements at York University in 1993 damage the Reform Party's critique of multicultural policy.³² So the question is whether Reformers have an un-bigoted, inclusive approach behind their plans to discontinue multicultural policy or whether it is a thin veil to hide a deep seated racism. We need to look at the 'traditional values' and the nostalgic reminiscences of a time gone by to which Reformers seem to cling, to see if their unhyphenated Canadianism embraces a multicultural ethic. Given their lack of endorsement of bilingualism and biculturalism, a multicultural

³² Margaret Cannon, The Invisible Empire: Racism in Canada, Toronto: Random House, 1995.

Canadianism does not appear to be the sentiment of the Reform Party. This conclusion is further strengthened by the sheer absence of any serious discourse on race or ethnicity within the party.

Aboriginal people

It is familiar news to hear of the disadvantaged position Aboriginal peoples have faced historically under the paternalistic Canadian government that continues today. Large discrepancies exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadian women. Aboriginal women have a greatly reduced life expectancy,³³ much higher unemployment,³⁴ less formal education and fewer job skills. Aboriginal women can expect to have almost twice as many children as their non-Aboriginal counterparts³⁵ and if employed, make much less money.³⁶

The Reform Party's little developed and largely unarticulated policy on Native Canadians says that it wishes to help Natives become self-sufficient and strongly encourages and supports Native self-government.³⁷ Given its overall emphasis on personal responsibility to overcome systemic discrimination and the primacy of the private sector, self-sufficiency and an end to the dependence of Natives on the federal government seems to fit their ideology. Native self-government would be subject to Canadian law including the Canadian Charter of Rights and

³³ .Canada. Women in Canada: A Statistical Report. Statistics Canada, 1995., p.149. Whereas the life expectancy of an Aboriginal girl born in 1991 was 74 years of age, all other Canadian females born in that year could expect to live until 81 years of age.

³⁴ Ibid., p.152. The unemployment rate of non-Aboriginal women is 17.7% compared to 9.9% for the non-Aboriginal woman.

³⁵ Ibid., p.150-1. Aboriginal fertility which is the number of children ever born per 1000 to ever married Aboriginal women and non-Aboriginal women in 1991. By group, this number breaks down as follows: North American Indian women have 3947 children per 1000, Metis women have 3696/1000; while Inuit women have 4676 children per 1000 and non-Aboriginal women have 2399 per 1000.

³⁶ Ibid. Most telling of the discrimination Aboriginal women encounter in the work force is their average earnings in 1990. Female Aboriginals who worked full-time, full-year earned on average \$23, 800 while her non-Aboriginal counterpart earned \$25, 900.

³⁷ Reform Party of Canada. Blue Book, 1995., p.4.

Freedoms according to the Blue Book.³⁸ This would lead to a great deal of controversy within the Aboriginal community as many Aboriginals resent having to bow to a foreign set of laws that have historically oppressed and disrespected their culture. Further, Native women's groups have mixed feelings about the Charter since some believe their rights as women would be protected without the Charter and do not need Anglo-Saxon law imposed upon them. Others believe that without the Charter, women are not sufficiently protected within their Aboriginal communities. Before any ambitious policy of constitutional change were to take place in Canada, a great deal of constitutional consultation would once again need to begin.

Same Sex Couples

Very little can be said about how the Reform Party views gay and lesbian marriage or the extension of spousal benefits to gays and lesbians except that it is vehemently and unanimously against them. Not only does the Reform Party specifically define the family in its constitution as exclusively heterosexual but it also does not recognize gays and lesbians as an historically oppressed group but rather as a "very powerful special interest lobby."³⁹ The phenomenon of 'gaybashing' was downplayed by Reformer Sharon Hayes, MP Port Moody-Coquitlam, during second reading of a bill as she herself "[had] heard of no individual [physical] attacks on the homosexual community."⁴⁰ In fact, Hayes went so far as to question why homosexuals need *special protection* at all *beyond other Canadians* when groups like "the minority English in Quebec....are being ignored by the government"⁴¹ because the Reform Party strongly believes we must treat all people as "equals".

³⁸ Ibid., p.4.

³⁹ Canada. House of Commons Debates. Bill C-33, Second Reading. Volume 134 Number 036, Second session, 35th Parliament., p.2110.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.2113.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Despite the rhetoric of equality espoused by Reformers, it does not extend to gay and lesbian relationships, nor does it give them the same benefits, rights and obligations as heterosexual couples. As taxpayers, gays and lesbians, their partners and their children are entitled to state and employment benefits to the extent that any other Canadian is so entitled. Indeed, to deny such benefits to gays and lesbians is to exclude them from the category: "Ordinary Canadians". The gay and lesbian community is itself split upon the idea of the legalization of their marriages. However, if gay marriage were legal those choosing to do so could marry and potentially derive the acceptance some desire from a respected societal institution. Those choosing not to marry would also be free to opt out of the institution altogether, a choice freely made by heterosexuals in common-law arrangements. Brenda Cossman points to the fact that as long as the family remains an important social and economic unit around which all social goods, rights and responsibilities are distributed, the exclusion of gay and lesbian couples will continue to be a source of discrimination and oppression.⁴²

Child Care

Although not much has been said about child care by the Reform Party, it is a crucial issue for many Canadian women. Even when employed, the primary burden of childcare and housework still remains with women. In 1992, employed women spent on average 5.3 hours per day on household activities, domestic work, child care and shopping.⁴³ Of major concern is that regardless of the age of the children, the amount of time employed mothers devoted to their children was roughly double that of employed fathers in 1992. Since poor women are kept out of

⁴² Ibid., p.230.

⁴³ Canada. Women in Canada: A Statistical Report. Statistics Canada, 1995., p.70. This number is based on a two parent heterosexual family with one child under five. In a family with two employed parents and children over five, a woman can expect to spend 2.5 hours per day on domestic and childcare responsibilities.

the paid labour force as a result of a lack of affordable daycare, it is arguable that something needs to be done to help Canadian women.

The Reform Party, with its definitive stance on who constitutes a family, make an unambiguous policy statement that child care programs should subsidize the parents based on financial need as opposed to the method of care chosen.⁴⁴ Reformers would not favour the kind of universal daycare services for which some feminists and child care workers have been lobbying, but would be more likely to focus on low income families and those most in need of the services. The idea of the Reform Party to subsidize only certain women rather than "the method of care chosen" could lead to means tested day-care, and unnecessary interference and intervention in the lives of women, much like women encountered as recipients of Mother's allowances in the early part of this century.⁴⁵ This would, in its paternalism, appeal to social conservatives, and, in its fiscal restraint and individual targeting, appeal to the laissez-faire conservatives.

MP Accountability

The Reform Party's claim to fame as a populist party, different from the other federal parties, has been its reputation as a grassroots movement that listens to the concerns of the 'common people'. The party includes citizen initiatives, recall and referenda in its Blue Book of policies and their constitution. In this section I will examine what these policies could mean for Canadian women. Since populism requires grassroots measures, this is the most elaborated policy commitment of the Reform Party.

⁴⁴ Reform Party of Canada. Blue Book, 1995., p.4.

⁴⁵ Patricia Evans. "Single Mothers and Ontario's Welfare Policy: Restructuring the Debate" in Women in Canadian Public Policy. Ed. Janine Brodie. Toronto: Harcourt, Brace and Company., 1995.

The Reform Party speaks of citizen initiatives in its Blue Book. In theory, this means if a person or group of people can initiate the signing of a petition by 3% of the Canadian population's eligible voters, the question will be put to a national referendum.⁴⁶ The population in Canada is 29,141,000⁴⁷ and the number of eligible voters as of 1993 was 19,906,796,⁴⁸ which means 588,203 is 3% of the eligible voters.⁴⁹ Collecting these signatures may be challenging but still a reasonable request if a concern is to be taken seriously and voted upon. Since we have no reason to believe women are less politically oriented, politically involved or inclined to take political action,⁵⁰ we can see citizen initiatives are likely at least theoretically to be a positive thing for Canadian women. Of course, we must keep in mind that only those women with the time and energy to devote to such an undertaking as a citizens initiative petition could potentially result in a biased class interest. For example, women with the time and energy to initiate such politics are generally students or young women without the burden of family responsibility and a double day of work, or those women who can afford to hire other women to do their domestic and childcare work for them. Also, initiatives reflect a politics of money, manipulation and back-room deals. In none of these departments do women have a great deal of power at present. Until Canada's "Old Girls" have an equally successful network of powerful connections, initiatives and recall may be a facade to appease the Canadian electorate by suggesting the party is accountable to Canadians.

⁴⁶ Reform Party of Canada., Blue Book., 1995., p.1

⁴⁷ This figure is as of 1994. Population Information Network Gopher of the United Nations Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis. Website (gopher://gopher.undp.org/00/ungophers/popin/wdtrends/pop1994).

⁴⁸ Telephone with employee at Canada Elections on July 18, 1996.

⁴⁹ As of 1991. Manning suggested 3% of Canada's eligible voters amounted to 780,000 people. Preston Manning. The New Canada. Toronto: MacMillan Canada, 1992., p.325.

⁵⁰ Janine Brodie. Women and Politics in Canada. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1985., p.7.

The next issue within MP accountability is the opportunity for constituents to recall those MP's in whom they lose confidence or those MP's who betray the trust of the people.⁵¹ This seems like the natural extension of democracy which will keep MP's watchful of their manoeuvrings in the House. It would also change the way being a Member of Parliament is perceived both by the Member and by constituents. Knowing they could be recalled before the next federal election would make MP's seem more like public servants than untouchable fixtures of the Canadian Parliament for at least four years. Though there is little discussion in Reform literature of the intricacies of recall, they would certainly have to take it seriously to uphold the populist image on which the party is supposedly founded. If a sufficient number of constituents in a constituency file a recall petition with the chief electoral officer, they can force their elected member to step down, and a by-election would be held.⁵² In terms of gender, men and women would both have the ability to recall an MP, and presumably, if enough women found a particular member to be distasteful enough, might just do so.

Finally, referenda are another important part of Reform Party policy. Referenda on "issues of major national importance" are to be held in conjunction with federal elections.⁵³ This is the most written about aspect of MP accountability. The party advocates the passage of a National Referendum and Citizen's Initiative Act that would provide for both advisory and binding referenda.⁵⁴ Sensibly, Manning does not believe in suspending portions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms that protect minority rights through the use of referenda. Instead, initiatives to amend the constitution itself are his preferred method.⁵⁵ Perhaps if such methods are used,

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., p.325.

⁵³ Reform Party of Canada., Blue Book., 1995., p.1

⁵⁴ Preston Manning, The New Canada. Toronto: MacMillan Canada, 1992., p.324-5.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

and it is difficult to imagine how the party could avoid their use when many of the MP's interviewed did seem truly committed to direct democracy measures, we will have a more accountable legislature and a better functioning democracy for both men and women.

Medicare

Since scientists today are rarely solitary agents acting alone but rather members of medical teams, those who supply the resources are ultimately in control of the research performed. Women historically have tended to be at the bottom of the hierarchy in the medical professions. Even in 1994, women made up only 32% of all dentists and doctors, and just 19% of those in the natural sciences, mathematics and engineering.⁵⁶ Since there are so few women in medical and scientific positions, the focus on female-specific illness was often not given priority. Instead, male medical models have been used and women have been subsumed within this category assuming the findings from male research could be easily extrapolated onto female persons regardless of hormonal differences, childbearing, menopause and menstruation. Broad healthcare surveys meant as a basis for evaluating the health of the population often erroneously exclude women. The diseases that have mainly affected women have not been a historical priority. For example, chronic pain, overweight, nervous disorders and rheumatism have not been given nearly as much funding and attention as male disorders like heart disease.⁵⁷ Furthermore, since decision makers for health and medical care are still mostly men, this means

⁵⁶ Canada. Women in Canada: A Statistical Report. Statistics Canada, 1995., p.67.

⁵⁷ Anita Gradin. "Power Over Research in Sweden Today." Government Policy and Women's Health Care: The Swedish Alternative. Ed. Gunnela Westlander and Jeanne Mager Stellman. London: Haworth Press, 1988., p.178. According to Statistics Canada's Women in Canada: A Statistical Report, Op.Cit., in 1991 25% of Canadian women suffer from arthritis or rheumatism, 25% also suffer from allergies, 16% of Canadian women suffer hypertension, 13% from hay fever, and 13% from migraines.

men decide the perspective on women that applies to health and medical care and teaching and medical research.⁵⁸

Health and research spending is related to female representation in parliament and in the public and private sectors. During the interviews with women Reformers, it became obvious that changes in health care spending were inevitable with the push to change the priorities in women's health care. Jan Brown, former Reform MP for Calgary South-East, explained in her interview that the perception of the Reform Party as uninterested in women's issues like breast cancer and New Reproductive Technologies is untrue.⁵⁹ Reformer Sharon Hayes, MP Port Moody-Coquitlam noted that AIDS, predominantly a disease diagnosed in men in Canada until recently, received \$43.5 million dollars while \$4 million dollars went to breast cancer research⁶⁰ and further, breast cancer is the leading cause of death in women aged 30-59.⁶¹ Hayes pointed out that breast cancer research received one tenth of the funding of AIDS research in 1994-5 and that 10,000 cases of HIV were reported in the same year with 7147 deaths while 17,000 women were diagnosed with breast cancer and 5400 died that year.⁶² A strong case can be made for a pro-active policy aimed at gender parity in parliament on the basis of women's health care spending alone. From the opinions of some of the female Reform MP's, they sound like they might well be in favour of such a policy.

⁵⁸ Anita Gradin. "Power Over Research in Sweden Today." Government Policy and Women's Health Care: The Swedish Alternative. Ed. Gunnela Westlander and Jeanne Mager Stellman. London: Haworth Press, 1988., p.176.

⁵⁹ Interview with Jan Brown, M.P. Calgary South-East., March 5, 1996.

⁶⁰ Canada. House of Commons Debates. Bill C-33, Second Reading. Volume 134 Number 036, Second session, 35th Parliament., p.2113.

⁶¹ Canada. Women in Canada: A Statistical Report. Statistics Canada., 1995., p.33.

⁶² Ibid.

This chapter has provided some insight into how a Reform government might prioritize issues of concern to Canadian women. Looking at issues of violence against women revealed that although the outcome may be desirable (stricter punishment for abusers) the reasoning behind it is androcentric and not based on an examination of a larger systemic problem. Reform tends to see male violence as a perverted tendency in an individual man rather than a broader social issue. Likewise, the same tendency to individualize experiences is apparent when reading the Reform Party's stance on equity issues. Sexism, racism, the gendered wage gap, and the ghettoization of women into low pay, low benefit jobs are not analyzed from a macro-perspective. Instead, an insistence upon degendered Canadian citizenship is the Reform Party's solution to these institutionalized, systemic problems. While there may be elitist and pseudo-populist aspects in its ideas on direct democracy, and while these might disadvantage women, some of these measures could be potentially empowering for Canadian women. For example, referenda and recall may give Canadian women a chance to be heard at a time other than at the ballot box. Finally, as with equity issues, as an androcentric party the Reform Party does not make women's health issues a concern. It is unlikely that the party will change this health agenda in the future. Evidently this populist party is not making the concerns of all "the people" equally valid in their policy statements. Instead, we see a deeply rooted androcentrism informing their policy decisions. Women's issues are ignored, downplayed, deflected, or marginalized.

Chapter Three

Organization of the Reform Party

The marginalization of women in political parties is becoming an increasingly researched and well documented phenomenon.¹ Despite common conjecture about women's marginalization within parties, it is not the electorate's unwillingness to elect female candidates, rather, it is the parties themselves that act as the political gatekeepers that keep women out. This chapter will explore some of the major problems women encounter within political parties generally as a way of looking at women in the Reform Party specifically. First, we will look briefly at how and why women are marginalized in Canadian federal parties. Second, we will examine what the three English Canadian parties (the Liberals, the New Democrats and the Progressive Conservatives) have done to increase women's presence within them. Third, we will look at the Reform Party's organization to see how well it fares in the gender balance. Finally, we will examine the necessity of female representation, and explore why more women Members of Parliament are important to Canadian society. Since populism is predicated upon the belief in the political empowerment of the people, we would expect Reform to want to recognize political and social inequality that disempowers half the Canadian population. At the same time though, knowing Reform to be androcentric in its ideology and policies, what measures could conceivably be expected from such a party? Through a combination of methodologies, specifically, a review of the literature

¹ For examples of research on women in political parties see Syliva B. Bashevkin, Toeing the Lines: Women and Party Politics in English Canada, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1993. See Women in Canadian Politics: Toward Equity in Representation, Ed. Kay Megyery, Volume six, Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1991. Also see Janine Brodie, Women and Politics in Canada, Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1985. And for a less academic, more anecdotal focus on women in political parties see Sydney Sharpe, The Guilded Ghetto, Toronto: A Phyllis Bruce Book, 1994.,

and qualitative in-depth interviews, we can critique the Reform Party's political positioning on women by comparing it to other English Canadian parties.

Why women are marginalized in political parties

One of the main reasons women are underrepresented in politics is the historical division of the private and the public in liberal democracies. Although women are no longer legally denied the franchise or banned from holding electoral office, the public/private divide has had a significant, enduring effect on electoral politics, both in terms of establishing the legislative agenda and selecting who would do the representing.² Issues related to the family, the gendered division of labour, child care, reproduction and sexuality have not been considered 'political' and therefore amenable to policy solutions. When 'women's issues' are excluded from discussion, women come to understand politics as being largely irrelevant to their lives. Part of the reason we currently have only 18% of the House of Commons composed of women is a result of the fact that politics has rarely spoken to their experience as women. While boys are taught to engage in political behaviour and discussions and can identify with adult male politicians as they mature, girls have not had this opportunity. Further, when we see only men in political roles, the cultural exclusion of women becomes self-reinforcing and the nearly exclusive election of males to political office creates the expectation that only males are suited to public office.³

There are countless examples of how women in politics soon learn that women do not 'fit' a public role, and a few examples will suffice to make this brief but important point. Unlike

² Janine Brodie with help from Celia Chandler. "Women and the Electoral Process in Canada." Women in Canadian Politics: Toward Equity in Representation. Ed. Kay Megyery. Volume six. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1991., p. 14.

³ Janine Brodie., Women and Politics in Canada. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1985., p.26.

male politicians, the sexuality of women politicians is always commented upon because she is a woman first, and a politician second. When Kim Campbell, our first woman Prime Minister, was discussed in the newspaper, Montreal's La Presse suggested she mask her full figure with loose, flowing clothes while the less sophisticated Toronto Sun urged her to wear a red push up bra.⁴ Former Reformer Jan Brown was often introduced as "the most sexy MP on the Hill" since her election as a member in the 1993 federal election.⁵ In addition to comments on female parliamentarians' sexuality, there is also an assumed familiarity men use even with women in positions of great political power. Female politicians are frequently addressed and introduced by their first names while men alongside them are introduced by their title and their second names. A final example will illustrate another common way in which women are marginalized in politics. When Audrey McLaughlin came to the House of Commons for the first time after winning a federal by-election, she asked a clerk for her identification. She was ushered into an office, stated her name and her business but the clerk could not find her name. Finally, the clerk realized she had been looking at the spouse's list.⁶ This is a small but significant reminder that women are not as easily seen as political representatives as are men.

When women enter the public realm they are not as free as men are to pursue a career since an assumed gender role still hangs over women's heads. The sexual division of labour is instilled through the socialization of women as primary caregivers, which ultimately keeps most women out of political office. When women do become involved in politics, they are frequently seen as bad mothers who devote too little time to their children. Male politicians, on the other

⁴ Sydney Sharpe. The Guilded Ghetto. Toronto: A Phyllis Bruce Book, 1994., p. 16.

⁵ Darcy Henton. "Seeing the Light on Reform's Dark Side." Toronto Star. July 3, 1996., A19.

⁶ Ibid., p.37.

hand, move quite easily between these two roles as father and politician and are never asked why they are leaving their children, nor are they called bad parents for doing so. A role strain is a product of role incongruence; it causes anxiety and tension sometimes resulting in the forfeiting of one role to satisfy the demands of the other.⁷ Women often have to resolve this strain before they can enter politics. Reform Party women agree that a role strain exists for women MP's. Six of the seven women Reformers have raised children; some entered politics when their children were young while others waited until their children were in their early teens before they entered politics. Val Meredith said in an interview it is the age of the children that is significant in leaving them, not the gender of the parents.⁸ Meredith said that male politicians with young children have difficulty leaving their children also. Since many Reformers are former farmers, they are not used to leaving the home. Here they stand in contrast to the more traditional party politicians in which business and law are overrepresented. Yet despite her initial claims of the likelihood of gender parity in role strain, Val Meredith also expressed her belief that "women are caregivers, we feel we should be there for our children and our families".⁹ It seems clear that Meredith understands that mothering and political roles are sometimes at odds.

Men politicians are more easily able to pursue their careers because they have an assumed companion behind the scenes to raise their children, do their laundry, cook their meals and make their beds. Former Liberal Minister Iona Campagnolo dealt with her role strain by delegating part of her family function to her younger sister who dropped her career as a Chartered Accountant and went to Ottawa.¹⁰ Campagnolo's younger sister acted as her hostess, took in her

⁷ Brodie., *Op.Cit.*, Women and Politics in Canada, p.91.

⁸ Interview with Val Meredith, MP, Surrey - White Rock - South Langley, April 23, 1996.

⁹ Interview with Val Meredith, MP, Surrey-White Rock-South Langley, on April 23, 1996.

¹⁰ Sydney Sharpe., *Op.Cit.*, p.156.

older sisters' dry cleaning, got her shoes fixed and looked after her daughter. In short, this example of what Campagnolo had to do illustrates the dilemma many women MP's find when they venture into the male world of politics; they too, need a political wife. In an article on gender and politics, Reformer Jan Brown wrote that it is foolhardy to believe that 'old fashioned' gender roles do not still haunt political women today. She said, presumably from her own experience in the Reform Party, that "...women still face subtle criticisms because a public life is still not yet considered to be compatible with family life."¹¹ Brown continued that "...questions such as 'how can you leave your family?' or 'who is taking care of the home front?' remain constant reminders that society still has specific role definitions for women."¹² Reformer Deborah Grey said when interviewed "...my marriage is the most important thing to me and I would not give it up, but, if my husband asked me to leave politics I would quit tomorrow."¹³ She recently married for the first time at age 41 and inherited two step children who live with their mother. She talked about how loving and supportive her husband is of her career. When questioned about role strain in being a mother and a parliamentarian she said "...why does everyone always focus on the children? what about the difficulty in leaving your husband at home? Presumably this man was at one time your lover. Why doesn't anyone ever talk about leaving him?"¹⁴

There is an added pressure on women MPs to represent their gender as well as their constituents. Because they are novel, women politicians are constantly being asked to women's functions, teas, socials and women's groups and to support and lobby for specific women's

¹¹ Jan Brown, MP "Changing the Gender Agenda of Politics". Canadian Parliamentary Review, Summer 1994., p.8.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Interview with Deborah Grey, MP, Beaver River, on April 23, 1996.

¹⁴ Ibid.

causes. Whereas male politicians are expected to represent the concerns of all their constituents, female politicians are seen to represent all women, a task too great for any single individual. It seems reasonable to suggest Reform women would likely not attend such functions since they do not see their gender as relevant to their politics. Although they are women, they see themselves as politicians, not as representatives of women in particular. Deborah Grey said "...I have a 40D chest, how could they not notice that I'm a woman?"¹⁵ But Grey certainly does not want any recognition of it. Reform Party women do not seem to feel this pressure to the same extent as other women politicians to represent their gender because they do not make it a political issue. Yet how could gender not be a political issue? Gender is an inherently political issue because gender, like politics, is about power relations. So, we can conclude that Reform women do not acknowledge their gender or at least this is what they say when they toe the party line.

How women are marginalized in political parties

One of the most shocking ways in which women are given explicit messages about their place in the House of Commons is the language used toward female MPs. Sheila Copps holds the second highest elected position in Canada as the Liberal Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Heritage. Like many female MPs, she has been called everything from a 'goddamn ignorant bitch' in a committee meeting to a 'slut' in the House of Commons.¹⁶ Reformer Jan Brown writes that women Members are labelled 'bitches' because "power and influence have yet to cross gender lines."¹⁷ Interestingly, the verbal abuse levelled at female politicians is rarely aimed at their alleged lack of skills, competence or personality and accompanied by a colourful

¹⁵ Interview with Deborah Grey, MP, Beaver River, on April 23, 1996.

¹⁶ Sydney Sharpe. Op.Cit., p.46.

¹⁷ Jan Brown, MP "Changing the Gender Agenda of Politics". Canadian Parliamentary Review, Summer 1994.

adjective. Instead, most remarks made to female politicians aim specifically at vulgar language used to degrade their sexuality. Another upsetting example of the treatment women receive in politics comes from the provincial level. Ontario New Democrat Francis Lankin was reduced to tears as male MPPs shouted accusations of 'rape' and 'gang rape' across the floor of the Ontario legislature¹⁸. As a former guard at Toronto's Don Jail, she had often been victimized and harassed by other jail guards. Sexual harassment in the workplace is a legitimate issue and Lankin did not want it delegitimized in such a way. These stories of the treatment women parliamentarians receive by their colleagues is a poignant illustration of how women are marginalized and sometimes silenced within political organizations.

Interviews with Reform women suggest a quite contrary experience to the above-mentioned climate women parliamentarians encounter. Reform women Members of Parliament appear to have been welcomed into the Reform Party as any other member would be. In fact, Val Meredith believes she got extra attention as a woman because there were fewer of her gender in the party. Meredith is correct in acknowledging this point as there are, in fact, only 7 women Reformers out of 52 currently in parliament. Deborah Grey confirmed that she endured more abuse for being a Reformer than for being a woman.¹⁹ Does this mean she endured *some* abuse within the party for being a woman? - none that she would admit to. She did say however, that women encounter barriers unique to their gender within parties generally: for example, when they are single parents, as she was with foster children. Grey also acknowledged that women tend to lack the necessary business connections that men have which are so important to being a successful politician. Several important points must be stressed in reference to what Reform

¹⁸ Ibid., p.178-81.

¹⁹ Interview with Deborah Grey., MP, Beaver River, on April 23, 1996.

women articulate about their experiences as women in the party. First, these women are apt to think they do not encounter second-rate treatment by virtue of their sex because ideologically their laissez-faire conservatism does not believe in gendered policies should they encounter sexually discriminatory treatment in their party. Women, like men, are individual, self-interested, rational, social actors. Second, even though these Reform women MPs said they were welcomed into the Reform Party, in chapter one we noted that these women all acknowledged a 'male environment' that is not likely to change in a hurry. Also noteworthy, is that all Reform women MPs interviewed believed women had a different approach to politics than men, even though they claim there are no differences between the two genders worthy of gender based policies.

Another phenomenon typically encountered by women in politics is that many women participate in politics but few are actually selected for positions of power. One reason commonly cited is that women tend to do best electorally in systems that use proportional representation rather than the Canadian style single member plurality voting system.²⁰ Skewed outcomes occur in this system when more votes are cast against a party than for them but there is no formal mechanism for translating these votes into seats. Feminist scholars argue that structural biases make it necessary for women candidates in our Canadian system to be partisan politicians first, and feminists second - a phenomenon that has lead some to suggest that the existing party structure only gives gender secondary importance in matters of electoral representation.²¹ Despite this central problematic for women according to some feminists, none of the parties currently hold positions on electoral reform. If the Reform Party did propose a system to redress

²⁰ Jane Arscott. "A Job Well Begun.....Representation, Electoral Reform and Women." Gender and Politics in Contemporary Canada. Ed. Francois-Pierre Gingras. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1995., p.57

²¹ Hege Skjeie. "The Rhetoric of Difference: On Women's Inclusion into Political Elites." Politics and Society. 19, 1991.

the skewed seats that result from the single member plurality system, the emphasis would likely be on translating votes into provincial or territorial seats rather than gendered seats.

Women are not encouraged to run by the parties as often as men are. In fact, sex bias often increases as a party becomes more competitive. In other words, women are most likely to be encouraged to run for office when they are most unlikely to win. In the 1993 federal election, for example, 198 women were candidates for parties like the Greens, the Marxist-Leninists, and the Natural Law party; nearly 42% of all female candidates, or 198 out of 475 fell into this fringe party category.²² When women are candidates, they are often put in uncompetitive ridings. In fact, the majority of women who run for elected office contest elections in ridings where they will almost certainly lose.²³ Women also have more trouble than men getting campaign funding as they are not taken as seriously as male candidates. Since women on average make less money than men, the high cost of contesting party nomination and pre-writ election spending can be prohibitive for women candidates. While Deborah Grey added that often women do not have the same business networks as men do, making fund solicitation challenging for women, Val Meredith said she was one of the top 10% in Canada in raising funds for her campaign.²⁴ Since Meredith, unlike Grey, came from a political family, she may have had previously established ties in the business and political communities. The difference in perspective between these two women may simply be a reflection of Meredith's class background, education and occupation which is more similar to her male colleagues than Grey's thus facilitating her campaign success.

²² Sydney Sharpe., Op.Cit., p.169.

²³ Janine Brodie., Women and Politics in Canada. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1985., p.108.

²⁴ Interview with Val Meredith, MP, Surrey - White Rock - South Langley, on April 23, 1996.

Historically, women have played a large role in political parties. Sylvia Bashevkin urges readers to look beyond the study of women in political office exclusively however, and situate female involvement in the context of party life at all levels.²⁵ She looks at several categories of women in political parties but women at the local constituency level, in the party executive and as delegates to party conventions are of concern here in looking at the Reform Party.

The role of constituency organizations in the Reform Party is hard to determine. At the time of the formation of the party, constituencies played the very minor roles of signing new members and soliciting funds while a Calgary clique had tight control over policy, strategy and communications.²⁶ On the other hand, some constituencies were completely taken over by right wing extremists or controlled independently of Reform doctrine.²⁷ The research on federal and provincial ridings suggests that women perform the stereotypically feminine types of party work at the local level; and that the competitive position of party organizations has had a direct impact on female participation, limiting women's mobility in cases where the power stakes are high.²⁸ To this second point Bashevkin adds that with the rise of new parties like the Reform Party, in addition to the volatility of the Canadian electorate, it has become increasingly difficult to determine whether female party presidents are clustered in weak or marginal ridings where their riding has little chance of electoral success.²⁹ She continues that in general, the very clear concentration of female presidents in uncompetitive ridings appears to be less skewed than in the past.³⁰

²⁵ Sylvia B. Bashevkin. Toeing the Lines: Women and Party Politics in English Canada. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1993., p.66.

²⁶ Trevor Harrison. Of Passionate Intensity: Right Wing Populism and the Reform Party of Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 1995., p.191.

²⁷ Ibid., p.198.

²⁸ Sylvia Bashevkin., Op.Cit., p.68.

²⁹ Ibid., p.74.

Let us look at the composition of the executives of thirty four Reform constituency associations: six in Alberta, five in British Columbia, twenty in Ontario, and one in each of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland respectively to discover information about the association executives.³¹ Out of these thirty four ridings, five women are constituency association presidents in the ridings of Calgary Southwest in Alberta, Fraser Valley West and Victoria in BC., Carleton-Gloucester in Ontario and St. John's East in Newfoundland. To be fair, three of the executives are indeterminable in Nanaimo-Cowichan and Richmond in BC., and Brampton in Ontario because the names are not listed or the positions of the directors are not specified. We cannot make blanket statements about the party as either completely competitive or completely uncompetitive in the ridings wherein women are presidents since we see instances of women in both. For example, the first riding in Alberta, Calgary Southwest, is a competitive riding for the Reform Party as are the two BC. ridings of Victoria and Fraser Valley West. Carleton-Gloucester in Ontario, on the other hand, is a Liberal safe seat as is St. John's East in Newfoundland. There are four ridings with no women on the executive at all. These are Kingston and the Islands, Mississauga East and Sudbury and Nickel Belt, all ridings in Ontario. In the ridings wherein women are present on the constituency association executives, they tend to be the secretaries, directors in charge of membership or one of a number of vaguely defined 'directors' on the board. The job of treasurer is usually held by a man as financial matters still tend to be seen as male issues or at least men are seen to be most adept at handling fiscal concerns.³² For example, out of the thirty four constituency associations in question here, there

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ This information on Reform constituency association executives can be found on the Internet at <http://www.reform.ca/ridings/index.html>.

³² For example, Canada has never had a female MP on the cabinet in charge of finance.

are only seven female treasurers; in fact, this number even though it is less than 25% still seems higher than one would have imagined.³³

Other than constituency executives, the gender of more than the president and the executive must be known to make a fair assessment of sex discrimination within the larger party. Convention delegations are another important area in party politics that needs to be examined for gender representation. Like the NDP, and unlike both the Liberal and Conservative federal parties, the Reform Party awards delegate credentials to a constituency based on its size.³⁴ Instead of having a uniform number of convention delegates from each constituency, the Reform delegates come overwhelmingly from the largest constituency associations with the result being a highly regionally concentrated representation. Despite having regionally unrepresentative Reform delegates, we also find a gender imbalance within the Reform delegates. Research conducted on the demographic profile of party activists has pointed to the historic composition of party delegates as being predominantly middle-aged, socio-economically advantaged, professional, educated, and of interest here, male delegates.³⁵ All three English Canadian parties, the Liberal, the Progressive Conservatives and the NDP, have taken steps to increase the representation of women at party conventions. By way of comparison to these parties, the Reform Party has made no effort to balance the number of women and men at party conventions. The Liberal Party's male to female ratio is 55:45, the Conservative Party's ratio is 63 men for every 37 women, the NDP male to female ratio is 63.4 men for every 36.6 women³⁶, and the Reform Party has the

³³ We find female constituency association treasurers in the ridings of Calgary North-East, Leeds-Grenville, Ontario, Ottawa West, Rosedale, and Simcoe Centre and Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Simcoe.

³⁴ Keith Archer and Feron Ellis. "Opinion Structure of Party Activists: The Reform Party of Canada." Canadian Journal of Political Science. 27(2), June 1994., p.283.

³⁵ Ibid., p.285.

³⁶ This still rather skewed number of men to women may seem surprising in a left-wing and

lowest representation of women delegates at 71.1 men to every 28.9 women.³⁷ Evidently as a result of quotas and initiatives, most Canadian party delegations tend to have increased in gender parity to roughly a 50:50 ratio between men and women since 1989.³⁸ Reform assembly delegates are the exception to this rule. Reform assembly delegates are generally 50+, well educated, certainly far above the Canadian average, with relatively high incomes. They are overwhelming Anglophone (99.7%) and again, predominantly male. In fact, the percentage of female delegates dropped from 32% to 29% in 1992.³⁹ Unlike the Liberal, Conservative and the New Democratic parties, the Reform Party has no policies designed to attract women or younger delegates. Hence, it is fair to say Reform delegates are drawn from that percentage of the population with the time, resources and desire to become involved in politics. In their most recent assembly in June of 1996, the gender composition of Reform delegates had not changed at all.⁴⁰ Since gender bias in favour of male participation is high in all political parties, unless the Reform Party takes a pro-active step to increase the number of women in the party's convention delegates, we can expect the gender bias will continue in the party.

historically socially progressive party. The reason for the high number of men to women in the NDP is the high number of delegates from the trade unions. While women have made progress in gender parity at the riding level, trade unions have not progressed as quickly. Consequently, because union delegations comprise 20 to 25% of NDP convention delegates, the gender composition remains mostly male. Alan Whitehorn and Kieth Archer. "The Gender Gap Amongst Party Activists: A Case Study of Women and the New Democratic Party." Gender and Politics in Contemporary Canada. Ed. Pierre-Francois Gingras. Toronto: Oxford University Press. 1991., p.6.

³⁷ Ibid., p.286.

³⁸ Sylvia Bashevkin., Op.Cit., p.76.

³⁹ Ibid., p.200.

⁴⁰ Rosemary Speirs of the Toronto Star commented that although the Reform Party assembly was not as 'white haired' as two years ago in Ottawa, the meeting of Canadian delegates was overwhelmingly composed of middle-aged, middle-class males. Rosemary Speirs. "Reform not yet Ready for Prime Time." Toronto Star. June 9, 1996.

Steps taken by other parties to include women

By way of comparison, it is important to look at the steps the three traditional Canadian federal parties have taken to improve the representation of women in their respective parties. The National Women's Liberal Commission conference in 1990, approved a constitutional amendment that specified the ways in which the Commission would encourage and promote women. First, they stipulated that 50% of the convention delegates from ridings be women; and second, that officials of the Women's Commission serve on the federal executive and some committees of the Liberal Party.⁴¹ In the Liberal Constitution under their stated role and purpose, it reads "The Liberal Party of Canada shall respect the principle of equal division between men and women in the structure and operations of the Liberal Party to the greatest extent possible."⁴² One of the primary objectives of the Liberal Party of Canada is to ensure the equal participation of men and women at all levels of the party. To ensure this commitment is maintained, the National Women's Liberal Commission, a commission designed to represent and promote the interests of women within the party, performs an assessment which is reported at every biennial convention.⁴³

The constitution of the federal Conservative Association of Canada also states that the executives of the party's women's federation must serve on the Association executive. Like the Liberals, members of the women's federation elite are usually appointed to federal PC party committees and riding delegations to Conservative conventions must include two women of six delegates.⁴⁴ Although their constitution does not go as far as the Liberal constitution in

⁴¹ Sylvia Bashevkin. Toeing the Lines: Women and Party Politics in English Canada. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1993. p.100.

⁴² Liberal Party of Canada. Constitution., 1994., section 1.(2)(f).

⁴³ Liberal Party of Canada. Constitution., 1994., section 4.(4) and 4.(7).

⁴⁴ Ibid., p.100.

specifically naming women, they are more radical than the Reform Party in their call for "progressive social policy".⁴⁵

The federal New Democratic Party predictably has the most progressive policies toward equal gender representation in the party elites. Fifty percent of all ridings will have women candidates, and the federal NDP identified affirmative action target groups as women, visible minorities, the disabled and aboriginal people.⁴⁶ By the early 1990's, although it seemed women could more easily run for party leadership, money was still an important barrier for party women. The issue of raising funds was placed on the partisan agenda and, in 1983, the Agnes Macphail Fund was established in the NDP. The other parties followed suit and in 1984, the Judy LaMarsh Fund was created by the federal Liberal organization and in 1986, the Ellen Fairclough Fund was established in the federal PC party.⁴⁷ The funds and their provincial counterparts helped to support female candidates in general elections. These are important steps in the advancement of women in politics because often, since women make less money and often have less access to financial resources than men, barriers to their contestation of elected political positions are erected and women are barred from these positions. Granted, these efforts to improve female representation in the federal parties could be criticized for their understated approach to a greater systemic problem: however, the parties have confronted the issue of a gender imbalance in their parties and have demonstrated a commitment to changing the status quo.

The same cannot be said of the Reform Party which does not see the lack of female representation in the party as cause for concern nor as an indication of a larger systemic problem

⁴⁵ Progressive Conservative Party of Canada. Constitution of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada. April 1995., section 2.1.

⁴⁶ Sylvia Bashevkin., Op.Cit., p.100.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p.107.

for women in the party. Although the Reform Party wants to give political power back to the people, it does not seem to want to give access to women within the ranks of Reform. Frankly, there is no comparison between the Reform Party and the three other English Canadian parties on efforts to attract women in all ranks of the party because, put simply, the Reform Party does nothing. There are no affirmative action policies for women, there are no special campaign funds to help women, there are no special appointments reserved for women to ensure their representation and there are no women's committees or special women's caucuses in the Reform Party. All of the Reform women interviewed said any of the aforementioned policies or programs to ensure gender parity in the party would be degrading to them. An article written by Calgary West MP Jan Brown, indicated that she was not oblivious to the systemic discrimination against women in parties, and presumably some of this knowledge was acquired from being a Member in her own party: "...politics represents an overwhelming challenge for women. Not only are they struggling to rid themselves of a stereotypical role, but they also have to re-establish themselves in a new environment ...that is quite foreign..."⁴⁸ In her article, Brown speaks of how women's contributions are devalued in our society and how we have come to expect men to succeed and women, not to perform quite as well as men. Ultimately, Brown does not diverge from the party line. In reference to any sort of recognition of gender, Brown says "...the choice to set women apart in such an orchestrated exercise illustrates we never really play in the game".⁴⁹

All of this information points to the reality that the Reform Party is an androcentric institution. This means, the party is run by men, it is mostly supported by men and as we saw in

⁴⁸ Jan Brown, MP "Changing the Gender Agenda of Politics." Canadian Parliamentary Review, Summer 1994., p.8.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.10.

previous chapters. It creates policies for men to the exclusion of women as a group. One of the main and most obvious reasons for this problem is the simple lack of numerical representation of women in all ranks of the Reform Party. Although there is an important distinction between being a biological woman and the political phenomenon of feminist consciousness, it is difficult for women not to become marginalized in a situation wherein they are so disproportionately underrepresented at every level of the party. So then, what is the significance of increasing the number of women in the federal parties?

Significance of more women in parties

As noted in the preceding sections of this chapter, there is no one factor that determines the number of women elected in parties. The political and electoral systems, the status of women in society, media treatment of female politicians, political party attitudes and policies, and the accessibility of financial and human resources, all contribute to the underrepresentation of women in politics.⁵⁰ Once women are elected to the House of Commons, there are further barriers to the forming of ties across party lines that would enable gender solidarity or even less idealistically, that would enable camaraderie among women MPs. The caucus system for example, in which party solidarity is strictly enforced, works against women's interests. The principle behind party solidarity is to work against the other parties. In such a situation, gender becomes subsumed within separate party alliances made up mostly by men.⁵¹ Women MPs are isolated from other women in parliament and are forbidden from co-operating with other women on policy options lest they be seen as disloyal to their party. As Sharpe notes, once female

⁵⁰ Lisa Young. "Legislative Turnover and the Election of Women to the Canadian House of Commons." Women in Canadian Politics: Toward Equity in Representation. Ed. Kathy Megyery. Volume six. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1991., p.81.

⁵¹ Sydney Sharpe. Op.Cit., p.39.

politicians become Cabinet Ministers, they may fight endlessly for women's issues in cabinet, but once they leave, they are strictly prohibited from discussing any disagreements outside Cabinet to ensure at least the appearance of Cabinet solidarity. The positive effects of women forming cross partisan alliances lend credence to the idea that there is comfort in numbers: such alliances would help to end the alienation women feel as the minority in the House of Commons. If there is truth to the ideas expressed both by academics and women MPs that women have a more consensus-oriented, non-hierarchical, less ego-driven approach to politics, such an alliance may not be as unlikely as it would seem at first. For example, in 1988 the Supreme Court ruled that Canada's abortion legislation violated a woman's right to the security of the person as defined by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Federal Tories responded to this with Bill C-43, written in its crucial later stages by then Justice Minister Kim Campbell.⁵² This bill would again re-criminalize abortion except with a doctor's consent. As is usual with abortion bills, both sides opposed the legislation: pro-lifers thought it did not go far enough, while pro-choice advocates thought it was too severe. Nevertheless, the bill was passed in the House and was expected to pass the higher chamber of sober second thought when in 1991, Liberal senator Joyce Fairbairn wanted to prevent this bill from becoming law. She rallied enough support among both Conservative and Liberal women senators to defeat the bill. As proof of the results of female solidarity on this issue, in 1969 when there was one woman MP, New Democrat Grace MacInnis, and four women in the Senate, the original Criminal Code abortion passed with little consideration of women's views on perhaps the only true 'women's issue'! This example illustrates the significance of increasing the number of women political representatives.

⁵² Despite these actions, Campbell claims to have a strong pro-choice stance in her new book Time and Chance: The Political Memoirs of Canada's First Woman Prime Minister. Toronto: Double Day Canada Limited: 1996.

Feminist scholars have talked about the necessity of a 'critical mass' of women representatives, which is defined as roughly forty to sixty percent.⁵³ This level of female representation could reasonably be expected to enable the women members to promote female interests. Challenge has been brought forth by others, in particular by Gotell and Brodie to suggest that the assumption of a positive correlation between the number of women in politics and the substantive representation of women's issues in government policies and agenda is fallacious.⁵⁴ They argue that there can, in fact, be a negative correlation between increases in female representation and responsiveness to women's issues, as women's presence in parties gives a symbolic legitimization while eschewing feminist demands for tangible public policies. Further, even if we do see a considerable rise in the number of women elected to parliament, parties like the Reform Party could continue their gender blind neo-conservative policies by selecting women whose goals are antagonistic to the women's movement. Perhaps a critical mass is not the answer.

Although there is truth in the claim that non-feminist women politicians might prioritize concerns as men do and therefore do little or nothing to help the feminist agenda, it is untrue however, to suggest that there is *a* feminist movement or even that there are exclusively *female* concerns. Much recent feminist scholarship has cautioned us against the Second Wave Women's Movements' tendency to homogenize women's interests into one large category. Much like androcentrism that uses a falsely universalized category to describe all people while it is in fact,

⁵³ Jane Arscott. "A Job Well Begun.....Representation, Electoral Reform and Women." Gender and Politics in Contemporary Canada. Ed. Francois-Pierre Gingras. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1995., p.64.

⁵⁴ Lise Gotell and Janine Brodie. "Women and Parties: More than an Issue of Numbers." Party Politics in Canada. Sixth Edition. Ed. Hugh Thorburn. Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1991.. p.59.

only congruent with the masculine, feminists tended to describe 'woman' in relation to issues only relevant to white, middle class, heterosexual, able-bodied, young, Christian women. Also like androcentrism, when there is a partial category that masks as the whole, only some women are represented while others engage in the exclusion of themselves. Cross cutting cleavages like race, religion, ethnicity, sexuality, education, class and language largely pervert the development of a concept or set of policy statements that we can point to as being in the Canadian woman's interest. This is not to suggest that feminism is unworkable or women's groups should not exist as they are more necessary than ever. We can no longer expect women to unite however, when one is a single immigrant Mother on welfare with few skills that translate into paid remuneration to form a political alliance with a white, heterosexual, Anglo-Saxon Protestant woman who is a corporate executive; these two women likely do not see eye to eye politically. Regardless of cleavages however, all women are always at a disadvantage because of their gender within patriarchy. Despite her class, race or sexuality, a woman will always be more discriminated against than her male counterpart. Although Reformers deny the existence of 'women's issues', they are very aware of their gender difference and the consequences of their gendered style of political negotiation; this can only eventually change the dialogue in the House of Commons.

For example, despite her very right wing political views, Val Meredith asserted that women in the House of Commons change the agenda by "softening" the environment. Although Meredith reported that "all issues are women's issues", and that as a rational person she objected to the suggestion that more women will change the policy agenda because she felt that this suggestion implied she was somehow less rational than a man, she did admit that different issues are raised when there are more women in the caucus meetings.⁵⁵ As an example Meredith said

⁵⁵ Interview with Val Meredith, MP, Surrey - White Rock - South Langley, on

"there is more money going to into AIDS research than breast cancer research yet many more women die per year of breast cancer than AIDS." Despite the probable underlying political reasons for her objection to higher AIDS funding than breast cancer research, she still makes the point that more women politicians means more female concerns reach the policy table.

Former Conservative Minister Flora MacDonald spoke of the importance of women in key cabinet and bureaucratic positions. "It was always very important to have a number of key women in other departments to whom I could explain what we were trying to do and how it would impact on Transport or on Finance or whatever." This example tells us that women can form alliances with other women, act as mentors and help each other succeed in an all male environment. The lack of female camaraderie or women's preference for men is an important stereotype to end as women help each other professionally and act as mentors to one another.

Conclusion

Having looked at the necessity of female representation in the House of Commons and the efforts made by the three other English Canadian parties to increase the percentage of women within their ranks, the Reform Party's different stance is noteworthy. On the one hand, Reform Party women MPs know about the barriers women in politics encounter that are unique to their sex. Deborah Grey pointed to women's less established business connections and the responsibility of single mothering as barriers to women's success in politics that men do not as frequently encounter. Diane Ablonczy agreed with the idea of role strain and affirmed that women tend to experience more guilt when they leave their children than men do.⁵⁶ Reformer Jan Brown, in an interview, even went so far as to say that there is a perception that the Reform

April 23, 1996.

⁵⁶

Interview with Diane Ablonczy, MP, Calgary North, on April 23, 1996.

Party does not identify with women.⁵⁷ On the other hand, the Reform Party's ideological commitment to neo-conservatism does not allow it to make gendered analysis part of its policy agenda. What is interesting to note is that a party claiming to want equality among Canadians does not want to eradicate any kind of political or social inequality among the electorate. We would expect a populist party that aims to empower "the people" would make the elimination of barriers to equality a high priority. One cannot hastily conclude from this fact that women's concerns are not a priority for these Reform Party women. Alternately, one may conclude that the party is unlikely to take any positive steps to help women as a group in the future.

⁵⁷ Interview with Jan Brown, MP, Calgary South-East, on March 5, 1996.

Chapter Four

The Electoral Base of the Reform Party

It is important to understand who voted for the Reform Party in the 1993 federal election which gave the party the second highest standing in the popular vote. This chapter is designed to tell us about one aspect of the Reform Party and women, namely, what kind of support base the party has among women. We are curious about whether relationships existing between Reform Party support and religion, ethnicity, religiosity, education, marital status, occupation, and age are also gendered relationships. Analyses will be conducted using crosstabulation tables and each table will be done separately for men and women to illustrate any differences. By way of comparison, the work of Harrison, Flanagan, and Harrison and Krahn will be examined as an example of the empirical work about the support base of the Reform Party by other scholars. The findings in this chapter are noteworthy since in all research done on the Reform Party to date, no publication has ever divided these categories by gender, in addition to the other variables examined. Instead, women were subsumed within one large category and any gender differences among Reform voters were not recognized. Analyses of these data will contribute a more comprehensive perspective on the support base of the Reform Party and women.

The second part of this chapter will look at the attitudinal variations of Reform Party supporters relative to the attitudes of Canadians who voted for the other federal parties. Attitudes about feminism, racial minorities, homosexuality, and welfare recipients will be examined in this part of the chapter using an analysis of variance. This will allow us to see if

Reform Party supporters have a view of the aforementioned groups that is different from other Canadian voters. In this chapter, we will observe whether assumptions made about Reformers being more socially conservative relative to other voters are accurate. All of the information comes from the 1993 Canadian National Election Study. A data subset was created from this data file for the purposes of this research in this thesis.

A brief reference to the work of Flanagan should be made as his findings on provincial support for the Reform Party and community size are very useful as a preliminary introduction to the Reform support profile data. The table on the next page is read by understanding a support index of 100 to mean that members of a various group voted for Reform at the same rate as the whole sample, or at 18.7%.¹ An index of 200 would mean that the members of the group were twice as likely as the national average to vote Reform whereas an index of 50 would indicate that they were half as likely to do so. An asterisk is placed after any index larger than 120 to indicate the groups that gave especially strong support to the Reform Party. Flanagan points out two striking pieces of information in his research on Reform voters. First, we can see what many intuitively understand about the initially Western-based Reform Party which is that most of the support for the party is in the Western provinces. Flanagan notes that although Reformers finished second in 56 Ontario ridings, many of these second place finishes were so far back as to be relatively meaningless.² Second, we notice that Reformers tend to be non-urban dwellers, meaning non-immigrant people, a point which will be confirmed later in the chapter when we consider Reform support by ethnicity. We can also observe that support for Reform is strongest

¹ Tom Flanagan, Waiting for the Wave: The Reform Party and Preston Manning. Toronto: Stoddart Publishing, 1995., pp.158-9.

² Ibid., p.154-5.

in towns with a population of less than 30,000 which gives the party a more rurally-concentrated support base.

TABLE ONE

Reform Support Indices for Region and Community Size³

Geographic		Community Size	
Atlantic Provinces	31	500,000+	89
Ontario	96	100-500,000	104
Prairies	229*	30-100,000	96
British Columbia	197*	10-30,000	135*
		1-10,000	136*
		Rural	96

Besides the rural, Western-based concentration of the Reform Party, one of the most interesting observations that can be made about Reform Party support becomes evident when we couple it with gender. Unlike all other federal parties that have roughly gender parity in terms of support, we find that Reform Party support correlates with gender. In the four other federal parties, there is an insignificant difference in the number of men who voted for a particular party versus the number of women who voted for the same party. In other words, all other federal parties receive almost equal support from men and women except the Reform Party. Reform provides a much less gender balanced vote in that 60.2% of its supporters were men whereas only 39.8% of its supporters were women.

³ Ibid.

TABLE TWO

Party Voted for by Gender

	Male	Female	Total	Total n
Other	51.5	48.5	3.6%	99
PC	48.8	51.2	14.2%	385
Liberal	50.2	49.8	42.1%	1,144
NDP	47.3	52.7	6.8%	186
Reform	60.2	39.8	19.4%	528
BQ	54.9	45.1	13.8%	375
Total	52.4%	47.6%	100%	N= 2177

If women are less likely to support the Reform Party than men, does religion have anything to do with this discrepancy? Are women of a particular religion attracted to the Reform Party because of their stand on 'family values'? Are atheistic women and men particularly averse to the Reform Party? The next question to ponder is whether support for the Reform Party is related to one's religion. Table 2 illustrates male Reform Party support by religion. We see there is very little variation in support among Protestant, non-Christian and atheist men. What we do see however, is that Catholic men are much less likely than all other denominations of Canadian men to support the Reform Party. Some scholars have indicated a correlation between being a Protestant man and voting for the Reform Party. For example, Harrison and Krahn reported that of decided voters in early 1991, Catholics were much less likely to support the Reform Party.⁴ Likewise, Trevor Harrison found that Reform Party supporters were disproportionately and predominately Protestant.⁵ In these data, the most significant discovery is the strong negative correlation between being a Catholic and voting Reform.

⁴ Harrison, Trevor and Harvey Krahn. "Populism and the Rise of the Reform Party." Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology. 32(2), 1995., p.134.

⁵ Trevor Harrison. Of Passionate Intensity: Right Wing Populism and the Reform Party of

TABLE THREE

Party Supported by Men in 1993 Election by Religion

	Protestant	Catholic	Non-Christian	No religion	Total	Total n
Other	3.3	2.8	1.4	6.5	3.6	50
PC	16.2	11.7	6.8	13.3	13.2	185
Liberal	40.8	40.4	52.7	35.4	40.2	565
NDP	9.1	3.9	5.4	6.8	6.2	87
Reform	30.6	11.7	28.4	31.2	22.3	313
BQ	n/a	29.7	53.4	6.8	14.6	205
Total	32.1	43.9	5.3	18.7	100	N= 1405

$$\chi^2 = 263.73$$

Degrees of Freedom =15

Significance = .00000

Let us now see if there are differences in Canadian women voter's party of choice and their religious affiliation. The largest category within female support for Reform came from Protestant women. Catholic women were very unlikely to support the Reform Party with only 7.5% support, only 18.3% of Jewish and non-Christian women gave the Reform Party support, and 15.7% of women with no religion voted for the Reform Party. Although the Reform Party women exhibit a similar pattern of support by religion as do their male counterparts, unlike the Reform Party men, women of non-Christian and atheistic persuasions are less likely to vote Reform. Likewise, Catholic women are very unlikely to vote Reform. Interestingly, Canadian women who are non-Christian and of no religion have differing results of support from their male counterparts. While 28.4% of non-Christian men supported Reform, only 18.3% of non-Christian women gave Reform their vote. Thus, if women are less likely to vote Reform

Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995., p.203.

than men, does religiosity have anything to do with this fact? Are religious women attracted to the Reform Party because of their family values? Are atheistic women and men more likely to be more averse to the Reform Party?

TABLE FOUR

Party Support by Women in 1993 by Religion

	Protestant	Catholic	Non-Christian	No Religion	<i>Total</i>	Total n
Other	4.9	1.8	6.7	5.7	3.6	48
PC	18.8	12	11.7	16.4	15.3	196
Liberal	41.9	45.7	53.3	40.7	44	563
NDP	9	4.7	6.7	13.6	7.6	97
Reform	25.2	7.5	18.3	15.7	16.2	208
BQ	.2	28.2	3.3	7.9	13.2	169
<i>Total</i>	41.5	42.9	4.7	10.9	100	<i>N=1281</i>

$$\chi^2=257.5$$

Degrees of Freedom= 15

Significance=.00000

It is precisely because of the image of the Reform Party as being a party of Christian fundamentalists that here we try to discover a relationship between religiosity and support for the Reform Party. The question posed to Canadian voters in the Canadian National Election Study was "How would you rank the importance of God in your life - very important, somewhat important, or not very important?" The results of this survey will give us an idea of the religiosity of Reform supporters.

We discover that the religiosity of male voters has little significance in terms of how these men vote. All we can conclude from these data is that God is of very great to moderate

importance in the lives of 77.5% of Canadian male voters. The Reform Party may have been seen as attracting religious people for many reasons. Ernest Manning's religiosity may have been attributed to Preston Manning despite his claims to the contrary. Deborah Grey, the first Reformer elected to the House of Commons, practices an evangelical faith that may have been seen to attract similarly religious supporters. Alternately, the social conservatism of the party may be reminiscent to some Canadians of a party inclined to attract religious fundamentalists. Even if the party were inclined to solicit the support of religious fundamentalists, this group only comprises roughly 7.9% of the Canadian population.⁶ Despite their 'images', male Reformers are not more religious than males in the other parties.

TABLE FIVE

Importance of God in the Lives of Men who voted in the 1993 Election

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	<i>Total</i>	Total n
Other	3.2	4.1	4.3	3.8	31
PC	12.6	12.7	14.5	13.1	108
Liberal	46.3	38.8	31.7	40.4	333
NDP	6.9	5.2	9.7	6.9	57
Reform	22.4	25.8	29	25.1	207
BQ	8.6	13.4	10.8	10.8	89
<i>Total</i>	42.2	35.3	22.5	100	<i>N=825</i>

$$\chi^2=16.5$$

Degrees of Freedom=10

Significance =.08658

⁶ This information came from Statistics Canada and can be found on their website at <http://www.statcan.ca/Documents/English/Pgdb/People/Population/demo32.htm>. Within the Protestant category 7.9%, which are presumably evangelical and fundamentalist religions, were labelled as 'other' which was distinct from Lutheran, Baptist, Anglican, and Pentecostal.

When we look at the relationship between religiosity and party voted for by Canadian women, once again we discover an insignificant difference between religiosity and the party voted for during the last federal election. We discover instead, that 89.1% of Canadian women rate God as being of great to moderate importance in their lives. We cannot conclude however, that those women who rate God as being important to their lives are any more likely to vote for the Reform Party. This fact provides us with a useful insight into Reform Party supporters to the extent that we must discredit any claims which link religiosity to an inclination to support Reform.

TABLE SIX

**Importance of God in the Lives of Women
who voted in the 1993 Election**

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Total	Total n
Other	3.8	4.6	4.8	4.2	32
PC	13.9	15.7	18.1	15	115
Liberal	48.7	49	41	48	368
NDP	7.6	6.5	8.4	7.3	56
Reform	18.9	14.2	15.7	16.9	130
BQ	7.1	10	12	8.6	66
Total	55.1	34	10.8	100	N=767

$$\chi^2=7.7$$

Degrees of Freedom=10

Significance =.65877

Interestingly, what this research reveals is that contrary to popular understanding, the Reform Party does not attract those with passion of religious belief.

The next question we want to answer is whether a correlation exists between ethnicity and Reform Party support and to what extent this correlation is further explicable by gender. Does the party's rhetoric resonate as a code with certain ethnic groups and not with others? Does gender make a difference in how the Reform message is received by different ethnic groups? The categories have been collapsed as follows: 'White/European' means those of British, Irish, Scottish, Welsh, Scandinavian, German, Polish, Eastern European, Oceanic and Australian origin. 'Mediterranean' means those of Turkish, Greek, Middle Eastern, Hispanic, Italian, and Portuguese origin. 'French' refers to those people of Quebecois(e) or French origin. 'Native' refers to Canadian First Nations people and 'Visible Minority' includes those of Eastern and Western Indian, Black and Indonesian origin, in addition to Chinese, Japanese, and Korean peoples, and those emigrants from Pacific Rim countries.

On first glance, we notice that visible minority men overwhelmingly voted Liberal, 46.9%, while only 9.4% of all visible minority men gave the Reformers support. This is particularly interesting given that the Liberals were first in popular support followed by Reform, and if no correlation between ethnicity and party support existed, then the popular vote would be mirrored here. 38.1% of White/European men voted Liberal, while not many fewer, 35.8%, voted Reform. From this table we can conclude that male White/European voters are pro-Reform with very few visible minority men supporting the Reform Party.⁷

⁷ I am indebted to Dr. Michael Lusztig from the University of Western Ontario for the observation that the ethnic basis of the Reform Party vote may be highly influenced by geography. For example, while ethnic diversity tends to be high in larger cities or in certain provinces, Reform Party support tends to be regionally concentrated in the Western Canadian provinces. This important point needs further attention on future research on Reform.

TABLE SEVEN

Male Voting by Ethnicity

	White/ European	Mediterranean	French	Native	Visible Minority	<i>Total</i>	Total n
Other	3.7	n/a	3.9	n/a	3.1	3.4	26
PC	13.6	18.4	10.4	n/a	28.1	13.4	103
Liberal	38.1	55.3	37	53.8	46.9	41	316
NDP	7.8	n/a	3.9	15.4	9.4	6.9	53
Reform	35.8	21.1	5.2	30.8	9.4	25.8	199
BQ	1	5.3	39.6	n/a	3.1	9.6	74
<i>Total</i>	63	4.9	20	1.7	4.2	100	N=771

$\chi^2=270.9$

Degrees of Freedom=25

Significance = .00000

When we look at the table of female support by ethnicity, we see that of all the women, White/European women were the largest category of supporters for Reform. These White/European women comprised 68.9% of all women and almost one quarter of them, 23.9%, supported the Reform Party. French, Visible minority and Mediterranean women gave the vast majority of their support to the centrist Liberal party and stayed away from the left NDP and the more extreme regional parties, the Reform Party and the Bloc Quebecois. Interestingly, there is a complete absence of Reform Party support among Visible minority women. From this data we can conclude that White/European women are most likely to support the Reformers. Another interesting finding is that Mediterranean women are half as likely as their male counterparts to vote Reform.⁸ Whereas 21.1% of Mediterranean men were Reform Party supporters and 30.8%

of Native men were Reform Party supporters. only 10.3% of the Mediterranean women and 14.3% of Native women were Reform Party supporters. As was noted by Harrison and Krahn, the social power of Anglophone males has been challenged most directly by Francophones, and visible minorities, the groups towards whom many Reformers tend to harbour particularly negative attitudes, a fact which would explain the lack of support from French and visible minority men and women.⁹ Further, it is not surprising that groups who have lost power and privilege would hold strong opinions on groups they perceive to have led to a loss in their social status.¹⁰

TABLE EIGHT
Female Voting by Ethnicity

	White/ European	Mediterranean	French	Native	Visible Minority	Total	Total n
Other	4.8	3.4	3.2	14.3	n/a	4.3	31
PC	15.9	6.9	12.9	n/a	15	14.8	107
Liberal	45.5	65.5	40.3	42.9	85	47.7	344
NDP	9.1	10.3	4.8	14.3	n/a	7.6	55
Reform	23.9	10.3	1.6	14.3	n/a	18	130
BQ	0.8	3.4	37.1	14.3	n/a	7.5	54
Total	68.9	4	17.2	1	2.8	100	N=721

$\chi^2=239.3$

Degrees of Freedom=25

Significance =.00000

Trevor Harrison reported from a May 1991 Report conducted by Environics Research and a July-August 1991 University of Alberta Study which stated that compared to both Canadians in general and to supporters of other parties, the Reform Party attracts particularly educated men.

⁸ No conclusions can be drawn about women Aboriginals support for the Reform Party as a result of a small sample size.

⁹ Harrison., Op.Cit., p.207.

¹⁰ Harrison and Krahn., Op.Cit., p.147.

well above the national average.¹¹ At the same time, other sources like Tom Flanagan have claimed the party receives most of its support from those who have completed high school and then falls off for those who have attended university.¹² A different pattern of Reform Party support emerges in looking at the education levels of male Reform supporters from the National Elections Study data subset created here.

The categories have been collapsed from the Canadian National Election Study data to break down as follows: 'Less than high school', 'High school', 'Some Post-Secondary', 'BA, MA, PhD Completed'. Within each category of party supported by men, we see little variation amongst the different levels of education attained. This tells us there is little correlation between the level of education a man has received and the party he supported in the last Canadian federal election at least among the Canadian National Election Studies sample.

TABLE NINE
Male Voters and Levels of Education

	Less than Highschool	Highschool	Some post-secondary	BA, MA, PhD Completed	Total	Total n
Other	3.6	2.6	4.3	4.3	3.7	31
PC	10.8	14.3	14.7	12.8	13.3	112
Liberal	45.9	40.4	36.8	40.1	40.6	342
NDP	8.2	7.4	6.1	6.4	7	59
Reform	24.2	24.8	25.1	24.6	24.7	208
BQ	7.2	10.4	13	11.8	10.7	90
Total	23	27.3	27.4	22.2	100	N=842

$$\chi^2=9.2$$

Degrees of Freedom= 15

Significance=.86478

¹¹ Trevor Harrison. Of Passionate Intensity: Right Wing Populism and the Reform Party of Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995. pp.202-203.

¹² Tom Flanagan. Op.Cit., pp.158-160.

Female voters reflect different trends than male voters in the 1993 election. There is a slightly increased likelihood of voting for Reform among women if she has completed high school or begun but not completed some kind of post-secondary education or training. Women who have undergraduate, graduate, post-graduate, and professional degrees constitute 20% of the female sample and 12.2% of these women gave Reform their support even though this group is slightly smaller than the other groups of women supporting the party. Relative to her male counterpart however, this group of women was half as likely to vote for Reform. 12.2% of women with a completed post-secondary degree(s) supported Reform while 24.6% of similarly educated men supported Reform. It is those women who are right at the national average of levels of education attained, which means those women who have completed high school and those women who have some post-secondary education, who were a little more inclined towards the Reform Party in 1993. Interestingly, there is also a noticeable difference in gendered support for the Reform Party in groups of men and women with less than high school education. Whereas 24.2% of all the Canadian male voters with less than high school voted for the Reform Party, only 15.6% of their female counterpart supported Reform. Coupling this fact with what we will discover later in the chapter, which is that the largest category of employment among women Reform supporters is housewifery, we know that many of the women who are now in their late fifties are some of the only women who had the luxury of the economic stability to be a full time housewife. Further, we know from this demographic profile that women who would have grown up in this time period were very unlikely to have gone to university. These facts may account for the slight reluctance of university educated women to vote Reform and the increased

likelihood of women with high school and some post-secondary to be more inclined towards Reform.

TABLE TEN
Female Voters and Levels of Education

	Highschool	Highschool	some post-2nd	BA, MA., PhD	Total	Total n
Other	2.8	2.1	5.6	5.8	4.1	32
PC	12.8	15.1	16.3	15.4	15	117
Liberal	46.7	53.1	45.6	46.2	47.8	373
NDP	8.9	4.2	7.9	9.6	7.6	59
Reform	15.6	19.3	19.4	12.2	17.1	133
BQ	13.3	6.3	5.2	10.9	8.5	66
Total	23.1	24.6	32.3	20	100	N=780

$$\chi^2=26$$

Degrees of Freedom= 15

Significance=.03797

The next aspect of Reform support will determine whether a relationship exists between marital status and voting for the Reform Party. Is the Reform Party perceived to be anti-divorce, (or pro-traditional family to the exclusion of other families?). The categories are 'Married/Cohabiting', 'Divorced/Separated', 'Widowed' and 'Single'. Married or cohabiting and divorced or separated men make up the vast majority of Canadian men with 75% of all voting men in this category. Both married and separated/divorced men support the Reform Party at approximately the same rate. This pattern is also found among support for other parties as well. The importance of family and marriage to Reformers is seen in their personal lives and attitudes. Harrison cites an Environics poll that noted that the Reform Party whose percentage support

among married voters was greater than the percentage of support among unmarried voters. This finding is consistent with our sample and the pattern is even more pronounced among women.

TABLE ELEVEN

Male Voters and Marital Status

	Married/ Cohabiting	Separated/ Divorced	Widowed	Single	Totals	Total n
Other	3.5	2.6	n/a	4.7	3.6	51
PC	14.5	11.2	13.5	10.3	13.2	188
Liberal	40.2	39.7	54.1	38.9	40.2	571
NDP	5.6	6.9	8.1	7.2	6.1	87
Reform	23.4	23.3	13.5	19.7	22.3	317
BQ	12.9	16.4	10.8	19.1	14.5	206
<i>Total</i>	66.8	8.2	2.6	22.5	100	<i>N=1420</i>

$$\chi^2=19.4$$

Degrees of Freedom=15

Significance=.19652

There is a difference in how Canadian women voted and their marital status. For example, women who are married are almost twice as likely as separated and divorced, widowed and single women to vote for the Reform Party. The largest group of Reform women supporters are married (20.1%), whereas only 11.3% of separated or divorced women voted Reform, 9.4% of widowed and 10.2% of single women chose to vote Reform. The chi square for men is insignificant whereas for women it is significant. Unlike their male counterparts who are equally likely to vote Reform if married/cohabitating or if separated or divorced, why are divorced and separated women much less likely to vote for the Reform Party? We do not see such an imbalanced support among these two groups of women reflected in support for the other

Canadian conservative party, namely the Progressive Conservatives. Perhaps one of the reasons is the sexual double standard of a socially conservative party that believes it is acceptable for a man to be divorced or separated but the same is not true for a woman is communicated to divorced and separated women. Moreover, separated and divorced women may find the 'family values' rhetoric of the Reformers to be distasteful or to inaccurately reflect their particular circumstances.

TABLE TWELVE
Female Voters and Marital Status

	Married/ Cohabiting	Separated/ Divorced	Widowed	Single	<i>Total</i>	Total n
Other	3.9	4.4	3.1	2.8	3.7	48
PC	14.9	13.2	14.2	18.5	15.2	196
Liberal	41.6	45.3	59.1	43.5	44.1	568
NDP	7	11.3	7.1	7.4	7.6	98
Reform	20.1	11.3	9.4	10.2	16.3	210
BQ	12.5	14.5	7.1	17.6	13	168
<i>Total</i>	61	12.3	9.9	16.8	100	<i>N=1288</i>

$\chi^2=39.3$

Degrees of Freedom=15

Significance=.00058

We now turn to the matter of whether there is any relationship between unemployment and that person's party inclination. In table 12 we hope to confirm or deny previous findings that indicate a high percentage of retired people among Reform supporters. At first glance, we notice that almost one quarter of men who are working (23.5%) or retired (22.3%) voted Reform

whereas only 16.7% of those men who are either unemployed or laid off voted Reform (almost the same proportion as male students, 17.1%). The nearly one quarter of all Reform men being retired also fits with previous findings about Reformers.

TABLE THIRTEEN
Male Voters and Employment

	Employed	Unemployed/ Laid Off	Retired	Student	Homemaker	<i>Total</i>	Total n
Other	3.6	3.3	1.6	8.5	n/a	3.6	51
PC	13.6	12.5	13.8	9.8	n/a	13.2	188
Liberal	39.2	44.2	46.3	32.9	37.5	40.2	571
NDP	5.8	7.5	5.3	11	12.5	6.2	88
Reform	23.5	16.7	22.3	17.1	12.5	22.4	318
BQ	14.4	15.8	10.6	20.7	37.5	14.5	206
<i>Total</i>	72	8.4	13.2	5.8	0.6	100	<i>N=1422</i>

$\chi^2=28.9$

Degrees of Freedom=20

Significance=.08905

When we look at women and voting patterns for the Reform Party, an interesting and never before observed phenomenon appears. Overwhelmingly, the largest support for the Reform Party among women came from the category of homemakers. This makes a great deal of sense. Like most people who cannot see the barriers others encounter because they are not part of their immediate lives, women who are not working in the paid labour force do not have a full appreciation for the barriers 'working women' encounter in their professional lives.

In sharp contrast to this large Reform female homemaker support base, we see that women students do not vote for the Reform Party. As we will see in upcoming attitudinal data on men and women, women tend to have more liberal views about welfare recipients, feminists

and homosexuality than do men. From this we can conclude that assuming the majority of women students are women in their twenties, young women would not likely be attracted to a socially conservative party like the Reform Party. Since many young women, meaning those born after 1970, have been raised with mothers who work for pay, these women have grown up with less traditional gender roles than their mothers did. Whether women agree with the women's movement or not, it has taught young women about sexist attitudes that they may encounter in their lives and changed the expectations in a generation of women. In short, the Reform Party has not targeted this audience.

TABLE FOURTEEN

Female Voters and Employment

	Employed	Unemployed/ Laid Off	Retired	Student	Homemaker	Total	Total n
Other	3.8	4.7	3.3	5.1	3.1	3.7	48
PC	17.6	8.1	13.1	11.4	13.3	15.2	196
Liberal	41	54.7	57.9	45.6	37.6	44	567
NDP	7.4	10.5	5.5	12.7	7.1	7.6	98
Reform	16.8	11.6	13.7	2.5	23.5	16.3	210
BQ	13.3	10.5	6.6	22.8	15.5	13.1	169
Total	55.4	6.7	14.2	6.1	17.5	100	N=1288

$\chi^2=58.4$

Degrees of Freedom=20

Significance=.00001

Age and party support are the final variables at which we will look for a relationship in this section. The question we are asking is whether one is more likely to vote for the Reform Party depending upon their age. Much work has simply extrapolated the age grouping of the typical Reform Party delegates onto their supporters which we will see in this analysis. We can see there is little likelihood that men of a certain age will vote for the Reform Party. Men aged 30-39 and 50-59 seem to be a little more likely to have voted for the Reform Party but unlike much of what we have read about the Reform Party attracting older male voters seems to be unsupported, and in fact, contracted here. We find that support for the Reform Party dips among those men over age 60.

This finding is significant because it is not what some researchers have declared about Reform Party support. For example, Trevor Harrison says Reform Party supporters are

disproportionately well educated, male, older and retired...more likely than other party supporters to be non-unionized and home-owners....disproportionately and predominantly English-speaking, Protestant, and Anglo-European.¹³

Although we can agree with most of this assessment, our data says that Reform Party supporters are 'older' and unless this means over 40, it is inconsistent with this data. This data is in line with the findings of Flanagan however, who notes that Reform Party support peaked among people aged 46-55 and dropped off among age groupings 56-65 and 65+.¹⁴

¹³ Ibid., p.203.

¹⁴ Tom Flanagan. Op.Cit., p.158.

TABLE FIFTEEN**Male Party Support by Age**

	18-29	39-39	40-49	50-59	60+	Total	Total n
Other	6	3.9	3.6	1	2.3	3.6	51
PC	10.2	14.6	14.2	11.5	14.2	13.2	188
Liberal	38.9	38	39.1	39.8	47.7	40.2	571
NDP	5.3	6.8	5	6.8	7.3	6.2	88
Reform	21.1	24.1	21.6	24.6	19.7	22.4	318
BQ	18.5	12.4	16.6	16.2	8.7	14.5	206
Total	18.6	28.8	23.8	13.4	15.3	100	N=1422

$$\chi^2=30.51$$

$$\text{Significance}=.06205$$

$$\text{Degrees of Freedom}=20$$

When we look at female Reform Party support a much less pronounced but similar pattern arises. The chances of voting Reform are elevated incrementally if a woman is between the ages of 30-39, and ever so slightly elevated if she is 50-59. And like her male counterpart, we see a drop in the support for Reform among women over 60.

TABLE SIXTEEN**Female Party Support By Age**

	18-29	39-39	40-49	50-59	60+	Total	Total n
Other	4.4	3.2	2.9	5.8	3.1	3.6	47
PC	15.8	15.3	15.3	15.6	13.8	15.1	195
Liberal	39.9	40.2	42.3	48.1	53.5	44.2	570
NDP	7.9	7.8	7.7	7.8	6.9	7.6	98
Reform	14	19.3	14.2	16.9	15.8	16.3	210
BQ	18	14.2	17.5	5.8	6.9	13.1	169
Total	17.7	28.9	21.3	11.9	20.2	100	N=1289

$$\chi^2=37.8$$

$$\text{Significance}=.00949$$

$$\text{Degrees of Freedom}=20$$

In the second section of this chapter, we will examine the attitudinal differences, if any, between Reform Party supporters and other Canadian party supporters. The first question to be asked is how the Reform Party males answer the question "Do you think much more, more, the same, less or much less should be done for Canadian women?" In this subset, the two most extreme categories have collapsed on either end so that 'much more' and 'more' become simply 'more' and 'much less' and 'less' become 'less'. We expect that positive results would indicate a sensitivity towards Canadian 'women's issues'. Although this question may be perceived as being vaguely worded, it has been included in this chapter because of the vastly different responses given by Reform supporters relative to other party supporters.

When we read across the categories 'more', 'same', 'less' in this table, we see that within each party, the distribution of support for each statement is similar with an incrementally larger percentage of men saying 'more' should be done for Canadian women than men saying 'same'. We also see that in all of the parties except Reform, the lowest percentage of men within each group say 'less'. What we see is that while the simple majority of Canadian men, or 54.3%, think that more should be done for Canadian women, and 30.9% of Canadian men think 'the same' accommodations should be done for Canadian women, only 4.7% of all Canadian men who voted in the last federal election believe 'less' should be done to help Canadian women. But at the same time, men with the view that 'less' should be done for Canadian women were overrepresented among Reform supporters. Only 17.1% of men agreeing that 'more' should be done for Canadian women voted for the Reform Party. Another 28% believing 'the same' should be done for women voted Reform. Interestingly, the largest category was 51.5% of men who said 'less should be done for Canadian women' voted Reform. This kind of statement is in line with

their beliefs that women and women's groups are a special interest unrepresentative of the Canadian population as a whole. Thus, we see a large attitudinal difference in Reform men and those Canadian men who voted for other parties.

TABLE SEVENTEEN

**Male Party Supported by Attitudes Toward
Accommodations for Canadian Women**

	Much More/More	Same	Less/Much Less	Total	Total n
Other	4.1	2.3	1.5	3.6	51
PC	13.6	13	9.1	13.1	183
Liberal	41.3	39.4	31.8	40.2	562
NDP	7.8	4.2	n/a	6.1	86
Reform	17.1	28	51.5	22.3	312
BQ	16.2	13.2	6.1	14.7	205
Total	54.3	30.9	4.7	100	N=1399

$$\chi^2=65.3$$

Significance=.00000

Degrees of Freedom=15

While in the last table we saw that 85.2% of Canadian men who voted in the last federal election thought either 'more' or 'the same' should be done for women, 89.9% of Canadian women said the same thing. Proportionately, we see that Reform women think much like Reform men. Although 65.6% of Canadian women think 'more' should be done for Canadian women, a mere 12.3% of this group are Reform Party supporters. Moreover, while only 2.7% of all Canadian women think 'less' should be done for Canadian women, once again this group is overrepresented within women who supported Reform; 40% of the women who agree that either much less or less should be done for Canadian women voted Reform. So like her male Reform

counterpart, while most of the women who voted for the other federal parties tended to think more or the same should be done for Canadian women, these women did not agree.

TABLE EIGHTEEN

**Female Party Supported by Attitudes Toward
Accommodations for Canadian Women**

	Much More/More	Same	Less/Much Less	Total	Total n
Other	3.5	4.5	n/a	3.5	45
PC	13.7	19	22.9	15.3	196
Liberal	45.7	41.5	28.6	44.1	564
NDP	8.6	5.8	5.7	7.7	98
Reform	12.3	23.2	40	16.3	208
BQ	16.3	6.1	2.9	13.2	169
Total	65.6	24.3	2.7	100	N=1280

$\chi^2=65$

Significance=.00000

Degrees of Freedom=15

Before moving to the next table, a reference to some relevant data should be made. In a study done by Harvey Krahn and Trevor Harrison, Alberta residents were asked to rate their agreement with a series of statements relating to gender relations. From these responses a "gender equality index" was composed to rank whether Reformers tended towards 'traditional' or 'progressive' values. Harrison and Krahn used this gender-equality index,¹⁵ which consisted of

¹⁵ Trevor Harrison and Harvey Krahn. "Populism and the Rise of the Reform Party." Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology. 32(2), 1995. People whose voting preference was Reform in 1991 were asked to rate the truth of the statements 'Men should take more responsibility for raising children', 'More should be done by governments to promote equality for women in Canada', 'The government of Alberta should legislate a pay equity policy, that is, equal pay for work of equal value' and 'It is time Alberta had a woman premier'.

thirteen variables, to discover the Reform Party supporter's attitudes about women and gender equality. Much in agreement with tables 16 and 17, the significant negative effect of the measure indicated that those less in agreement with statements about gender equality were more likely to vote Reform. Contrary to the research presented here about the average age of the Reform supporter, Harrison and Krahn conclude that the reason for the appeal of the Reform Party by older males may have been because of their perception that the Reform Party did not promote gender-equality policies and programmes.¹⁶

Analysis of Variance

Next we will look at an analysis of variance or Anovas to calculate a mean that describes how the Canadian population feels towards a certain group. The scale is a one hundred point thermometer wherein 0 indicates very negative feelings toward a certain group and 100 indicates strong positive associations with a group. In an Anova we examine how far each group is from the mean and get a general idea about the 'warmth' Reformers feel for feminists, racial minorities, welfare recipients and gays, relative to Canadians who supported other federal parties. Herein we can see if the Reform Party voter is like or unlike other Canadian voters attitudinally. In every Anova table, we see a mean which represents the national average response to this group on the 100 point thermometer scale. Beside the category 'Men', in brackets, we find the mean of how all Canadian men rated their feelings towards a given group regardless of the party they supported in the 1993 election. Beside the category 'Women' we find the same information. Vertically, down the left side of the Anova tables, beside each party name, we find the average

¹⁶ Trevor Harrison and Harvey Krahan. Op.Cit.

rating of each person, male and female, according to the party they supported, regardless of gender. Like the crosstabulation tables, within each cell, we find the intersectional ranking of gender and party about attitudes towards certain groups. Here we will discover if there is a gender difference in attitudes. This format will allow us to see if the attitude is a function of party supported, gender or both.

Although we know Reform Party supporters tend to have an attitudinal reluctance to grant special privileges to specific population subgroups based upon ascribed characteristics, we cannot fairly draw any conclusions about how Reformers 'feel' about racial minorities. In table nineteen, we can see that the average of Canadian voter's response to 'how [they] feel about racial minorities?' is 68.11 on a 100 point thermometer. This means that the Canadian population does not generally feel hostile, but rather feels quite positively towards racial or visible minorities. We see that Canadian women feel slightly more friendliness towards racial minorities than Canadian men but the difference is not significant. As could be expected, when we look at the parties, Liberal, NDP and independent party voters feel the most positively about this group while the two regional parties, the BQ and of importance here, the Reform Party, feel the least supportive of minorities. Immediately we notice that the category that is the farthest from the mean of 68.11 is male Reformer voters who rated 62.98, still much closer to the mean than we may have predicted. Meanwhile, their female Reform counterparts were higher than both the male Reformers and the Canadian average. Women Reform supporters had more positive feelings towards racial minorities at 69.05. Although Reform women may have positive feelings towards racial minorities, visible minority women were still not inclined to vote Reform.

TABLE NINETEEN
Thermometer On Racial Minorities

<i>Mean of the Total Population= 68.11</i>		
	Men (67.09)	Women (69.25)
Other (70.52)	67.8	73.52
PC (66.97)	65.91	68.01
Liberal (69.75)	69.56	69.95
NDP (72.49)	70.98	73.79
Reform (65.35)	62.98	69.05
BQ (65.41)	65.97	64.7

F=5.196 Significance=.000 (main)
F=1.551 Significance=.171 (interaction)

The next category to be looked at is attitudes towards feminists. The Canadian average thermometer 'feeling' about feminists is 53.69. Once again, Canadian women, on average, feel more positively towards feminism than do Canadian men, but only marginally. Except for both of the Canadian Conservative parties, the PC's and the Reformers, women generally feel somewhat more positively about feminists. Unlike the average Canadian women, Reform Party women have the lowest rating of warmth felt for feminists of all other parties and genders at 44.72. Their male Reform counterpart is warmer but still well under the mean at 47.57. It is interesting that women Reformers dislike feminists more than male Reformers do. This attitude could be understood by observing that the Reform agenda is antithetical to most feminist concerns. Reform MP's have, on the whole, distanced themselves from feminists by labelling them "self-interested special interest groups". Since we know that the largest employment category within female Reform Party support was housewifery, we may conclude that Reform Party housewives perceive the feminist agenda as anti-family and antithetical to their lifestyle choices.

TABLE TWENTY

Attitudes Towards Feminism

<i>Mean of the Total Population= 53.69</i>		
	Men (52.65)	Women (54.83)
Other (55.1)	51.41	59.11
PC (52.92)	53.29	52.57
Liberal (56.28)	55.31	57.28
NDP (61.3)	60.21	62.22
Reform (46.42)	47.57	44.72
BQ (52.78)	49.75	56.52

F=14.41 Significance=.000 (main)
 F=2.311 Significance=.042 (interaction)

The next category to examine is the Reformers attitudes about homosexuals. We choose to explore this category because a low rating for homosexuals would reinforce the pro-traditional family we expect the Reformers to support. While most Canadians are at 46.12, which is a rather low rating, the mean is skewed since Canadian men feel much less positively about homosexuals than do Canadian women. There is a large gender variation in thermometer rankings towards homosexuality whereby men tend to rate feelings towards homosexuality at 39.72, and women rank attitudes about homosexuals much higher at 53.26. Taking party support out of the equation, we see that gender has more of a predictive effect on attitudes towards gays than does the particular party supported. For example, although Reform Party men feel particularly negatively about homosexuals, all men generally within the Canadian electorate tend to feel negatively about homosexuals but to a lesser extent. Reform men rate homosexuals at a mere 33.82 which gives them the lowest ranking of all groups. Female Reformers rate homosexuals at 42.31, which is unusually low relative to other Canadian women but still much higher than her male Reform

counterpart. As we may have predicted, Reformers feel most negatively about homosexuals which is in accordance with their 'family values'.

TABLE TWENTY ONE

Attitudes Towards Homosexuals

<i>Mean of the Total Population= 46.12</i>		
	Men (39.72)	Women (53.26)
Other (56.41)	48.72	64.44
PC (46.24)	39.86	52.34
Liberal (45.26)	38.26	52.38
NDP (52.01)	43.13	59.7
Reform (37.13)	33.82	42.31
BQ (55.91)	49.4	64

F=42.07 Significance=.000 (main)
F=.944 Significance=.451 (interaction)

It is well known that the Reform Party takes a dim view of welfare state measures like social assistance. Does the Reform Party feel more negatively than other federal voters about welfare recipients? As we will notice, Canadian women are more tolerant of welfare recipients than are Canadian men. Likewise, the Liberals, the NDP, the BQ and those who supported independent parties all feel more positively towards welfare recipients than the two Canadian conservative parties, the PC's and the Reformers, who are below the Canadian average in terms of warmth towards this group. Canadians rank welfare recipients at 50.6 out of 100 on the thermometer and Reform men rank them at 43.64. Reform women rank welfare recipients slightly higher at 47.47, which is closer to, but still below, the national average. Canadians in general do not feel favourably about those people collecting welfare but as we may have

anticipated. Reform men, who constitute almost 70% of Reform voters, feel the most negatively about welfare recipients.

TABLE TWENTY TWO

Attitudes Towards People on Welfare

<i>Mean of Total Population= 50.65</i>		
	Men (49.36)	Women (52.09)
Other (56.97)	57.52	56.36
PC (48.54)	48.16	48.9
Liberal (51.18)	49.74	52.64
NDP (59.31)	57.72	60.74
Reform (45.14)	43.64	47.47
BQ (52.98)	52.66	53.66

F=13.696 Significance=.000 (main)
 F=.466 Significance=.802 (interaction)

Conclusion

In summary, we have discovered some interesting and unique qualities about female Reform Party supporters that set them apart from supporters of the other federal parties. On the whole, the data suggest that the Reform Party is currently unable to attract women. Unlike other federal parties, we saw a very pronounced gender imbalance in terms of Reform support with 60.2% of all votes to Reform coming from men and only 39.8% coming from women. We saw that Protestant women were more than twice as likely as Catholic women to vote Reform, and, much to the contrary of formerly published qualitative research, we saw that religiosity has no bearing on party support. We did see that ethnicity played a larger role in determining the party supported in the last federal election. White/European women were two times more likely than Mediterranean women, and twenty times likelier than French women to support the Reform

Party; visible minority women largely shy away from Reform. We saw that for women, those who have completed high school and some post-secondary education or training were slightly more inclined towards the Reform Party while those who had completed a degree were slightly less likely to vote Reform. Married or cohabiting women were two times more likely than widowed or single women to vote Reform and one and a half times likelier than divorced or separated women to do so. We observed that within the female Reform supporting category, the largest category of women were homemakers. Contrary to many previous findings, age has little to do with likelihood of voting for the Reform Party. And when we looked at the attitudes Reform voters have towards racial minorities, feminists, homosexuals, and welfare recipients, we found that most Reformers felt a 'coolness' towards them on the thermometer ranking. We now know the Reform Party fails to attract women, the next question we have to ask is why?

In many ways the pro-traditional family rhetoric that excludes divorced, separated, working and lesbian women is antithetical to the lives and beliefs of many Canadian women who live in common law relationships, have children before marriage, and work outside the home for pay despite what traditional family values dictate. A party that accepts traditional family values seems not to resonate with women of the Canadian electorate. Moreover, the anti-special interest rhetoric dissuades Canadian women who are non-Christian, are visible minorities, Native, and French from a party that does not respond to their interests in a way they would see as fit. Language used by Reformers like "self-serving special interest groups" and "unhyphenated Canadianism" does not seem to have enticed these groups of women to vote Reform.

While the Reform Party does have a certain kind of support among women, it is well below that of other parties. Further, they do not benefit very much from their supposed appeal to

socially conservative women. More religious women do not seem inclined towards Reform, neither are older women more inclined to support Reform. While we know that young Canadian women ages 18-29 are the least likely to respond to and vote for the Reform Party, they should be targeting this demographic for the continuation of Reform in the future. We cannot predict a great deal of support to come from these women in the next election however, since neither a women's nor a youth caucus exists in Reform. The party is well aware of the lack of female support for them and have taken steps to try to appeal to women in the next federal election. Despite their marked success in the 1993 election, without at least half of their support coming from women, the Reform Party cannot hope to form the next federal government nor even retain the number of seats they won in the last election without a dramatic increase in female support.

The Reform Party and Women

Conclusion

One of the most important findings in this thesis is that the Reform Party has not been successful in attracting female support. We have seen that the ideology, the policies, and the structure of the party are androcentric and contrary in many ways to both the interests of Canadian women and to the party's claims of populism. Chapter one explored the implications of Reform Party ideology for women. It explored 'what exists' in Reform Party ideology, meaning, who the 'we' are in Reform vernacular. Likewise, chapter one explored what society is like and what men are women like within it, according to Reform Party ideology. The discourse analysis revealed a highly gendered citizenship that claims to represent both men and women but, in fact, only represents a male perspective and interest. Likewise, the party's focus on unhyphenated Canadianism that claims to incorporate all Canadians, actively excludes women from the equation. Many ideologies structure relationships, concepts and people in a binary framework to be labelled either good or bad. The 'good' woman according to Reform Party ideology does not pay attention to her gender, she does not recognize systemic barriers women can encounter in the paid labour force, nor does she recognize difference. Instead, she sees herself as an "unhyphenated Canadian".

Chapter two on Reform Party policies, indicated that while some Reform Party policy statements could have positive repercussions for Canadian women, others would be quite negative and short-sighted in terms of a larger solution to a problem. Still other policy solutions would even be hostile to women. For example, stronger sentencing and attempts to reconcile

problems in an abusive marriage may, in the short term, curb violence but in the longer term, few men will be freed from the root cause of their wife assault in the first place - namely misogyny. In other words, the Reformers' stricter punishment may not serve as a deterrent at all. On the other hand, the Reformers' position on MP accountability may, in fact, be a positive step for Canadian women. In other policy areas that have a more profound and daily effect on women and the quality of their lives like employment equity, multiculturalism, and same sex couple benefits, we can anticipate no progress to be made and perhaps, even a few steps backward. Finally, large policy silences were found in the areas of child care, Aboriginal people and Medicare. Only time will tell how the Reform Party will ultimately respond to these issues, if they choose to respond at all.

Very instructive of the androcentrism in the Reform Party was our examination of the party's structure. We looked at how parties in general marginalize women by ignoring issues of concern to women, reducing female MPs to their sexuality, and in extreme cases, yelling profanities at female MPs across the floor of the House of Commons. Relative to other federal parties, the Reform Party has not and will not make gender representation in the party a priority nor will it recognize that having only 7 women Members of Parliament out of 52 indicates a systemic problem, not a lack of available female candidates eligible for office as the case may have been in earlier decades.

Finally, a study of the support base of the Reform Party indicated that Reform does not attract female support. We concluded that some Canadian women might have been dissuaded from supporting the party as a result of the Reform Party's family values rhetoric. Reform language acts as a code to exclude single mothers, divorced and single women, and lesbians.

Additionally, even though the Anovas indicated that Reform women felt more positively about racial minorities than the national average, the distaste the party exhibits toward granting special recognition to specific subgroups like ethnic groups, including what some perceive as anti-Francophone rhetoric, seems to have successfully convinced most visible minority, Middle Eastern, Hispanic, French, and Native women not to vote for the Reform Party.

So then, what can one conclude about those women who do support Reform? To some extent, the data indicates that the party seems to solicit a type of 'protest vote' from those women who do vote Reform. Harrison and Krahn created a political alienation index to see if those decided Reform voters in Alberta tended to be politically alienated. The results indicated that those people who were more alienated from government were more inclined toward Reform and their anti-government positions.¹ When we look back at the largest categories of employment among female Reform supporters we notice three important variables that might lead to a feeling of alienation from government that Harrison and Krahn discuss. First, most of the women Reformers were from the Western provinces and may have responded to the Western alienation the Reform Party targeted. Second, many of the Reform supporters were rural, which may contribute to an added sense of political alienation from Ottawa that city dwellers may not experience. Finally, the largest employment category for female Reform supporters was housewifery, a career that may leave women feeling somewhat politically removed. The data indicate that there is some likelihood also that the Reform Party appeals to an 'angry white female' voter. Like her male counterpart who has been discussed in many publications, she responds to family values rhetoric that dissociates itself from homosexuality, reproductive

¹ Trevor Harrison and Harvey Krahn. "Populism and the Rise of the Reform Party in Alberta". Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology. 32(2), 1995.,p.142.

freedom, lifestyle choice and feminism. She is a White, Protestant Anglophone with a comfortable but not affluent lifestyle. Being a member of this group, she has seen demands made by other ethnic subgroups and seen a loss in the status of her ethnic group. She is definitely a social conservative and like both Richard Sigurdson² and former Reform MP, Jan Brown³ asserted about Reform supporters, this population subgroup longs for a bygone era when gender roles were more clear cut and an ethnic social hierarchy worked more to her advantage than it might today.

Of course, we cannot fully predict how the Reform Party might change should they become the governing party in the next federal election. The socially conservative ideology of the Reform Party might lose its initial force as the party becomes entrenched in the traditional Canadian party pursuit of trying to broker between regional and ethnic cleavages. This mass bureaucratic party with its strong, central bureaucracy, 'collegial leadership', private financing and ideological purity could potentially change as the Reform Party moved toward the electoral professional model.⁴ For example, it may be unrealistic to assume that the party will remain committed to cutting interest group funding entirely given their crucial role in the policy process. Next, the party may find it impossible to govern itself in the House of Commons without the unifying force of strict party discipline. Further, we must question again as we did in chapter one how genuine the Reform Party's commitment to listening to 'the people' is, and how long they would remain in office if the party truly did listen to 'Ordinary Canadians'.

² Richard Sigurdson. "Preston Manning and the Politics of Postmodernism in Canada." Canadian Journal of Political Science. 27(2), June 1994.

³ Telephone interview with Jan Brown, M.P., Calgary South-East March 5, 1996.

⁴ Angelo Panebianco. "Parties and Democracy: Transformation and Crisis." in Political Parties: Organization and Power. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988. p.266.

Our tired brokerage model left room for a new party such as Reform. Rather than accepting new, liberal ideas, the Reform Party has rejected many of them and formed a socially conservative party that cannot attract women in proportion to their percentage of the population. Having looked at Reform's neo-conservative, populist ideology, its policy statements, the organization and electoral base of the party, we can make two firm conclusions. First, that the Reform Party is an androcentric institution, antithetical to the interests of Canadian women. Second, and as a result of the first conclusion of androcentrism, an internal tension exists within the Reform Party's ideological structure since it claims to be populist yet excludes issues of concern to Canadian women. Speculation as to whether or not Reform will win the next Federal majority government is anyone's guess. What we do know definitively is that if the Reform Party does continue to solicit such tremendous support, we will see an historical regression of the gains made by Canadian women in the latter part of the twentieth century.

Appendix

Questions asked of Reform MPs

March 5, 1996 Interview questions for Jan Brown, MP

1. How did you first get involved in politics?
2. The Reform Party has a large discrepancy in the number of male and female voters. Why do you think this is? and why do you think the party attracts a somewhat older voter?
3. The Reform Party does not believe in affirmative action policies within the party, and is the only federal party without a women's caucus and without initiatives to encourage women to become MPs, how do you think this larger systemic problem will be corrected within the party if it is not addressed?
4. Does the Reform Party have any policies that would be seen as attractive to Canadian women?
5. Do you think the Reform Party has an ideology?

April 23, 1996 Interview Questions for Members of Parliament Diane Ablonczy, Deborah Grey and Val Meredith

1. How did you become involved in politics?
2. I have a somewhat personal question if you care to answer it, do you have any children?
3. If so, how old were they when you entered politics?
4. My research has told me that many women MPs experience a role strain when they are mothers that male MPs do not. I am wondering what your response is to this?
5. Have you ever encountered problems in the Reform Party because of your gender?
6. The Reform Party does not believe in affirmative action policies within the party, and is the only federal party without a women's caucus and without initiatives to encourage women to become MPs, how do you think this larger systemic problem will be corrected within the party if it is not addressed?
7. The Reform Party does not say anything about women, why is this?

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VITA

Name:	Stephanie Lauren Montgomery
Place of birth:	Toronto, Ontario
Year of birth:	1972
Post-Secondary Education and Degrees:	<p>University of Western Ontario London, Ontario, Canada Honours B.A. with distinction in Political Science and Women's Studies, 1995</p> <p>University of Western Ontario London, Ontario, Canada M.A. Political Science, 1997</p>
Honours and Awards:	<p>Scholarship for Achievement in a Combined Honours Program 1994-1995</p> <p>Special University Scholarship 1995-1996</p>
Related work experience:	<p>Teaching Assistant University of Western Ontario 1995-1996</p>