ADVOCATES, ADVERSARIES, ANOMALIES: THE POLITICS OF FEMINIST SPACE IN GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
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ABSTRACT

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Master of Arts 2001
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This research project examines the ways that politically-minded feminists create and sustain spaces for transformative feminist practice within Canadian development contexts despite institutional, ideological and economic constraints. This research project is significant because it contributes to a much-needed reassessment of feminist engagement with Gender and Development (GAD). Ultimately, this research seeks to determine whether and in what ways GAD can become a political force for progressive social change.

Through a two-pronged research approach of (1) semi-structured interviews with Canadian gender practitioners; and (2) organizational document analysis, this research demonstrates that politically-minded feminists are present within mainstream Canadian development organizations and are attempting to push the boundaries of mainstream Gender and Development (GAD) processes to embrace feminist projects, values, and commitments. The research suggests that building allies through connections with women’s movements is crucial for feminists to make mainstream development more amenable to transformative feminist goals, values and principles.
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INTRODUCTION

The current mainstream development industry has become a bureaucratic mire that is antithetical to feminist ways of thinking and being. Many Canadian international development organizations, both NGOs and bi-lateral agencies alike, function as highly gendered spaces that mirror a hierarchical and technocratic corporate culture which, according to Carol Miller and Shahra Razavi is “fundamentally opposed to feminist goals” (Miller & Razavi, 1998, p. 3). Gender and Development (GAD) structures within mainstream organizations are also often bureaucratic and technocratic, disengaged from the political energy of women’s movements. Given this complex context, feminists are left with the difficult decision of where to situate themselves—either within or against the development industry.

Many individuals have consciously decided to reject the international development machinery altogether. This “disengagement strategy” (Miller & Razavi, 1998, p. 3) is often embraced by feminists who believe that the costs of development will always outweigh its gains and will harm women most of all through its process (Stienstra, 1994). However, according to DAWN, a network of activists, researchers and policymakers from the Global South, complete disengagement from development is not necessarily the best answer: “Despite the formidable obstacles faced by women, to abandon the project of institutionalizing gender is NOT an option” (Quoted in Arnfred, 2001, p. 87). Some feminists believe that the best way to make development more amenable to women’s interests is through the impact of outside pressure for change. These individuals usually join alternative
feminist-defined Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) so that they can engage in an organizational space that promotes connections with broader women's movements and activist organizing. Other feminists maintain that engagement from within the development industry is nevertheless imperative for the processes of development to change in favor of women's interests.

Given that the development industry promotes hierarchical power structures that usually favor male control, activists and theorists alike contend that it is very rare to find politically minded feminists working within mainstream development organizations. However, this research demonstrates that feminists with critical perspectives are indeed present within the complex arena of mainstream Canadian development agencies. These individuals consciously engage with mainstream organizations while seeking to infuse the structures, systems, and processes of development with transformative feminist values, commitments, and ideals. Given this situation, it is important to consider the strategies that politically minded feminists employ in order to integrate transformative feminist principles and goals within their work. Thus, this research project will specifically examine how politically-minded feminists create and sustain spaces for transformative feminist practice within Canadian development contexts.

My reasons for addressing this question in my research significantly relate to my personal/political identity as a feminist and as a development practitioner. My experience working for international NGOs in Zimbabwe and Haiti made me acutely aware of the ways in which development's main project of economic growth and capital production is inimical to my own feminist convictions for equality and
structural transformation. I have become conscious that GAD does not often or easily complement my vision of a world transformed by feminist values. I understand that the potentially radical parts of GAD are very often “reduced to a technique of data collection for the purpose of more effective planning” (Currie, 1999, p. 15). Furthermore, I am critical of the ways that gender mainstreaming has obscured women’s movements and de-legitimized feminist demands for critical analysis and transformation of unjust global economic structures. Consequently, I have come to ask whether it is actually possible to be a feminist and remain engaged in development work. With this in mind, I decided to analyze the ways that gender practitioners engage in Canadian development organizations while maintaining their feminist convictions for radical social change.

Furthermore, I recognize that this research is informed by my political identity as an outsider to the Global South and by my personal identity as a woman living in relative privilege. I recognize that objectivity is an illusion; that I cannot be purely objective, nor do I hope to be. My experience in development work, my identity as a feminist, my personal history and individuality have all influenced the ways in which I have addressed this research question and its analysis. While recognizing that the social givens which constitute my life are derived from systems of oppression, I seek to utilize these givens in order to challenge the roots of social injustice within development processes and structures.1

1 Charlotte Bunch asserts that it is imperative for global feminists to use personal identity as a means for social transformation: “Our attitudes and actions towards the givens of our lives are the primary means we have of starting to gain control over our own selves and our destinies. We have no control over the social givens of our birth. We have limited control over our individual traits. But we can control what we do with those givens and traits. We can use our privileges to change society or to maintain it.” (Bunch, 1987, p. 82).
I believe that this research project is significant because it contributes to a much needed reassessment of feminist engagement with GAD. Specifically, it addresses the ways feminists seek to make GAD a political force for progressive social change. The research aligns itself with feminist goals which seek the emancipation of women through the transformation of hegemonic structures of the international development industry. Ultimately, it presumes to be part of feminist praxis in that it endeavors to undertake critical research of development and its patriarchal systems in order to find ways in which development could contribute to the feminist project of women's emancipation.

A number of questions will guide the discussion and analysis throughout this paper: How do feminists try to change the structures/processes of development to make them more feminist defined? How do gender practitioners attempt to forward an agenda for change within mainstream development despite institutional, ideological and economic constraints? Does GAD hold the potential to be part of, and contribute to, the feminist project of social transformation? How can GAD be linked to feminist projects of transforming the structures, systems and institutions that create and maintain inequality and oppression?

Through a two-pronged research approach of (1) semi-structured interviews with Canadian gender practitioners and (2) organizational document analysis, this research demonstrates that politically-minded feminists are present within mainstream Canadian development organizations and are attempting to push the boundaries of GAD to embrace feminist projects, values, and commitments (Chapter Two). They do this through both formal tactics and informal strategies.
within the confines of bureaucratic mainstream development contexts (Chapter Three). Ultimately, the research demonstrates that these internal strategies (both formal and informal) are insufficient in isolation from connections with external women's organizing and activism (Chapter Four). Indeed, insider feminist advocates must build relationships with alternative feminist-defined organizations and with local women's organizations/movements if they are to push the boundaries of GAD in favour of transformative feminist goals.
CHAPTER 1: METHODOLOGY

Research Process

The focus of this study is to conceptualize and analyze the spaces that feminists are negotiating for transformative practice within the gender programs of Canadian development organizations. This has required examining gender practitioners' perspectives on the limitations and possibilities of GAD to be a transformative framework for women. It has also required examining whether and in what ways the empowerment claims of GAD are realized in the policies and "donor-client" relations of diverse Canadian development agencies. In order to accomplish this task, a two-pronged research approach of semi-structured interviews and organizational document analysis was utilized.

Twenty-one (21) semi-structured interviews of approximately 1.5 hours in duration were undertaken during a five-month period from April to August 2001. Specific interview questions were designed in advance in order to guide the discussion (See Appendix A). Two interviews (Julie and Rena) were undertaken through e-mail in order to accommodate the participants' schedules. The interviews were informal in nature and progressed much like a conversational dialogue, thereby enabling flexibility in responses and encouraging in-depth discussion and analysis. The interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis. In the transcripts, the name of the organization
where the participants work has not been concealed. However, the names and other identifying information about all but one participant have been changed. Joanna Kerr of AWID gave permission to utilize her name within the context of this thesis while pseudonyms have been used for all other participants. (See Appendix B). I have used pseudonyms to reflect the diversity of the participants. However, for purposes of confidentiality I have deliberately not given respondents culturally appropriate names. In addition to the interviews, various published and unpublished organizational documents were collected and analyzed for information pertinent to the central research issues. These documents include organizations' gender policies, gender training materials, conference papers, organizational news bulletins, program delivery strategies, discussion papers on implementing gender equality, project reports, proposal requests, informal notes from departmental brainstorming sessions, staff agreements, transcriptions of formal speeches, presentation notes, program funding submissions, gender analysis guidelines, gender specific planning frameworks, and gender strategy meeting agendas and notes.

**Participant Selection**

A cross-section of participants was chosen in order to ensure that a diversity of Canadian development institutions was represented in the study. Initially, I had planned to undertake an institutional comparison of three development organizations. However, it was found that an institution-specific analysis would require more gender practitioners per organization than currently exist, thus making

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2 All participants agreed in advance and were aware that the name of their organization would be used in the context of this research. See Appendix D.
a viable comparative analysis between institutions difficult. Consequently, twenty (21) participants were interviewed from ten (10) different organizations, representing a range of Canadian development institutions including: one (1) bi-lateral organization (CIDA); three (3) international NGOs (CARE Canada, Oxfam Canada, and World Vision Canada); one (1) research-based donor institution (IDRC); two (2) coalition/networks of NGOs (AWID and South Asia Partnership); one (1) women's advocacy organization (ACPD); and two (2) feminist-defined NGOs (Inter Pares and MATCH International Center) (see Appendix B).

Participants were chosen from a variety of development agencies—representing both mainstream and alternative organizations3—in order to demonstrate the multiplicity of contexts wherein GAD practitioners are situated. The only criteria for participation in the study was that the participants must be either full-time, part-time or contractual employees of international development related organizations whose individual work or experience either directly relates or significantly contributes to gender concerns in the organization's policies, programs or projects. Two (2) participants were not included in the analysis (Susan was

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3 I am intentionally differentiating between mainstream (CIDA, Oxfam Canada, World Vision Canada, CARE Canada, and IDRC) and alternative development organizations (ACPD, AWID, Inter Pares, MATCH). Mainstream organizations are often understood to be state actors that maintain a macro-level focus and are consequently limited in scope (Clark, 1995). In addition to CIDA, I have included four international NGOs in my definition of mainstream development organizations. While these NGOs are more informal and have more autonomy than bi-lateral institutions, they are nevertheless corporate in scale, maintain international head offices in Northern-based countries, and are often an extension of the formal state apparatus. Furthermore, it is common for international NGOs to maintain strong funding ties to CIDA which links them to the dominant development project. While NGOs can incite pressure on state institutions, these international NGOs are considered to be mainstream organizations because they do not necessarily emerge from a people-centred/grassroots basis and therefore can impose their own ideological conception of "development" on partner organizations. It is important to note that Oxfam Canada is difficult to categorize because it considers itself an alternative organization given that it has established linkages to many social movements (such as the anti-debt movement against the international Monetary Fund and the World Bank) and local women's organizations (Oxfam Canada, 1999). Nevertheless, I have included Oxfam Canada in my categorization of a mainstream organization because it maintains most of the qualities described above.
eliminated because she is a volunteer and did not meet the specific participant criteria. Ronan, the only male participant, was eliminated to maintain a uniform cohort of female gender practitioners. The nineteen (19) participants included in the analysis are of varying ages between 25-55 years approximately and have varied employment backgrounds. Six individuals are originally from the Global South, and were able to bring this experience to the discussion, although other participants also reflected on the intersectionality of race and gender. The participants included project officers who act as gender focal point persons within their program divisions, interns responsible for gender mainstreaming processes, gender equality policy-makers, program managers, general project officers whose work significantly relates to an organization's gender policy, gender researchers, executive directors, gender analysts and/or gender specialists. Participants' work experience in the field of international development ranged from one (1) to twenty (20) years.

Participants were selected for inclusion in the study through a combination of criteria-based sampling, confirming and disconfirming case sampling, snowball/chain sampling, and opportunistic sampling techniques. In particular, I wanted to ensure that participants from both mainstream development organizations and alternative organizations were included in the study. Participant recruitment was established through initial contact with these organizations through a variety of means, such as attending public discussions, utilizing networks established through volunteer activities, and making personal visits to organizations' head offices. In some cases, I approached certain individuals because of their
known experience in gender-related work in development. Otherwise, I followed suggestions from initial contacts as to the most appropriate individuals to contact at a particular organization. Personalized generic letters were sent to selected individuals via e-mail in order to explain the research project, describe the research process and invite interest in participation (see Appendix C). This was followed by telephone or e-mail contact with participants in order to confirm the details of the interview (time, place, etc). Letters of informed consent and a document outlining further participant information were provided at this time. This enabled participants to review this information prior to the scheduled interview time in order for the research process to be as transparent as possible (see Appendix D).

Lessons Learned: Challenges and Observations of the Research Process

A number of challenges were faced throughout the research process, enriching this experience as an opportunity for both personal and academic learning. Indeed, certain pragmatic aspects of doing research presented various challenges especially within the processes of participant recruitment, interview design, and data collection. Firstly, obtaining a positive response from identified individuals proved more challenging than first expected. Of the thirty-five (35) individuals solicited for participation, twenty (20) were positive while approximately fifteen (15) declined. The reasons for this were varied. A number of those contacted expressed doubt as to whether they were the most appropriate candidate for participation in this study. Some felt that their experience doing gender work in development was either insufficient or inapplicable to the issues that I wanted to
discuss. This response may be the result of the lengthy introductory letter that I sent to participants in addition to a participant consent form that contained very detailed, and somewhat theoretical, information. Consequently, various respondents were concerned that they could not "speak" to the issues at hand. In order to address this situation, the introductory letter was made more personal and was sent separately from the other documents, thereby making the request for participation seem less daunting and more accessible. In addition, it seemed that some respondents hesitated because they understood this study to be a program evaluation. Indeed, many participants had concerns about representing the GAD work within their department or organization. After recognizing this constraint, I altered the language employed within the introductory letter in order to reflect the project's goal of collecting a multiplicity of perspectives on GAD, as opposed to an institutional analysis. Lastly, participant recruitment was difficult due to various constraints on people's time. For example, one participant terminated the interview after only twenty minutes in order to attend another meeting. I learned that I was attempting to undertake the bulk of this research at a time that is the end of fiscal year for many organizations. As a result, an already overworked staff had little extra time for participation in activities such as this research process. Consequently, some of the interviews were conducted later than originally planned, in order to ensure that a diversity of perspectives was maintained.

In terms of interview design, it was necessary to tailor each interview to the specific organizational context of the participant with whom I would be speaking. Moreover, the process-oriented analytical framework required that the interview
questions be continuously revised according to the analysis completed from the previous interview(s). This proved to be a useful and exciting challenge that enabled on-going development of the central research questions throughout the entire research process. In addition, given that the interview discussion revolved partly around theoretical concepts, I found that the conversation was often more useful if participants had an example subset of questions prior to the interview.

Finally, specific challenges emerged in regards to the actual data that was obtained. Almost all of the participants who work at the 'top' levels of an organization were intent on imparting information reflective of the status quo. Indeed, participants who represent the management of organizations and who hold more power to effect change in the way gender-development operates, were generally less critical, and more apt to speak in terms of the dominant 'party line'. It was a challenge to get to the heart of the topics at hand with participants in positions of authority who often spoke from an organizational perspective, rather than utilizing the personal pronoun "I". Indeed, one such participant insisted that I stop recording the conversation so that she could disclose information on the challenges she has experienced while undertaking gender mainstreaming efforts in a particular program. Despite my assurances of confidentiality and anonymity within the research process she insisted that this information, which constituted her only critical analysis, remain off the record in deference to her desire/commitment to be a "good civil servant".

Additionally, in terms of documentation, while there was often a wealth of data available on the adoption of GAD as an organizational philosophy, very little
actual data on the implementation of GAD or impact assessments exists. Finally, I found that the interview time of 1.5 hours was sometimes not adequate to ensure a deep conversation with participants. Consequently, the data obtained from some interviews remained superficial, while others who were more comfortable with the interview process were able to provide deeper analysis and specific examples to highlight the topics of discussion in the same period of time.

**Analytical Framework**

The overall goal of this research is to connect the theoretical and practical components of transformative feminist thinking to the lived experiences of GAD workers within the Canadian development context. In so doing, I hope to better understand the social reality of GAD practitioners and policy makers, especially as it sheds light on the problematics of the contested space of feminism within development. The methodological approach has been drawn from a number of qualitative methodologies, most significantly grounded theory and critical feminist research. The process of generating theory from continual data analysis popularized by Glaser and Strauss as the central framework of Grounded Theory inspired me to allow the research questions and focus to develop over time concurrently with the data collection (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). The simultaneous reflection on both the data and the theoretical framework enabled the central research ideas to evolve (Kirby & McKenna, 1989, p. 128). Indeed, during the initial interviews, the questions for discussion were more general in content than during the final interviews, as the central ideas were still in a formative phase. This was not an easy process given that it required a certain
amount of faith in the interview data to generate both specific and general patterns that would be useful to the creation of a solid theoretical position. However, as various perspectives were continually compared through an on-going process of data collection and analysis, certain thematic ideas became evident, leading eventually to a fuller understanding and a more integrated analysis of GAD theory and transformative feminist practice in development. While I did not entirely utilize Grounded Theory’s systematized coding process, I nevertheless constantly related the interview transcriptions to the ideas, concepts and theories that eventually formed the central research focus and supporting arguments.

Feminist research principles have likewise played a significant role throughout the research process. While the research topic is specifically concerned with the implications of feminism within the particular, and highly contested, context of international development institutions, this does not necessarily constitute a feminist methodology per se. Similarly, it is not simply my personal identity as a feminist that makes the research process ‘feminist’ by definition. While there is no specific and unique feminist methodology, there are certain feminist principles that have influenced the ways in which I have undertaken this project. The feminist critique of positivist research approaches drew my attention to the dynamics of the power relationships inherent to all research processes, including this one. Feminist research understands knowledge as a socially constructed phenomenon, and

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4 While other theorists assert the position that, "(F)eminist research ought to be concerned with the implications of feminism itself" (Stanley & Wise, 1983, p. 51), it is my contention that a feminist research methodology must be defined by more than simply the topic of feminism itself.

5 Indeed, according to DuBois: "What I'd like to be able to do now, of course, would be to propose some radical new method for feminist social science. But I do not in fact hold that there is or ought to be a distinctively feminist scientific method. I do believe that feminism empowers and requires us
recognizes the linkages between knowledge and power. It seeks to shift these power relations by breaking down the researcher-researched dichotomy. (Maguire, 1987). Furthermore, feminist theory must be interconnected with feminist practice which, in the words of bell hooks, "emerges from the concrete, from my efforts to make sense of everyday life experiences, from my efforts to intervene critically in my life and the lives of others" (hooks, 1994, p. 70).

In keeping with these principles, I made the research process as transparent as possible. To do this, I provided detailed information concerning the objectives and procedures of the research project to each participant well in advance of the interview. In addition, I sent a copy of the interview transcript to most participants and any requests for changes or deletions were subsequently made. Furthermore, I sought to break down the researcher-researched dichotomy by encouraging a dialogical research process in which I interacted with participants by contributing comments and conversation as much as possible, given the time constraints, while simultaneously ensuring that the participants would reveal their priorities with as little external influence as possible. In so doing, my commentary was also recorded and subsequently utilized as part of the analysis. This attempt to share information and to dialogue was made easier by the fact that most of the participants and I share a similar commitment to women's equality. Often, the relationship between the researcher and participant ends once the research process is terminated. However, I have found that this common identity as feminists within development has enabled the strengthening of some

to think very differently about the purposes and methods of social science than we have been able to do within the confines of hegemony and androcentric science and worldview" (DuBois, 1983, p. 109).
relationships that will carry on once the research process is over. While recognizing this shared identity of women within a specific context, this research process likewise recognizes the multiple identities of women within the patriarchal institution(s) of international development. Indeed, feminist research recognizes the divergent social realities and multiple sites of oppression that women within a single context experience.

This critical analysis of my role as researcher demanded that I remain open to the participants' subjective experience and understanding of GAD. Throughout the research process I sought to maintain a critical perspective and to develop a specific theoretical position, while simultaneously recognizing, listening to, and honoring the participants' multiple ways of reading the world. Indeed, I did not expect to discover such divergent opinions from self-defined feminists within mainstream development on the relationship of GAD to transformative development practice. These varied perspectives have consequently influenced my own thinking around the purpose and possibilities of GAD to be a transformative framework for women.

However, this research project ultimately falls short of feminist research ideals because it is not fully participatory. One of the central features of participatory research is that it situates the research subject and question in the hands of a community, and ultimately seeks the radical transformation of a social reality through the on-going and active participation of an oppressed or marginalized community throughout the entire

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6 For example, upon meeting one of the participants at a public lecture, I was greeted with a warm embrace which confirmed my sense that a deeper relationship than that of simply a researcher-participant had been established. Furthermore, I have been invited to participate in the Annual General Meeting of certain participating NGOs, which is also indicative of a continued relationship.

7 This phrase is drawn from the work of Paulo Freire whose involvement in literacy campaigns during the 1960s in Brazil developed the foundation of his critical pedagogy that is based upon a concomitant reading of the word and a reading of the world. Freire highlights the significance of critical awareness that is essential to the act of being and knowing; integral to both ontology and epistemology (Freire, 1998a, 1998b).
research process (Hall, 1992). While this research does not shed light on an issue from the standpoint of the margins of society, it does address women's experience on the margins of international development institutions. However, this was done with individual women who share similar commitments to women's equality, and not a collective or community of women.

Furthermore, the particular research question, while it emerged through the process of data collection and analysis, nevertheless has remained largely in my own hands as researcher. Ultimately, the research process has been extractive in nature, and has not significantly democratized the power to analyze and solve the research question. Participatory research asks certain pertinent questions about the nature of doing research such as: Whose knowledge is being elevated in the research process? In whose interests is this research? For whose benefit is this research being conducted? Who has access to the research results? These are important questions to ask of any research project and they demonstrate the ways in which this particular project falls short of participatory research ideals. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this research will be useful both to gender practitioners within development organizations and to grassroots women's organizations and networks. Given that development institutions are often difficult to communicate with and usually keep internal documents and perspectives from the public forum, it is hoped that this research will provide some women's organizations with greater access to such information. In so doing, this research project challenges the monopoly of expert-based research so prevalent in the development industry and therefore is an opportunity for "researchers and [others] to join in solidarity to take collective action, both short and long term, for radical social
change" (Maguire, 1987, pp. 28-29). Furthermore, it is hoped that this research will provide an opportunity for gender practitioners to reflect on the potential unification of feminist theory and feminist practice within the context of doing development work.
CHAPTER 2: CONTEXT

Defining the Gender Practitioners

Some GAD theorists understand gender mainstreaming to be a process rooted in feminist ideals, and led by feminist-defined gender practitioners working in development.\(^8\) This view presumes that gender practitioners are consciously and intentionally infusing the structures, processes and institutions of development with feminist perspectives of, and commitments to structural transformation, social justice and women's emancipation from all forms of local and global oppression. Furthermore, it assumes that gender practitioners working in both mainstream and alternative development contexts generally maintain a critical feminist position on the growth-orientation inherent to development's conception of 'progress'.

However, these assumptions overlook the reality of the current GAD field that has evolved into a highly bureaucratic, professionalized and technical industry that is very distant from its feminist roots and values. Within this context gender practitioners working in development today do not necessarily operate from a

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\(^8\) The origins of WID and GAD is a highly debated subject. Some theorists contend that WID/GAD emerged from state institutions as an extension of development's intentional project of domination and exploitation of the Global South by the wealthy North and the interconnected perspective of women as necessary contributors to economic growth (Bhasin, Said, & Menon, 1985; Boulding, 1980; Isla, 1993; Miles, 1996; Mueller, 1989; Shiva, 1989). Another perspective, which is not necessarily incompatible, asserts that WID/GAD is (also) the product of a coalition of feminist theorists at Sussex University's Institute for Development Studies, and feminist movements/activists (see Connelly, Li, MacDonald, & Parpart, 2000; Tinker, 1997; Young & McCullagh, 1981). For example, Signe Amfred links the history of WID/GAD to feminist critiques and movements: "Initially the issues of WID and later of GAD were pushed by women engaged in feminist theory and in the women's movement. In the 1970s in general there was quite a close connection between women's movements, feminist theory and the launching of gender issues in political contexts, nationally and in development organizations" (Amfred, 2001, p. 78).
feminist basis or with feminist-defined values. In fact, gender practitioners may not necessarily even self-identify as feminists.\(^9\)

In general, the current GAD field is not drawing its energy or directing its vision from the questions, concerns, and ideals found in feminist theorizing and global feminist movements. Rather, a gap has emerged between the critical thinking and politicized discourse of feminists and women activists, and the gender equality discourse prevalent in mainstream development institutions like the World Bank, IDRC, CIDA, and mainstream NGOs (Arnfred, 2001, p. 79). The unified discourse of the gender mainstreaming business makes it difficult to discern which gender practitioners are working towards feminist-defined goals, and which remain embedded within a GAD perspective. Indeed, this task becomes even more difficult given that, according to Danish theorist Signe Arnfred, a certain

"development feminism" [has] emerged, increasingly integrated in and with the issues of investigation defined by the big and powerful development institutions—the World Bank, the UN and donor governments—and not by feminist movements. (Arnfred, 2001, p. 78)

Consequently, the use of feminist discourse alone is not a reliable indicator that gender practitioners are infusing their development practice with feminist values and commitments. This research confirms the complexity of gender practitioners' identities and correlating perspectives. A feminist identity does not always mean that a gender practitioner will maintain transformative feminist goals in their development practice, making the GAD field both contradictory and ambiguous.\(^\text{10}\)

\(^9\) There is little consensus around what is meant by gender equality among gender practitioners working in different organizational contexts. See (Jahan, 1995).

\(^\text{10}\) bell hooks effectively addresses this complexity of feminist identity and praxis: "The possession of a term does not bring a process or practice into being; concurrently one may practice theorizing without ever knowing/possessing the term, just as we can live and act in feminist resistance without ever using the word
Sometimes during the interview process, the participant's feminist identity was immediately evident. If not, I asked whether she would identify herself as a feminist using whatever definition of feminism she chose to employ. Seventeen (17) of the nineteen (19) participants self-defined as feminist, but only nine (9) seem to intentionally be using GAD practice to make development more feminist-defined. Those who self-define as feminists include all five (5) participants working in alternative agencies (Joanna, Maria, Beth, Selena, Miriam), and twelve (12) participants working for mainstream agencies (Kim, Laura, Heather, Rena, Anne, Nagwa, Sonya, Lisa, Danielle, Julie, Martha, and Shirley). The two participants who do not self-identify as feminists (Eleanor and Rebecca) maintain that they are uncomfortable with this identity in their organizational context in particular and with the imposition of labels in general. Interestingly, these two individuals work specifically as gender equality specialists as opposed to general project officers, within their respective mainstream institutions.

There are two divergent ways of engaging in gender work in development, either through a bureaucratic or transformative lens. The nineteen gender practitioners interviewed in this research study cross this divide currently existing within the GAD field. In order to analyze the strategies that feminists are employing to create and sustain spaces for transformative feminist practice in development, I have categorized the participants according to their perspectives on the ideals, concerns and goals of GAD and the feminist project of social transformation.

"Feminism". Often individuals who employ certain terms freely—terms like "theory" or "feminism"—are not necessarily practitioners whose habits of being and living most embody the action, the practice of theorizing or engaging in feminist struggle." (hooks, 1994, pp. 61-2).
Five (5) participants in this study generally perceive no contradictions or distinctions between GAD and their understanding of feminism—Nagwa, Rebecca, Martha, Shirley, and Laura (see Appendix E). They are all situated within mainstream development organizations that are currently pursuing institutional gender mainstreaming processes (IDRC, World Vision Canada and CIDA). It is interesting that four out of these five practitioners are either hesitant or ambivalent about their personal identity as feminists within their particular organizational contexts (namely Rebecca, Martha, Shirley, and Laura). These same four participants seem uncritical about the whole project of international development, in spite of their commitment to development as a method of promoting social justice. More importantly, all of these individuals remain uncritical of the gender mainstreaming process and envision it as synonymous with global feminism. For the purposes of this study these practitioners have been categorized as Uncritical Gender Mainstreaming Advocates given that they do not actively perceive GAD as an approach that could expand the possibilities for transforming development through feminist values and ideals (see Appendix E).

In contrast, all of the fourteen (14) other practitioners in this study made specific distinctions between the ideals, goals and projects of GAD and those of feminism(s).11 These individuals engage with the processes and structures of international development while recognizing the contradictions between GAD and their feminist convictions. However, five (5) of these fourteen (14) participants who perceive the relationship between GAD and feminism as one of tension,
nevertheless remain committed to the fundamentals of gender mainstreaming as
the most effective way to promote women's interests in development, namely
Eleanor, Heather, Rena, Julie, and Kim. While recognizing differences, even
contradictions between feminism and GAD, these five participants envision GAD as
the "means to the goal of global feminism's project for social change" (Rena). All
five of these participants remain steeped in the discourse of gender equality and
gender mainstreaming and have therefore been identified as Critical Gender
Mainstreaming Advocates given that they remain committed to gender
mainstreaming as the most effective means to the end goal of transformative
feminist change within the context of bureaucratic development institutions (see
Appendix E). Their feminist convictions have not led them to push the boundaries
of GAD despite their recognition of the potential contradictions.

Not surprisingly, all five of these participants work within bi-lateral or international
non-governmental development institutions (CIDA, Care Canada and Oxfam Canada).
For example, Julie recognizes the inherent contradictions between the GAD project that
is "focused on economics as fundamental to development" and her feminist-oriented
understanding of the multi-layered "web of relations" that oppresses and limits the
potential of women:

11 This analysis was made based on the interview data, but also on what the participants did not say, or
what issues were or were not highlighted, and my analysis of the ways these issues were discussed during
the interviews.
12 Eleanor remains an anomaly within this category given that she is uncomfortable with the whole project
of global feminism as an ethno-centric and hegemonic agenda imposed by the North. She recognizes the
distinction between global feminism and GAD, yet she seems to consider gender mainstreaming in
development to be the more effective way to advance women's equality.
13 When I refer to these critical and uncritical groups together I will call them Gender Mainstreaming
Advocates.
The DAWN network’s project\textsuperscript{14} is definitely different from GAD’s, since GAD was developed to speak to the development industry and change it, while DAWN fundamentally challenges the current development paradigm. (Julie)

In particular, Kim argues that this antagonistic relationship of tension between feminism and GAD is necessary in order for GAD to come closer to feminist ideals. Kim asserts that the feminist discourse is imperative because it “really pushes the groundwork on gender” (Kim). In other words, she sees feminism as the imperative undercurrent from both within and outside of development that pushes GAD to become more transformative and more critical.\textsuperscript{15} She sees GAD and global feminism as necessarily interconnected and fervently maintains that feminism and GAD must remain two distinct entities if this relationship of co-operative conflict is to remain intact. Thus, she argues that the feminist approach is ineffective within the context of international development because it does not sufficiently engage men: “there's so much resistance by men towards the feminist approach to gender that I don't find it effective. I find that we're losing men who would otherwise be sensitive” (Kim). Kim asserts that feminist-identified development practitioners who employ feminist discourse can potentially “let our opinions dominate so that we discourage men from engaging in the dialogue” (Kim).

In Kim’s perspective, GAD is “a little bit softer than the feminist agenda”, and is therefore more palatable and more inclusive of both men and women. Thus,

\textsuperscript{14}Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) is a network founded in the mid-1980s by activists, researchers and policymakers in the Global South. It is significant that Julie chose to contrast GAD with DAWN given that DAWN is critical of the dominant development project of economic growth and presents alternative perspectives of economic, justice and peace that are based on the perspectives and experiences of women in the Global South. See (Sen & Grown, 1987).

\textsuperscript{15}The relationship between outside activist movements and inside feminist practitioners will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four (4).
according to Kim, feminism must remain outside of development constructs so that it can effectively place pressure on the mainstream for transformative change:

I don’t think that [feminism’s] the arena for gender and development. That is feminism, and it should just be feminism.... [feminists] should just continue as feminist[s] and critique on the outside, and not necessarily integrate with gender and development....But I think [feminism] still has a very strong role to play as a catalyst and a pressure and an advocate. (Kim)

Thus, Kim fits within my definition of a Critical Gender Mainstreaming Advocate as someone who consciously and intentionally promotes GAD as the most effective means within the context of development work towards the ultimate goal of gender equality and transformative feminist change.

The final nine (9) participants in this study also make a specific distinction between GAD and Global Feminism; however, they are more critical of gender mainstreaming processes and seek to push the boundaries of GAD in order to infuse their work in development with feminist values, ideals, goals and commitments. These nine (9) individuals are: Maria, Joanna, Beth, Selena, Miriam, Anne, Sonya, Lisa, and Danielle (see Appendix E). I have called these practitioners Transformative Feminist Advocates to signify their intentional choice of going beyond the current GAD framework in order to negotiate and sustain spaces for transformative feminist practice in development. This distinction between Gender Mainstreaming Advocates and Transformative Feminist Advocates is an important one that will be useful in the analysis of individual and organizational strategies discussed in chapters three (3) and four (4).

Who are these nine individuals and what specifically sets them apart as Transformative Feminist Advocates? Unlike the Gender Mainstreaming Advocates,
members of this grouping work in both mainstream development organizations (four in CIDA and IDRC) and alternative feminist-defined organizations (five in ACPD, AWID, MATCH, and Inter Pares).

It is very difficult to categorize individuals in the way I have done for the purposes of this research and it must be done with care. However, there is confirmation from others that the indicators I have used to identify Transformative Feminist Advocates are valid. Joanna Kerr, for instance, maintains that when she is attempting to make the same kind of assessment she looks for specific indicators such as a politically-minded analysis and the use of words like "economic justice...and rights-language [and that they] are using feminist praxis as well as discourse" (Joanna).

All nine of these individuals assertively self-identify as feminists and maintain that this identity and perspective is a crucial part of both their personal lives and professional work in development. Their motivation for being involved in gender-oriented work in development is also a key indicating factor of a transformative feminist perspective. Only the Transformative Feminist Advocates linked their personal experience as women with their political identity as feminists and their commitment to feminist-defined development work. In particular, Lisa, Maria, Anne and Beth connect their felt experience of oppression and subordination as women to their work within the field of international development.¹⁶ Maria contends that a lot of women that get involved in this work and...take on a feminist approach do it because at one point in our lives we've been touched by something that has happened to us. (Maria)

¹⁶ No data is available on this from either Selena or Miriam as this question was not asked within the context of their interview process.
In contrast, Gender Mainstreaming Advocates tended to specify more conventional development-oriented motivations such as "a personal commitment...to the ideals of cooperation [and] of sustainability..." (Eleanor). Transformative Feminist Advocates identify as women with other women in development contexts who have experienced similar issues of racism, sexual/physical abuse, and sexual harassment in the workplace. In so doing, they exemplify the feminist understanding of personal/political connections:

I know from a very real, felt position what it is like to experience gender subordination in some very real painful ways...that is probably what motivates a lot of us in all of this. So we transform that anger and that painful experience into constructive activity. (Lisa)

Furthermore, Transformative Feminist Advocates maintain a critical perspective on mainstream development's project of economic growth and market efficiency. They are wary of the claims that GAD is a transformational approach to development, and they recognize that the practice of GAD often remains firmly embedded in the dominant growth-oriented development paradigm. In general, Transformative Feminist Advocates are critical of development's linear conception of progress, modernization, industrial expansion, capital production and accumulation, and they challenge the assumption that market forces will provide for the satisfaction of human needs. Indeed, Anne sees that "the overall picture is one of development as economic growth" (Anne) and that GAD's role is often relegated to providing "some cushions to soften the impact" (Anne) of the dominant profit-

17 Although there are a number of "controveris interpretations" (Ochsner, 1996, p. 223) of GAD's position on economic growth, many theorists maintain that GAD is an approach that calls for the structural transformation of the global economy. For example, Plewes and Stuart defend GAD as an approach that "calls for an alternative paradigm which seeks to transform radically rather than merely reform current social, political, economic, and gender relationships" (Plewes & Stuart, 1991, p. 127).
based development paradigm. Nevertheless, Transformative Feminist Advocates are acutely aware of their own personal contradictions within development work as individuals who are connected to and therefore complicit in, the hegemonic and potentially oppressive processes and structures of international development.

In turn, Transformative Feminist Advocates consistently maintain a vision of a "just society" (Sonya) as the ultimate goal of development. According to Maria, working in development is "about social justice" and contributing to a world based on principles of equality that recognizes all "different types of oppression and inequities" (Maria). Furthermore, Transformative Feminist Advocates conceptualize development as a specifically political process, and seek to inject their feminist principles and transformational political practice within their work as gender practitioners. Transformative Feminist Advocates recognize that there is a significant disjuncture between GAD theory and practice. They are critical of the GAD literature that argues, "gender is a political issue, because it is about power" (MacDonald, 1994, p. 17). In turn, Transformative Feminist Advocates maintain that a power analysis is rarely evident in GAD practice given that GAD has become a-political and technical work (Maria, Joanna, Danielle, Sonya, Beth). Thus, Transformative Feminist Advocates differentiate between the parameters of development as "an industry" and feminism as "a social movement" (Joanna), and seek to bridge the divide between them. In other words, they maintain a distinctly political vision of development processes that is connected to social movements and women's organizing.
In particular, Transformative Feminist Advocates are critical of GAD's increased focus on the inclusion of men in its practice. They often find themselves in a dilemma “between WID and GAD” (Sonya) which causes them to constantly re-evaluate their practice: “Do we explicitly still work with women [or should] men be brought on board as well?” (Sonya). They are concerned that gender is a social construct relevant to theoreticians and policy-makers but not as applicable to the very women it seeks to benefit (Currie, 1999). They see that GAD's emphasis on power relations between men and women often overshadows their feminist concerns for “transforming patriarchal structures, and also economic systems, means of production, and the distribution of wealth” (Beth). They recognize that although the GAD approach can be compatible with feminist methodologies, it does not usually build on women's historic subordination or incite the personal and collective growth of women (Beth). In essence, Transformative Feminist Advocates are concerned that the current emphasis on gender dilutes much-needed attention to women-specific issues in development:

The term ‘gender’...doesn't put women first; you don't see or hear women first when you hear ‘gender’. Gender is men and women, and it's looking at men's and women's roles in society. Feminism starts with women; it starts with women's oppression and it involves women sharing their experiences and knowledge. (Beth)

Similarly, María contends that,

There’s just so much work that we need to do specifically with women that I feel sometimes that this approach to focus on men through gender takes away too much from us really working with women and on women's issues (Maria).

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18 GAD theory focuses on the social construction of gender and the interdependent and unequal relations between women and men in household, market, state and social environments. In other words, GAD is concerned not with women per se, but with "the position and condition of women in relation to men" (Kirson, 1990, p. 5).
Thus, Transformative Feminist Advocates are cautious of the ways that GAD can be used as a means to “put men and women on equal footing” (Beth) which is not possible without the feminist transformation of patriarchal structures that currently govern the world. They recognize that the ways GAD is used in development does not generally challenge patriarchy and male privilege, and consequently de-politicizes feminism. Indeed, Transformative Feminist Advocates are wary of the “global formalized language” (Arnfred, 2001, p. 74) of gender mainstreaming that potentially obscures existing inequalities between men and women.

It is clearly evident that the Transformative Feminist Advocates in this study are committed to integrating feminist values into, and ultimately transforming, development theory and practice. Thus, Maria contends that she cannot “imagine doing development work without having a feminist agenda” (Maria). Additionally, all those identified as Transformative Feminist Advocates bring a macro analysis of global economic structures (including globalization and neo-liberal trade policies) to their understanding of women’s oppression at the local/project level (where most gender analysis is conventionally situated). Although Transformative Feminist Advocates view GAD and feminism as two distinct entities that interact on conflicting, contradictory and/or antagonistic terms, they nevertheless maintain that GAD could be transformed into a paradigm that is complementary to their feminist ideals. Therefore, Transformative Feminist Advocates conceptualize GAD and feminism as “two railroad tracks...that are not meeting enough” (Maria).
Institutional Context

It is important to understand the context within which both Gender Mainstreaming Advocates and Transformative Feminist Advocates operate. The following section will outline and discuss the specific context of mainstream development organizations as it pertains to the challenges and constraints of forwarding both a gender mainstreaming and transformative feminist agenda in development.

Despite their different agendas, Transformative Feminist Advocates and Gender Mainstreaming Advocates face similar constraints and challenges in working to advance women's interests within the context of bureaucratic mainstream development organizations. Both may face antagonism, disrespect, derision, and sometimes even outright resistance by colleagues or managers who consider the integration of gender concerns to be peripheral or possibly even irrelevant to development policies and programming. Such attitudes and perspectives may be submerged under a guise of politically correct development-speak, concealing the actual extent of support for gender concerns.

Mainstream development organizations can be hierarchical and highly gendered social spaces favouring male control. Such organizational structures are inimical to feminist values of participatory or democratic ways of working and being. These are complex hierarchies given that some women (a few with transformative feminist perspectives) do occupy management positions, while remaining largely outside informal power hierarchies within organizations. In other words, men almost always

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19 The context of alternative feminist-defined organizational contexts will be discussed in Chapter Four (4).
hold the majority of formal and informal power in terms of how decisions are made and which development agendas are taken up—usually not GAD, and almost never transformative feminist agendas. It is important to point out that gender practitioners working in mainstream organizations also face challenges with female bureaucrats who can be just as resistant as men to the implementation of a gender equality agenda.

All gender practitioners (both Gender Mainstreaming Advocates and Transformative Feminist Advocates) deal with very difficult contexts within mainstream organizations that are often highly gendered, hierarchical and bureaucratic social spaces resistant to both gender equality and feminist goals. Indeed, both groups of gender practitioners working within this context of resistance confront a bureaucratic machinery that provides little institutional support for the integration of women's interests within mainstream projects and programs. All Gender Mainstreaming and Transformative Feminist Advocates attempt to accomplish their work in spite of formidable resource constraints of staff, money and time. Sometimes they work without organizational policy support for gender equality goals. Even when a gender policy does exist, there is often not a corresponding implementation strategy, rendering the policy ineffective in practice. This institutional social space provides gender practitioners with little respect or legitimacy, leaving them politically marginalized and often isolated. For feminist-defined gender practitioners, this institutional space is even more challenging given that mainstream organizations continue to perpetuate negative assumptions about

20 There is even less institutional support and resources for women-specific projects or programs than for gender mainstreaming projects and programs.
feminism and are usually highly resistant to feminism in general and to feminist discourse in particular.

Recent academic literature on organizational development and institutional change has drawn attention to the highly gendered structures of mainstream development organizations (Goetz, 1997c; Kabeer, 1994; MacDonald, 1994; Porter & Judd, 1999; Rao, Stuart, & Kelleher, 1999; Staudt, 1990). Shahra Razavi reports on the inflexibility, indifference, even hostility and resistance of bureaucratic responses to gender practitioners and their goals of gender equality:

Feminist accounts of institutional politics document the dogged resistance that internal advocates encountered as they struggled to bring gender into organizations with mandates that hardly mesh with gender equity or with bureaucratic procedures that border on inflexibility, and how they had to rely on the co-operation of bureaucrats (often male) who seemed to be at best indifferent, but more often hostile to what they perceived to be irrelevant political incursions into their professional boundaries and personal lives. (Razavi, 1998, p. 20)

Similarly, Naila Kabeer argues that bureaucratic rules and practices “actively reconstitute gender hierarchy” (Kabeer, 1994, p. 87). In particular, Anne Marie Goetz’s work focuses on gendered institutional politics within the context of mainstream development organizations (Goetz, 1997c). Like Razavi, Goetz highlights the culture of resistance that pervades mainstream organizations and obstructs the processes of gender mainstreaming. Goetz conflates gender mainstreaming with feminist actions for change, yet her institutional analysis is useful in revealing the conditions faced by both Gender Mainstreaming Advocates and Transformative Feminist Advocates.

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21 Goetz highlights the ways in which various formal strategies by gender practitioners have been met with resistance. She argues that: “Much GAD research and activism has involved mobilizing constituency support to press for change from the outside, or on internal strategies such as encouraging the hiring of more women development professionals, increasingly sophisticated policy development, and the collection and provision of data on women’s situation to help promote change in the knowledge environment.”
Indeed, Goetz sheds light on the persistent political marginalization of women's views within institutional development planning processes. She effectively argues that the ways in which decisions are made within development organizations, and the outcomes of those decisions often reflect the inherently gendered nature of development institutions (Goetz, 1997a, p. 10). Institutional practices of policy-making, program planning and evaluation not only reflect the gendered subtext of organizational power structures, but also contribute to the further marginalization and oppression of women:

"[I]nstitutions do not just passively mirror gender difference in social organization; they also produce gender differences through their structures and in their everyday practices." (Goetz, 1997a, p. 12)

Goetz' work is analytically useful because it isolates aspects of gendered development organizations. For example, a history of institutional gender bias; the existence of gender-biased staff; the prevalence of gendered authority structures and accountability systems; and the construction of gendered space and time all contribute to the perpetuation of a gendered and bureaucratic organizational culture which valorizes and even rewards male-oriented ways of working (Goetz, 1997a, pp. 16-23). Indeed, aggression, hierarchical power structures and results-based project planning have become the status quo in mainstreaming development organizations, making feminist ambitions for structural transformation especially difficult to integrate.
The Gendered Context of Canadian Mainstream Development Organizations

This picture of mainstream development organizations as gendered, bureaucratic and hierarchical social spaces which usually favour male control is confirmed in my interviews with all of the gender of practitioners working within Canadian mainstream organizations and my study of the documents of these organizations. Both Gender Mainstreaming Advocates and Transformative Feminist Advocates face tight constraints and difficult challenges in contexts which almost always politically marginalize and de-legitimize GAD work. However, development organizations are not entirely male-dominated or completely patriarchal. This research demonstrates that Canadian mainstream development organizations are complex and often contradictory entities that allow for change—such as the development of CIDA's very progressive policy on gender equality—yet simultaneously prevent that change from being fully realized. Development organizations are not monolithic or homogenous. Nevertheless, certain patterns and recurring perspectives challenge and constrain gender practitioners within these organizations.

The lack of institutional support for gender equality goals in development is tellingly evidenced in the recent management decision at CIDA to merge the Gender Equality Policy Division with a new division on Child Protection. This decision which came from the Vice President’s office after CIDA’s management had launched its new Social Development Priorities for 2000-2005 (CIDA, 2000), demonstrates the ways in which gender equality is often misunderstood and de-legitimized within mainstream organizations. Furthermore, it suggests that gender equality goals in development are
not highly valued. According to Eleanor,

It was a very quantitatively based move...there is no natural home for them together. [Management] attached [the Child Protection Division] to what they thought was the smallest division [Gender Equality]. In my opinion, it was also attached to a division that seemed to be non-consequential... And what this has cost has provided an image I believe, both within CIDA and outside of CIDA, that neither of these two issues are important enough to be looked at separately.... (Eleanor)

This decision to merge the Gender Equality division with the new secretariat for Child Protection reveals that GAD work is still being conceptualized from a Women in Development (WID) oriented perspective that sees women’s roles as imperative to the effective and efficient functioning of development processes. Indeed, the patriarchal conception of women’s role in development is evident in CIDA’s understanding of the Gender Equality Division as the ‘natural’ space to house the new secretariat for Child Protection.

Without exception, those interviewed for this research feel that GAD is considered to be a trivial part of development work within mainstream organizations. For example, Laura asserts that in spite of working in a gender-driven programme at CIDA, she “can’t talk about [gender equality] because people don’t want hear about it”. Indeed, gender equality is often considered to be insignificant in comparison with the “real” issues of development—such as technology transfers or private-sector development—which support economic growth. CIDA gender practitioners assert that programs do not usually take up gender equality as a primary objective because it is rarely seen as a “big enough area for us to work” (Anne). Gender equality programs which support more intangible objectives, such as women’s empowerment, have been awarded much less money than projects on infrastructure involving big equipment (and
big money), relegating gender equality to an insignificant part of doing development. Indeed, there currently exists “a real drive for focus” (Anne) within mainstream organizations, which means that there is a lot of resistance towards “what people consider to be the ‘soft issues’” (Eleanor), like gender equality. Programs at CIDA are striving “to be clearer, to be more efficient, to be less up in the air” (Anne) and are therefore not interested in making more space for gender concerns.

Furthermore, the political marginalization of GAD programs and practitioners is evident within the employee structures of some mainstream development organizations. Although a few high-level gender positions exist within some organizations (such as the CIDA directorate position of the Gender Equality Policy Division), gender mainstreaming is more often than not the responsibility of low-level interns or project officers. Other than the director of the Gender and Sustainable Development (GSD) unit at IDRC, the responsibility for gender mainstreaming in most program initiatives is relegated to student interns who, according to one of these interns, “are at the bottom of the totem pole in terms of research and intellectual activity” (Nagwa). This decision to place gender mainstreaming processes in the hands of non-influential and non-threatening student interns reflects the ways in which GAD lacks legitimacy and is considered to be an insignificant part of mainstream organizations. According to Ines Smyth, the gains that have been made in terms of integrating gender concerns into donor-agencies have been limited considering that “there are still few women in the upper echelons of decision-making in development organizations” (Smyth, 1999, p. 4).

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23 My point is not only that small budget items have less weight and derive less respect within development agencies, but that agencies only give small funds to work that is perceived to be insignificant. In other
While the responsibility for gender mainstreaming is relegated to low-level bureaucrats, the gender equality agenda is often legitimized through male voices within development organizations. This has been Laura's experience at CIDA who has observed that, "when a man talks about gender, people listen".

In addition, the actual number of gender specialist positions within mainstream organizations is inadequate to satisfy most institutional needs. Only one program officer at World Vision Canada (a large international NGO with a staff complement of over 300) is officially responsible for gender mainstreaming processes. Similarly, within the Africa Branch at CIDA there are over 350 projects and only one gender equality specialist. Gender work not only suffers from a lack of human resources but also from financial constraints. Fifteen (15) participants in this research commented on the limited money and the inadequacy of institutional support for GAD projects and programming. Resource constraints for gender equality work in development have become more serious in the past five years as increased privatization of the development industry has resulted in decreased public funding, with gender positions and programming being most susceptible to cut-backs.

Additionally, power structures are gendered within Canadian mainstream development organizations. Although some gender practitioners hold positions of power, those interviewed for this study testified that an "old boys network" (Heather)

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words, it is the agency and not the nature of the work that determines the small budget.

24 This situation is reflective of widespread inequitable hiring practices of women within mainstream organizations. According to an IDRC intern, there are 70 program officers within a particular program initiative and "only a handful of them are females" (Nagwa). Similarly, another project officer at IDRC contends that while there are three women at the senior level of IDRC, one level down there are no women, and at the next level down, only three positions of thirteen are held by women (Lisa).
is alive and well at CIDA (which maintains hegemonic control of most decision-making arenas). According to Heather, this network holds informal power that is significant within the Agency because it frequently determines the direction of programming issues. Heather explained that women do not usually participate in this informal power structure because it is often located outside of the Agency in male-defined space such as “at the golf course or fishing” (Heather). These institutional politics prevent gender practitioners who are almost all women from participating in a significant way within informal organizational power structures and thus GAD remains an insignificant, and often overlooked part of mainstream organizations.

These organizational power relations often work in insidious ways. The integration of a gender analysis or gender disaggregated data within project planning and evaluation procedures gives the impression that gains have been made in favour of gender equality. However, these gains are limited given that they have not significantly reduced the gendered power structures that exist within development processes. Lisa makes the point that although all projects valued over $100 000 must submit a gender evaluation at IDRC, the projects themselves are answering male-defined questions and addressing a male-defined agenda:

In the end analysis...the male perspective is still dominant and it still shapes our institutions, it still shapes our analysis in many respects. And to think that when we’re doing gender disaggregated data, we’re doing gender work and we’re now finally getting to gender analysis—it really misses the boat doesn’t it? I mean, yes, we should have gender disaggregated data, but that doesn’t mean that we’re going to have gender analysis. It just means that we’re getting gender disaggregated data to answer male perspective questions, or male perspective problems...A perspective from a positioned female standpoint still has not got equal place on the agenda. (Lisa)
Furthermore, organizational structures distort the gender equality agenda in favour of a male bias. For example, Kim asserts that gender equality is often simplified into a "numbers game" wherein equitable hiring practices are equated with a successful gender mainstreaming process: "I think people in our organization think we're already doing it, we've hired all the women, we've got 50 percent so there are no gender issues" (Kim). This presumption fails to take into account the highly gendered structures that constrain women at the decision-making table, and evades a deeper analysis of organizational working culture.

As evidenced in the theoretical literature, these institutional politics and power structures often contribute to an organizational culture in which gender issues are intentionally ignored, dismissed or rejected. Some participants in this research study maintain that gender mainstreaming efforts have often been greeted with "a fair amount of silence" (Rebecca), which they interpret as a form of resistance. They report that the inclusion of a gender analysis is often seen as 'extra' work that makes people's heavy workloads even heavier, resulting in apathy or outright resistance (Rena, Danielle, Eleanor). Gender practitioners also experience frequent blatant resistance to integrating gender analysis within technical projects. Gender practitioners are sometimes accused of "want[ing] to make every project a gender project" (Eleanor) by those who work within technical sectors such as trade or infrastructure development. This resistance is based on the erroneous assumption that a gender analysis is not relevant or applicable because women are not directly involved (Eleanor).
Institutional Context Specific to Transformative Feminist Advocates

This gendered context of resistance is especially difficult for Transformative Feminist Advocates working within mainstream development organizations. Various theorists have discussed and analyzed the relationship between institutional contexts and feminist discourse/practice (Amfred, 2001; Bhasin, 1992; Goetz, 1997c; Kabeer, 1994; Smyth, 1999). For example, Collette Oseen argues that the entire development machinery maintains: “rigidly hierarchical systems that reward obedience to men rather than feminist commitment to change, in a context that appear[s] to be covertly hostile to feminist goals…” (Oseen, 1999, p. 101). This idea of submerged internal resistance to feminist goals is echoed in the work of Ines Smyth who asserts that a fear of feminism manifests itself within Northern development organizations through “avoidance, silences and muted resistance” (Smyth, 1999, pp. 22-23). Smyth argues that mainstream donor agencies perpetuate certain popularized and negative assumptions about feminism and therefore are reluctant to engage with feminist discourse or practice (Smyth, 1999, p. 24). These assumptions significantly restrict the spaces within development organizations for Transformative Feminist Advocates to work given that they ignore and pervert “the very essence of feminism [and] its roots in women’s experiences within specific contexts” (Smyth, 1999, p. 24).

The participants that I interviewed affirm that popularized notions of feminism currently abound within mainstream Canadian development agencies. According to Nagwa at the IDRC,

feminism is seen as a dirty word. I think there is still the stereotype of [feminists as] anti-men. And stereotypes of witches and…an association that
if you are a feminist you must be a lesbian. All of these stereotypes I think play into the discourse or the ideas of people who are involved in development, who haven't really read feminist theory. (Nagwa)

Other gender practitioners observe that feminists are labeled as "extremists" (Shirley) and "radicals" (Laura) by conservative individuals within organizations. Indeed, Lisa observes that feminists “have received a bad name [and] a bad image or even a laughable image.” The perpetuation of anti-feminist sentiment is justified on the basis that feminism is a Western imposition that is inconsistent with the values of people in the Global South. However, Smyth points to the inherent contradiction in this argument given that development institutions decry feminism as a form of Western imperialism yet they are simultaneously “unconcerned about exporting Northern views and practices on how best to grow crops, dispense credit, manage an organization or communicate with people” (Smyth, 1999, p. 26).

This anti-feminist sentiment insidiously pervades the organizational culture of mainstream institutions so that employees who are identified as transformative feminists are often isolated, mocked, and/or threatened. In her previous work with a mainstream agency, Maria asserts that after she defined herself as a feminist she was “very isolated immediately [because] I didn’t fit the more conservative elements of the institute” (Maria). In addition, the management of that organization sought to dictate Maria’s feminist discourse by monitoring her writing: “The content of my work was really checked. There was a lot of stuff that was taken out of the book that I wrote [because] it was considered too political” (Maria). Indeed, other participants believe that their job security will be threatened if they are perceived as being too “political” or too “feminist”.

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25 The use of this quotation does not imply that some feminists are not witches or lesbians; rather, it is trying to demonstrate the ways in which popular stereotypes of feminists are present in development.
Transformative Feminist Advocates recognize that the decision to position oneself as a feminist within a mainstream context that is inimical to feminist objectives may require them to “pay a professional price for doing so” (Sonya).

It is important to point out that the GAD field often operates in conjunction with this pervasive context of resistance to transformative feminist ways of working/being. Indeed, GAD has become a highly technical and quantitative field that fits comfortably within an apolitical context. Transformative Feminist Advocates recognize that the situation of GAD within apolitical institutions has contributed to a hollow and technocratic process that diminishes opportunities for politicized practice in development:

One of the things that development tries to do is to make things apolitical. But feminism is politics....when we try and separate feminism from gender, when we try and make it that neat little box, we do that apolitical thing. (Danielle)

GAD practice has been simplified into mechanical frameworks that are isolated from feminist visions and principles. Indeed, the very existence of the WID/GAD dichotomy reduces the complexity of gender analysis “into a little acronym” (Danielle). Joanne has observed that GAD work has become much more technical since the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women and has “grown to include so many more consultants and so many more mainstream organizations that are doing so-called gender work.” GAD is now more about “a couple of little boxes that

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26 The theoretical literature specifically dichotomizes between WID and GAD (Connelly et al., 2000; Kirson, 1990), reinforcing the idea that WID and GAD represent “very different theoretical positions with regard to the problems experienced by low-income women in the Third World” (Moser, 1993, p. 3). However, while WID and GAD are distinguished as two separate and distinct approaches to women within the development paradigm, they converge and are intertwined in a number of specific ways. The division of development theory into the WID and GAD camps suggests that the so-called ‘problems’ associated with WID have been rectified through GAD. While this dichotomization portrays two distinct theoretical positions, WID and GAD are not so easily differentiated in policies or practice.
[gender practitioners] have to tick off” (Joanna) and less about feminist ideals and commitments.

In addition, the demands of Results Based Management (RBM) reporting functions have further mechanized the GAD field. CIDA funding requires that all projects and programs measure long-term impact through a specific logistical framework that most gender practitioners find has restricted innovation because of the administrative burdens of RBM:

The types of conditions, and the ways in which proposals and financial reports have to be submitted [mean that] you spend all your time fundraising and reporting on money and no time doing the work. (Joanna)

Miriam argues that RBM emphasizes quantitative rather than qualitative aspects of a project so that an analysis of the structural causes of women’s oppression do not easily translate into the pre-determined RBM framework.

Furthermore, the influx of bureaucratic gender practitioners since 1995 means that GAD practice has evolved into a highly professionalized field that is not necessarily associated with political processes:

As gender is becoming much more professionalized...[we] may be losing some of the more fire in the belly, political, driven people. So GAD becomes much more depoliticized; it’s not seen as a political process, it’s seen much more as a mechanical one. (Maria)

The professionalization of the GAD field has evolved simultaneously to the increase of academic programs on international development so that a new generation of GAD practitioners is being formed who are less committed to social justice and more consumed with professional advancement and academic recognition. The growing infiltration of the private sector into mainstream development further depoliticizes the GAD field given that private firms do not
usually operate on feminist principles of social justice and participation (Joanna; Maria). Thus, this research demonstrates that Transformative Feminist Advocates are working within a highly professionalized, technocratic and bureaucratic context that is itself contentious with feminist objectives of structural transformation and political analysis.

Towards Strategies for Change

In response to this context of constraints and tensions, theorists and practitioners alike are calling for mainstream agencies to “put their own houses in order with regard to gender” (MacDonald, 1994, p. 18). Recent literature in the GAD field points to the need for strategic planning to transform the gendered structures of development institutions (Goetz, 1997c; Rao et al., 1999). This is evident in Naila Kabeer’s influential book entitled Reversed Realities: Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought, where she points to the inherent hypocrisy of organizations that boast gender equality policies and undertake overseas programming around women’s interests yet internally perpetuate women’s subordination:

[It is] difficult to see how male-dominated, top-down agencies can hope to address women’s strategic gender interests without some transformation also occurring in their own rules, practices and perceptions. (Kabeer, 1994, p. 298)

Similarly, Collette Oseen highlights the responsibility of feminists working from within mainstream organizations who must recognize how crucial internal institutional

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27 Maria points out that CIDA’s Open Bidding System (OBS) is now a common way for consulting firms to attain gender equality contracts so that the private sector has become much more involved in GAD operations (Maria). See (Rooy, 1999).
transformation is to the credibility and consistency of their work as feminists in
development:

If we are going to be able to “do development” in ways that suit us as
feminists, then we must first confront and overcome the processes of
marginalization in our own organizations, in order to confront and overcome
these same processes outside. (Oseen, 1999, p. 110)

In order to make these connections between external actions and internal
perspectives, gender practitioners must first negotiate more space and credibility for
a women’s agenda within existing mainstream development organizations. Chapter
Three (3) will consider the ways in which both Gender Mainstreaming Advocates
and Transformative Feminist Advocates are attempting to respond to this context to
forward an agenda for change within mainstream development despite institutional,
ideological and economic constraints. Chapter Three will analyze the strategies
that are specific to Transformative Feminist Advocates attempts to integrate feminist
values and feminist-defined goals within their practice in mainstream institutions.
CHAPTER 3: STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

Depending on their perspective and intentions, gender practitioners can play a critical role in promoting a transformative feminist agenda in development.

According to Anne Marie Goetz, the “everyday practices” even of low-level bureaucrats are imperative to challenging the dominant power relations within mainstream development institutions (Goetz, 1997b, p. 176). These everyday practices involve specific choices for individual practitioners working within mainstream development organizations. For example, Ines Smyth asserts that gender practitioners in mainstream contexts must make important choices about how they engage within development organizations:

They can take an overt feminist stance...by using feminist language and by favouring links with feminist organizations. By doing so they may experience open derision and antagonism from colleagues and senior managers....They may, on the other hand, become closet feminists, conforming to the approaches dominant within their organizations while continuing, as far as possible, to seek spaces to prioritize women’s rights. (Smyth, 1999, p. 19)

Both these strategies, among others, are evident within the context of mainstream Canadian development organizations. Indeed, throughout the research process I witnessed formal attempts to promote an agenda for gender equality, in addition to informal, and sometimes covert, strategies that demonstrated a “skillful manipulation of bureaucracies” (Smyth, 1999, p. 19) in favour of feminist-defined goals. The purpose of this chapter is to outline and analyze the strategies, both formal and informal, that gender practitioners are utilizing in Canadian mainstream development agencies in order to create and sustain spaces for both gender
mainstreaming processes and transformative feminist practice in development. In so doing, it will become evident that the presence of politically-minded Transformative Feminist Advocates is imperative to the broadening of spaces for feminist values and goals within mainstream development agencies. The potential costs and consequences of these strategies will also be discussed, and will demonstrate that their outcomes, though important, are nevertheless limited given the context of mainstream development.

This chapter draws on the professional experience of gender practitioners, academic theory and organizational documents to elaborate the strategies that gender practitioners (both Gender Mainstreaming Advocates and Transformative Feminist Advocates) employ in order to effect change within the context of hierarchical and bureaucratic development institutions. Light will be thrown on a number of important questions in the context of this discussion: What dynamics are involved in the process of pursuing transformative feminist practice from within bureaucratic agencies? What political dilemmas, if any, do Transformative Feminist Advocates face in order to promote institutional change within development? What constitutes transformative feminist space within the current practice of gender mainstreaming? In essence, these questions will address the potential of GAD, as it currently exists within mainstream development organizations, to be part of, and contribute to, a feminist project of social transformation.

Note that this chapter deals specifically with the actions and perspectives of Advocates in mainstream development organizations. The strategies of Transformative Feminist Advocates in alternative feminist-defined organizations will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four (see Appendix B).
Formal Tactics: Change from Within

In general, gender practitioners most commonly promote change through what have become conventional practices of gender mainstreaming, such as developing gender guidelines, gender analytical frameworks, gender equality methodological tool kits, gender equality strategy papers, and institutional gender equality policies, and implementing gender-disaggregated data and gender equality reporting mechanisms. Gender mainstreaming has been popularized as a central tenet and key buzzword in development agencies since the 1995 United Nations Conference on Women in Beijing. For example, following the conference the World Bank underwent a conceptual shift from a WID approach of women "stand-alone projects" to "mainstreaming gender concerns in all operations" (Buvinic & Bates, 1996, p. 21). Gender mainstreaming usually involves a comprehensive integration of gender equality analysis into all areas of an organization's policies and programs. For example, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) defines gender mainstreaming in the following way:

Mainstreaming implies that attention to equality between women and men should pervade all development policies, strategies and interventions....[It] involves giving attention to equality in relation to analyses, policies, planning processes and institutional practices that set the overall conditions for development (Quoted in, Arnfred, 2001, p. 76).

Similarly, CIDA promotes gender equality as "an integral part of all CIDA policies, programs and projects" (CIDA Gender Equality Division, 1999, p. ii). Gender mainstreaming activities are normally integrated within the formal mechanisms of mainstream development agencies and are undertaken by all GAD practitioners, including both Gender Mainstreaming Advocates and Transformative Feminist
Advocates. Nevertheless, different GAD practitioners vary greatly in their approach to using these formal mechanisms. Consequently, the possibility for transformative feminist space in development is partially dependent upon the perspective and political identity of internal gender practitioners.

**Institutional Change**

For many participants interviewed in this research study, gender mainstreaming involves attention to internal institutional issues such as hiring practices, maternity leave and the integration of gender-disaggregated evaluation measures. In addition, the Gender and Sustainable Development unit at IDRC and the Gender Equality Policy Division at CIDA have focused on the development of a gender-specific web page which provides information to staff members on the organization's gender equality commitments and includes links to more detailed information on topics such as “What is a gender analysis?” (CIDA Gender Equality Division, 2001, p. 1) and “Gender analysis as a development research tool” (IDRC Gender and Sustainable Development Unit, 1999, p. 1). Often, the existence of a gender equality policy is considered imperative to the successful advancement of gender equality goals and institutional change. The policy at CIDA, which one participant referred to as “our sacred text” (Eleanor), is utilized as the central justification for the promotion of a gender equality agenda within the Agency.

**Gender Training**

One of the most common formal strategies for institutional change utilized by gender equality practitioners is the implementation of strategic gender training
workshops or courses. This is reflected in the theoretical literature which conceptualizes gender training as an integral part of strengthening internal organizational capacity so that "a commitment to gender equality is institutionalized into all structures of the organization" (Porter & Smyth, 1998, p. 64). For example, the Gender Equality Policy Division at CIDA offers a workshop for CIDA employees entitled "Gender Equality in Practice" to CIDA employees three times per year, and has recently developed an on-line gender training course (CIDA Gender Equality Division, 2000b, p. 1). In general, most gender training efforts are geared toward planners, policy makers, general development practitioners and project functionaries (Mathur & Rajan, 1997, p. 68). Often, gender training programs focus on enabling participants to critically understand concepts such as *gender equality*, *gender analysis*, or *gender sensitization* (Mathur & Rajan, 1997, p. 71). The political perspective of gender practitioners greatly influences the direction that such gender training courses take. These individuals can create and direct courses that provide the skills necessary to improve gender awareness of development policies and programs. This perspective reflects a human capital approach that understands gender training to be a "technical solution" (Porter & Smyth, 1998, p. 59) that seeks to up-skill development professionals in the interests of women's increased integration within development projects and processes. Alternatively, Transformative Feminist Advocates can promote an alternative approach that envisions gender training within a popular education framework as a "process of self-awareness leading to social mobilization" (Porter & Smyth, 1998, p. 59). This politicized vision of gender training is concerned with enabling participants to
recognize and address the structural, political and ideological aspects of gender inequality. Thus, it is evident that the approach of individual practitioners greatly influences the extent to which gender training advances a more transformative feminist agenda.

**Building Formal Alliances**

These overt strategies of developing gender procedures, technical tools, and policies are often supported through the building of formal alliances between gender specialists within organizations. The CIDA Gender Equality Network is one example of the ways in which gender equality practitioners are attempting to gain recognition and support for gender equality goals within Canadian development organizations (CIDA Gender Equality Division, 2000a, p. 1). This formal network includes all the members of the Gender Equality Division in CIDA’s Policy Branch, and all the gender equality specialists and focal-point people within other CIDA branches.29 The Network meets once a month in order to provide analysis and offer advice on current gender equality issues and projects to CIDA programs, policy makers and senior management. The creation of formal spaces for gender equality advocates to come together is an important strategy in the building of a strong force for advancing gender equality goals within development institutions. The cultivation of internal allies allows like-minded feminist advocates to forge linkages, form alliances, share experiences and maintain contact, and provides a context within which a transformative feminist agenda can be pursued (Sonya).

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29 The branches which are participating in the Gender Equality Network include: Africa and the Middle-East, Americas, Asia, Canadian Partnership, Central and Eastern Europe, Multilateral and Performance Review Branch.
**Gender Enforcement**

While most gender training courses are not mandatory requirements for either incoming or current employees, most gender practitioners are working to ensure that gender analysis and gender disaggregated data become compulsory features of organizational planning and evaluation frameworks. As it currently stands, gender analysis is not a compulsory requirement for CIDA programs and projects. However, Eleanor asserts that one of the most important struggles for gender practitioners is to "make [gender equality] as compulsory as possible so that it's not resting on your opinion of equality but it rests on your duty to do your job" (Eleanor). In spite of various bureaucratic constraints, some gender practitioners advocate enforceability as a strategic way to forward a gender equality agenda. This firm approach has afforded CIDA gender equality specialists with a reputation for passionate persistence with gender equality goals:

> What I like and respect with a lot of the CIDA people that [I] meet and talk with is that they insist on [gender analysis]. And I think that's what we need, and if it's a feminist drive or if it's just an individual drive of a lot of women... I like that there is a lot more enforcement. (Kim)

Given that this strategy of enforcement is often not supported by organizational cultures or policies, insider feminist advocates frequently become internal "gender cops" as a way of ensuring that project officers pay heed to gender equality analysis in program implementation and evaluation. In their role as gender cop, practitioners are constantly on the lookout for documents, programs or policies

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30 While the Gender Equality Policy Division maintains that gender equality is no longer a specific requirement for documents such as the Program Performance Report (PPR), each individual program maintains its own specific project requirements. For example, the Brazil program, which is responsive in orientation, nevertheless made the integration of women within a ground water project in North East Brazil dependent on funding. (Heather).
that overlook a gender equality analysis. Moreover, the gender practitioners who choose to assume this function repeatedly raise questions during staff meetings in regards to gender, frequently respond to circulating documents with changes in favour of gender equality, and consistently maintain a clear position on gender equality within their own project reports. Lisa describes her role as a permanent gender police officer at IDRC: “We’re really poking with the power prod, saying [gender] has to be there, we have to be doing this, we have to be asking these questions, what are you doing on this?” (Lisa). While some individuals find this role as an organization’s gender conscience puts them in an “uncomfortable position” (Lisa), it nevertheless demonstrates an explicit approach that many gender practitioners (both Gender Mainstreaming Advocates and Transformative Feminist Advocates) employ to ensure that gender equality concerns are addressed within Canadian development institutions and operations.

Costs and Concerns

The Transformative Feminist Advocates that I interviewed are very aware of the potential costs and limitations of these formal strategies for implementing gender equality. They recognize that institutional change is liable to become a band-aid solution (Maria, Joanna, Sonya, Lisa, Danielle). They fear that the numbers game diverts attention away from the ways in which development processes affect local situations, by focusing gender mainstreaming on Northern development institutions. And they recognize that while equitable hiring practices are important, the numbers game does not necessarily address institutional gendered structures. Anne Marie Goetz makes the same point when she notes that
"it cannot be assumed that female staff will promote poor women’s interests in
development" (Goetz, 1997b, p. 195).

The Transformative Feminist Advocates that I interviewed were clear that a
feminist critique of organizations must go beyond a limited analysis of institutional
structures and focus on the institution as a gendered social space in need of
complete transformation. Indeed, Joanna asserted that

there is a big difference between organizational development processes and
then institutional transformation....There’s this whole emphasis on hiring
policies, training, getting the numbers of women and men right in
organizations, making sure you have a gender policy, but actually talking
about cultural change inside an organization, and how that cultural change
will affect the kind of work you do outside is very different work that goes on.

She and other Transformative Feminist Advocates echoed the concerns in the
literature that gender parity does not necessarily affect internal power relations,
which "are structured by gender, race or class" (Rao & Stuart, 1997, p.11).

Furthermore, many of the mainstream Canadian development organizations
involved in this study limit their understanding of gender mainstreaming to a single
focus, so that completing a gender analysis or integrating gender-disaggregated
data constitutes a satisfactory, or even successful, gender mainstreaming process.

My interviewees know that this narrow focus does not challenge what Aruna Rao
and Rieky Stuart call the "deep structures" (Rao & Stuart, 1997, p. 11) of
organizations. Indeed, they are well aware that “putting one’s house in order"
(MacDonald, 1994, p. 18) does not necessarily mean that institutions, systems or
structures that contribute to women’s oppression in local contexts will be challenged
by development processes.
Moreover, designing a formal organizational policy on gender equality does not always reflect the internal attitudes and presumptions embedded within an organization's dominant culture. In some cases, the effort to create a gender policy constitutes the main thrust of an organization's gender-based efforts. For example, until recently World Vision Canada's central endeavor at mainstreaming gender equality has involved the creation of a gender policy and the hiring of one gender resource staff member for the entire international partnership. Furthermore, the existence of a gender equality policy does not necessarily reflect the submerged individual perspectives on gender equality that co-exist within an organization. While this strategy is obviously imperative in terms of achieving and maintaining management support, insider advocates recognize that progressive policy goals are often difficult to translate into practice:

I believe that there is always going to be a gap between policy and practice. How do you actually put into place the ideas that some people have [written about]?...You put it into practice and it changes shape again. From what I see, people that work in the program desk find it sometimes very hard to apply the policy. (Sonya)

In addition, some organizational gender equality policies, such as World Vision Canada's policy, do not have a coordinating implementation strategy, rendering the policies ineffective in practice (Rao & Stuart, 1997).

In addition to the strategy of enforcement which potentially reeks of paternalism, gender training can diminish complex feminist theories into a technocratic and rudimentary training session. There is an unrealistic expectation that people will come to understand gender analysis and gender equality issues in the course of a three-hour training workshop. Consequently, gender equality

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31 In 1998, the International office of World Vision appointed a director of GAD (Shirley).
becomes both simplistic and technocratic and is disengaged from feminist theory and frameworks. According to Danielle, a Transformative Feminist Advocate at IDRC:

There is an assumption that people can just take on gender very easily. The fact is that the people who do work with gender have studied these issues for a long time—it is extraordinarily complex, there are all kinds of contested things, there is a whole bunch of different frameworks. Feminist literature is really important and we need to engage with it and understand some of the history of the debates that go into it. And it’s really unfair to expect people just to be able to take on this understanding.

In addition, gender training often identifies the problem of gender disparity as attitudinal, rather than structural. Therefore, gender training assumes that increasing internal gender awareness within an organization will necessarily lead to transformative change. While this may be true to a very limited extent, it nevertheless remains a simplistic surface solution, which ignores the more pertinent problem of structural oppression.32

Informal Strategies: The Politics of “Being Sneaky”

The reality of most development organizational contexts requires more from insider advocates than these formal strategies can generate in terms of tangible results for transformative feminist goals. While the institutional social space of some mainstream organizations, most notably Oxfam Canada, is highly receptive to formal attempts by gender practitioners to advance change in favour of women’s interests, it is also common for practitioners to resort to subterfuge in order to

32 The training approach implicitly identifies the problem as attitudinal; it assumes that once sexist attitudes are changed, resistance will vanish. The search for simple formulae and tools to integrate gender-sensitive data and practices to projects and policies implies faith that technique can override forms of prejudice embedded in organizational cognitive systems and work cultures (Goetz, 1997a, p. 4).
challenge organizational power relations. These informal/covert strategies are less well known but are nonetheless important. According to a CIDA Gender Focal Point project officer, "there are interesting things you can do in the margins and in the little corners in between" (Anne).

James C. Scott in an article entitled "The Infrapolitics of Subordinate Groups," speaks about the various forms of disguised ideological insubordination that the powerless utilize in order to assert power (Scott, 1997). Although Scott’s research is intended for the study of power relations as they exist within local and global economic frameworks, his conception of the "infrapolitics of the powerless" is applicable to the everyday forms of resistance that insider feminist advocates employ within the gendered social space of Canadian development institutions. Scott’s work helps us to recognize that these subversive attempts to make changes within the margins of mainstream development can be politicized actions that should be recognized as such.

Both Gender Mainstreaming Advocates and Transformative Feminist Advocates employ a variety of informal, and sometimes covert, strategies within the context of their work at mainstream development organizations. However, only Transformative Feminist Advocates do so with specific intentions for transformative feminist goals. The multiplicity of formal and informal strategies requires Transformative Feminist Advocates to be decisive and intentional about the spaces in development that they are negotiating for change. The rest of this chapter will outline, analyze and discuss the various informal strategies that all gender practitioners use to forward change. Specifically, I will differentiate between those
strategies used by both Gender Mainstreaming Advocates and Transformative Feminist Advocates (altering feminist discourse; politicizing social relations; compromising; using instrumentalist arguments), and those strategies explicitly used only by Transformative Feminist Advocates (conceptualizing GAD as an entry tool; intentionally integrating feminist discourse; and manipulating budgets and agendas).

In particular, Transformative Feminist Advocates working in mainstream contexts intend these subterfuge strategies to be effective means of pushing the boundaries of GAD to embrace transformative feminist values, goals and commitments. The relative success, though incremental, of these covert strategies demonstrates the contradictions inherent to the entire structure of the international development machinery. Like globalization, this development machinery is not an immovable edifice. Rather, it is a complex and often contradictory process that allows for challenge and change even from its most marginal spaces. Nevertheless, it is important to question whether these informal/covert strategies are sufficient in order to negotiate, create and sustain spaces for transformative feminist practice within mainstream development. We must problematize these strategies in order to recognize both the benefits associated with gender mainstreaming and the potential costs to feminist organizing, discourse and agendas. Some critics of insider strategizing argue that "what has been lost in the process of assimilation has been so central to the feminist agenda, that there seems to be little reason to pursue the same strategies any further" (Razavi, 1998, p. 21). Given that the hegemonic and often paternalistic spaces of mainstream
development often "suppress and defuse feminist voices as they enter bureaucracies" (Miller & Razavi, 1998, p. 3), we must ask whether these strategies hold enough influence to enact transformative feminist change in development, or whether they actually displace spaces for transformative feminist change. This chapter will discuss the potential costs, consequences, and contradictions of these informal strategies in order to demonstrate that while these strategies are important, they hold only limited potential within the insular context of mainstream organizations.

We don't use the F-word—Altering Feminist Discourse

All gender practitioners who self-identify as feminists are acutely aware of the negative connotations of feminism that abound within Canadian development organizations. In a study about the fear of feminism evident at Oxfam Great Britain (GB), Ines Smyth confirms that feminism in general, and feminists in particular are still considered to be bra-burning, male-hating radicals that propose an "alien and frightening prospect" to many Northern mainstream development NGOs and bilateral agencies (Smyth, 1999, p. 17). Consequently, feminist-defined gender practitioners (both Gender Mainstreaming Advocates and Transformative Feminist Advocates) more often than not disguise their feminist discourse in order to ensure that organizational decision-makers will not dismiss gender equality goals and ideals. These individuals are cautious of the "immediate allergic reaction" (Eleanor) that overtly feminist discourse or concepts may inflict upon an ill-prepared or antagonistic management team. Consequently, feminist-defined gender practitioners attempt to make programs and projects with feminist concepts or
principles more palatable through employing GAD terminology. Anne speaks of the various ways she has altered her discourse in order to ensure that the gender equality agenda is less threatening to the 'unconverted' at CIDA:

There are lots of things that I wouldn't say or try to do that I might in another context....It's all kinds of small pieces of self-censorship that you might practice. I personally interpret GE and the kind of policy we have within CIDA as being a feminist approach. And it's not a word that I use very often within CIDA—I don't want to scare people. (Anne)

In a similar way, Julie integrates various feminist principles—such as a feminist understanding of domination and oppression, a feminist view of process, a concern for inclusion and difference—within her work at Oxfam Canada, yet she consistently does this through a GAD-oriented discourse (Julie). Likewise, a project officer at CARE Canada recognizes that the lack of feminist discourse in organizational documents impels many employees who self-identify as feminists to intentionally modify their language in order to match the dominant organizational culture that advocates gender mainstreaming (Kim). Consequently, feminist discourse is "watered down" (Kim) in the sense that although CARE Canada project officers may actually be working in partnership with feminist organizations, they nevertheless disguise this by describing it as "supporting civil society" (Kim). CIDA project officers also utilize a similar coded language as a covert strategy to integrate feminist projects within their work: "We talk about women's organizations but we really mean feminist organizations. There's a particular kind of women's organization that we're talking about in our coded language..." (Anne).

It is important to recognize that for some practitioners, the modification of feminist discourse is an intentional choice that often involves struggle and an
awareness of the complexities and contradictions of remaining engaged as a feminist within mainstream development:

Working here at IDRC I've had to strategically think about when I want to use the word feminist or feminism and when I want to use the word gender....I tend to definitely use gender more and to use the word feminist or feminism where I think it's appropriate because I don't want to come across as antagonizing. In itself, talking about gender I think is still a sensitive issue. It's a struggle, I think it's a constant struggle. And you have to be strategic. (Nagwa)

This imperative to be careful is likewise evident within the experience of a CIDA project officer who self-identifies as a feminist “vocally not always at CIDA depending on the audience and the moment and the strategic value of doing that” (Anne). For some individuals, especially Gender Mainstreaming Advocates, this decision to alter their discourse is considered an appropriate or respectable response to a bureaucratic working environment. Other individuals, notably the Transformative Feminist Advocates, do not simply alter their language at a whim; rather, it is a strategic decision that they understand as necessary to forwarding a transformative feminist agenda by the most effective means possible within the context of mainstream international development. For example, Joanna Kerr at AWID is trying to re-politicize the GAD discourse through trying to ensure that “gender” is always employed in conjunction with other feminist-defined terms such as equality.

However, this research demonstrates that Transformative Feminist Advocates in particular experience this decision to alter their feminist discourse as a compromise between their political convictions and the power structures of development organizations:
Where the compromise comes in is when I'm working with my team on gender issues; I totally tone down. I don't talk about the fact that I'm a feminist. I mean in private conversations I will, but in a team setting I very much try to feel where they are at, what's going on, [and] what's the most effective strategic way of moving in this direction. (Sonya)

Individuals who maintain a critical perspective on development and a politicized understanding of feminism as imperative to structural transformation find themselves in the difficult situation as "insiders" who must delicately choose between their own feminist identity and the advancement of gender equality goals.

As Ines Smyth contends, individual feminists have often found themselves silenced [in Northern NGOs], and have had to adopt working strategies which they experience as compromise" (Smyth, 1999). This experience of compromise is inherently contradictory to the basic tenets of feminism that seek wholeness through the connection between the personal and the political. Nevertheless,

Transformative Feminist Advocates choose to strategically divide their personal identity as feminists from their insider identity as gender specialists in the interests of subversively promoting a transformative agenda for women through the processes of international development:

I think if I went away and worked in a small NGO that I wouldn't have trouble saying... that this is really a feminist agenda. But that's something that you compromise to work within the mainstream agency. If I stand up in my staff meeting and say we're working on this new project and it's a very good one, it's a feminist project, I will have to cope with so much outrage, maybe not immediate outrage but for one thing that would be seen as being provocative, intentionally provocative....So it's an interesting compromise because in my non-work life I feel strongly about using the word and not saying "Oh I'm not a feminist" to sort of try and soften things and make it easier. In my work life I take the other strategic decision and say "If we want to go anywhere with this, we don't use the F-word." (Anne)
Indeed, the intentional choice by Transformative Feminist Advocates to mask their feminist discourse by employing gender terminology potentially disengages gender equality theory and practice from their feminist principles and convictions. There are problems associated with the proliferation of 'gender-speak' that currently abounds in mainstream development institutions. Many Transformative Feminist Advocates are uncomfortable with the ways that gender has become "a buzz word that is thrown around whether it be in the World Bank or in a micro-credit organization" (Joanna). While the popularity of gender mainstreaming discourse may appear beneficial to the achievement of gender equality goals, gender practitioners assert that most people working in development simply do not understand the concept of gender. According to Joanna, "The words that are used are "gender", "gender mainstreaming" or "gender goals". People do not know what that means or necessarily its objectives--I think that is a huge problem". Similarly, Rena maintains that while project officers at CIDA are generally aware of gender equality as a cross-cutting agency priority, they "don't know exactly what gender equality means nor how to practically integrate it within their projects/programming" (Rena). This problem has been discussed in the critical theoretical literature on GAD. For example, Ines Smyth points out that "one of the most worrying aspects of the ease with which gender terminology is used, is its lack of clarity and precision" (Smyth, 1999, p. 20).

Both Gender Mainstreaming Advocates and Transformative Feminist Advocates, perpetuate this problem by de-linking gender equality discourse from its feminist origins:
In order to really sneak in the feminist ideals into development work and into mainstream development agencies, I think many feminists, myself included have taken a point of view of not emphasizing that GAD has come from a feminist background, that GAD was born through the feminist movement. (Sonya)

By modifying their feminist discourse and employing a coded language, insider advocates perpetuate, and possibly accentuate, the inconsistency and ambiguity of gender terminology. Transformative Feminist Advocates recognize this inherent contradiction; nevertheless they defend the importance of strategically engaging gender discourse in order to legitimize a feminist agenda in mainstream development. However, this can be a potentially costly decision given that a disjuncture exists between “the feminist intent behind the term [gender] and the ways in which it is employed to minimize the political and contested character of relations between men and women” (Baden & Goetz, 1998, p. 25). The ways that gender has been institutionalized and operationalized is often so distant from the feminist ideals of structural transformation that the tactic of language modification may actually diminish, or possibly even destroy the linkages between GAD and transformative feminism. As Bisi Adeleye Feyemi states: “By naming ourselves as feminists, we politicize the process of women's rights” (Adeleye-Fayemi, 2000). Unfortunately, when insider advocates divorce themselves from a feminist identity and discourse, the consequence is the further de-politicization of GAD processes.

**Politcized Social Relations**

The altering of feminist discourse makes gender practitioners and even gender mainstreaming processes seem less threatening and therefore more acceptable to resistant development bureaucrats. While most gender practitioners
are aware that gender mainstreaming can obscure and even de-politicize feminist work, they nevertheless recognize that gender equality is a “very strategic thing to do...because it’s easier to get the medicine down” (Eleanor). Gender practitioners are cautious that their presence or agenda is “not being provocative” (Anne), does not “come across as antagonizing” (Nagwa), or does not “scare people” (Anne). All gender practitioners, both Gender Mainstreaming Advocates and Transformative Feminist Advocates alike, are strategic in building relationships that will ultimately forward a gender equality agenda and/or a transformative feminist agenda.

Indeed, both Gender Mainstreaming Advocates and Transformative Feminist Advocates attempt to integrate gender equality concerns through sustaining an open and approachable demeanor, maintaining a sense of humour in regards to gender analysis, and upholding an inclusive perspective. The strategic decision to “make people feel comfortable” (Rebecca) with the issue of gender equality can be a political choice to make the gender equality agenda more palatable by dismantling the underlying fear of the bra-burning radical that persists and is fostered by some within mainstream development agencies today. Most gender practitioners assert that it is important to invoke a positive image of gender mainstreaming, to “teach that [gender analysis] is fun, that it is enjoyable...that it does not have to be a chore” (Danielle). Thus, insider advocates capitalize on their social aptitude and political consciousness in order to manipulate gender equality into informal conversations with key individuals who hold decision-making power in development organizations.

For example, Danielle maintains that she seeks to “target people in different ways, in sort of casual conversations ...and through their interests discuss gender
and let them see that my approach to gender is very open" (Danielle). Likewise, Rebecca addresses the issue of internal hiring practices of female staff at IDRC in a similar fashion through informal conversations. At a team meeting in February 2000, the mostly-male staff of this particular Program Initiative at IDRC responded to the issue of the numbers of female program officers with "dead silence" because they "didn't see gender equity issues in projects linked to gender equity issues in the workplace" (Rebecca). Over the following year, Rebecca attempted to draw attention to the issue, not through formal mechanisms but rather by trying to "engage people in the hallways" (Rebecca). Finally, gender equitable hiring made its way onto the team's formal agenda through the political insight and savvy social skills which persuaded resistant staff to embrace this goal:

So if I would have at that point when there was resistance really pushed [the issue], it would have alienated people. But by bringing it in bits and pieces and sort of sneaking around with it, it made it on to the formal agenda. (Rebecca)

This indirect approach through the strategic building of social relations requires perceptive insight into the complex hierarchies, both formal and informal, that constitute the power structures within mainstream development organizations. Miller and Razavi comment specifically on these skills when they note that, "tampering with the nuts and bolts of a bureaucracy in the context of a highly sophisticated policy development process requires an in-depth understanding of how the bureaucratic machinery works" (Miller & Razavi, 1998, p. 7).

In addition, some gender practitioners, especially those in management positions, may attempt to join the existing informal male space so that they can better negotiate decision-making power. This political decision to utilize informal
social relations specifically within the male power structures of an organization addresses the importance of sustaining support from those most likely to be resistant to a gender equality agenda. Indeed, a Gender Mainstreaming Advocate at CIDA maintains, “You wouldn’t want not to have them on your side because then it would be hard to do anything” (Heather). She explains that while there is a formal hierarchy of management at CIDA that includes many women, informal male networks often subvert this formal mechanism so that these networks actually hold most of the decision-making power:

Our Vice President is a man and he certainly has people that he goes to for advice in the Branch and all those people just so happen to be men. And they aren’t necessarily people who would be in the right chain of command....I know some of the directors who are women have to find ways of getting their viewpoints in and that’s not always easy....You can try and get yourself into that informal [male] network. You can go out for beer on Fridays and try and get your point across there. (Heather)

The political manoeuvre to advance gender equality goals while stroking male egos is a strategy that is often employed by insider advocates, both in Northern donor organizations and in the field. It is a political strategy which utilizes the existing hegemonic structures in the attempt to challenge, and ultimately dismantle, these informal power structures in favour of women’s interests. Transformative Feminist Advocates employ this strategy to build alliances with those who wield decision-making power in order to compel support for a transformative agenda of gender equality. Nevertheless, this strategy requires that all insider gender advocates utilize incisive political skills in order to, as the GAD theorist Carol Miller contends, “identify where the strategic points of leverage in the policy establishment are and
how allies can be cultivated despite the distrust of traditional bureaucrats” (Miller & Razavi, 1998, p. 7).

In contrast to the assimilation of feminist advocates within informal male networks, the creation of women-specific space within development processes is an additional way that insider advocates attempt to promote either a gender equality and/or a transformative feminist agenda. Sometimes the formation of women’s informal space occurs spontaneously in response to a male-driven project or meeting agenda. For example, Kim shared the transformative experience that occurred when women came together informally and produced an important statement that became an official contribution to a particular development symposium in Sudan:

There were a lot of Sudanese women there, but there was nowhere on the agenda for space for Sudanese women to sit down and talk. So it just inevitably happened that during lunch hour a bunch of us started talking and then it actually moved into a meeting, and then it actually moved into a statement. And the best part of the three-day symposium was the lunch-hour meeting which was impromptu....There's something to be said about a certain solidarity that comes fairly easy [sic] when women come [together]....There's this thing that happens, this chemistry that happens when women all get together, which is a positive chemistry." (Kim)

The formation of such spaces encourages the cultivation of internal feminist allies and this better enables advocates to push forward a gender equality agenda amidst challenging bureaucratic structures. While formal gender networks exist in organizations such as CIDA, Oxfam and World Vision Canada, most insider advocates also build informal alliances with other like-minded individuals in mainstream organizations. According to Kim, informal alliances are an important way for feminists to “support each other...by pursuing projects and programs which
we feel are important" (Kim). An increased sense of solidarity results from informal discussions that occur in neutral areas of organizations such as washrooms or cafeterias. These informal meetings occur regularly at CIDA where insider advocates are able to share information, vent frustrations and discuss possible strategies:

There's a lot of people with similar views who meet together regularly informally and say [things like]: "I can't believe I just tried to struggle through this," or "I had this horrible discussion," or "this project just got killed because they couldn't see the importance of [gender analysis]," or "why after 20 years are we still trying to get them to do gender analysis in all their projects?" (Anne)

The cultivation of informal alliances also exists across and between mainstream Canadian development organizations. Indeed, for the past many years, a group of gender practitioners from various organizations have met together for regular gatherings or “GAD-erings”, as they are now called. These are “informal get-togethers of women who come together because of their professional or personal interest in gender issues related to development” (Heather). The co-ordination of the GAD-erings has been spontaneous and fluid. The meetings usually occur in people's homes, over an informal meal, where practitioners discuss GAD and share the best practices and challenging experiences of doing gender equality work in development. Insider feminist advocates maintain that the “mutual learning and support” (Julie) that these informal networks of practitioners provide is imperative since, according to an Oxfam Canada employee, gender advocates “need all the help we can get” (Julie). Indeed, strategic relationship building is an important way that insider feminist advocates are working to promote change within mainstream Canadian development organizations.
Nevertheless, the intentional manipulation/politicization of social relations is potentially problematic given that many resistant bureaucrats and project partners are already cognizant of this covert technique. Indeed, the attempt to make people feel comfortable about gender through “soft nice talk” (Kim) is a very well known strategy that is “not so subtle [and] could have a backlash effect” (Kim). Moreover, the creation of strategic alliances such as joining informal male networks potentially leads to the irrevocable watering down of feminist agendas and gender equality policies (Razavi, 1998, p. 20). Is it not adverse to feminist ideals that for insider advocates to succeed they must “act like men; that in order to get anything done, women must find a male mentor/protector and just work within the system” (Oseen, 1999, p. 101)? In the attempt to make people feel comfortable, these compromises may ultimately lead to the relinquishing of the transformative feminist potential of the gender equality agenda.

**Compromising for Change**

Gender practitioners in mainstream contexts often face the political dilemma of having to discern how much pressure to exert in order for change to transpire. Often, the process of persuading those in power to prioritize gender equality issues involves a delicate balance between success and failure that sometimes requires Transformative Feminist Advocates to compromise their primary feminist objectives. Anne reflects that her agenda for feminist change will only ever be “partially integrated into what this CiDA Program is doing” (Anne). This means that she often finds herself working on projects that do not necessarily reflect her primary vision of
change for women (Anne). Gender Mainstreaming Advocates also compromise their agendas for gender equality in order for at least incremental change to occur:

When [gender practitioners are] with a project manager who may be very resistant to work on [gender analysis], then we may focus more on toning down the language and saying that this is the minimum that has to be done. Especially if it is someone who doesn't really care....There's compromises along the way particularly because it is not a requirement. (Eleanor)

Eleanor's experience of compromise can be linked to the lack of enforcement for gender analysis within the CIDA Gender Equality Policy (CIDA Gender Equality Division, 1999). Indeed, the process of designing CIDA's second policy on gender in 1999 reflects the compromises that gender equality advocates must often make in order for their agenda to move forward, even a little. While insider advocates pushed for gender analysis to be a requirement, the final language in the policy states that, “CIDA policy programs and projects should contribute to gender equality” (CIDA Gender Equality Division, 1999, p. ii). This small change has massive consequences because it shifts gender equality from a requirement to a mere suggestion, consequently leaving gender equality practitioners with no policy enforcement behind their actions.

In turn, Gender Mainstreaming and Transformative Feminist Advocates find themselves in the difficult position of having to discern “how far we should push” (Eleanor). They must work a delicate balancing act that neither pushes the gender equality agenda too far and thereby alienates resistant bureaucrats, nor accepts only the bare minimum from project officers, such as gender-disaggregated project data with no analysis of power relations. As Eleanor maintains,

In this line of work we are very cautious of the immediate allergic reaction that [gender equality] can provoke in people....If you go a little less, you get
nothing; if you go a little more, you get nothing. So, you have to go at the right level. (Eleanor)

In addition to internal resistance and lack of policy enforcement, CIDA gender equality project officers also face time and energy constraints that result in a compromised agenda:

For example, with this water project, I have been discussing gender issues and social issues with the coordinator for two years... But I can't fight with the man every day to get this done. There comes a point when you just run out of energy... You say to yourself "this is good enough". It may not be perfect or what I would have done in terms of integrating gender into the project. But it's something; it's there. I think that... has been the biggest compromise. I wouldn't accept zero from partners but sometimes I'll accept fifty or seventy five percent because I don't have the time to get one hundred percent. (Heather)

Similarly, when the Gender Equality Network at CIDA were asked at the last-minute to contribute comments to the agency's 2001 Sustainable Development strategy, they made a strategic decision to include only "what was absolutely necessary" (Eleanor). Consequently, a number of transformative issues were not integrated into the strategy document in order to ensure that at least some changes, such as integrating gender-specific language were successfully accomplished. This decision to compromise on some parts, in order to achieve results in others, is a process of "wagering" (Caroline) for insider advocates.

Thus, it is evident that compromise is employed both as a tactic of survival and as a strategy for change within the context of mainstream development organizations. The tactical choice to compromise, to accept only fifty percent of one's ideal gender analysis, requires patience and understanding of the process-orientation of gender equality within the context of the mainstream development industry. Is it possible that insider advocates are conceding too much in the
process of trying to effect change? The strategy of compromising and of accepting less than an adequate gender analysis would require demonstrates advocates' attempts to ensure "least worst scenarios" (Razavi, 1998, p. 20) for women in development processes. However, it is possible that this strategy will lead to the assimilation of feminist goals into the dominant development discourse and the abandonment/neglect of Advocates' own feminist convictions.

**Instrumentalism**

One of the most prevalent ways that both Gender Mainstreaming and Transformative Feminist Advocates manipulate non-feminist defined issues is to employ instrumentalist arguments to place feminist issues of gender equality on the formal agendas of mainstream Canadian development organizations. In order to justify the gender equality agenda to skeptical bureaucrats, gender practitioners have commonly utilized the dominant development discourse of economic growth and market efficiency. According to Shahra Razavi, the strategy of justifying gender equality based on its pay-offs to development indicates that insider advocates speak:

as supplicants trying to persuade those not convinced of the intrinsic value of gender equality, in terms least likely to generate resistance, that gender issues need to become a priority. (Razavi, 1998, p. 37)

They attempt to make the gender equality agenda relevant to policymakers and management by demonstrating the ways in which it affects, or is compatible with, the central economic concerns of mainstream agencies, so that gender inequalities are conceptualized as "market distortions which cause economic waste..." (Razavi, 1998, p. 40). The use of economistic-oriented arguments is perceived by gender
practitioners to be necessary to prove the legitimacy of gender equality within the Agency:

You make the compromise of trying to make the case with the terms that will be most persuasive with the people you are trying to persuade and with people who don't fundamentally agree with you. So you say things like 'Well the World Bank says gender is good for growth'. And actually that's not the most persuasive or important argument from my point of view. But you go through those kinds of motions. (Anne)

As evidenced above, insider advocates often utilize World Bank documents that defend gender mainstreaming as an imperative investment that leads to increased economic growth. According to the Bank, investment in women "is critical for poverty reduction. It speeds economic development by raising productivity and promoting the more efficient use of resources; it produces significant social returns..." (World Bank, 1994, p. 22). Mainstream Canadian development organizational documents echo this rationale by justifying gender equality objectives in terms compatible with the dominant growth discourse. For example, the Malawi Program's gender-focused agenda is justified on the basis that women, who dominate the agricultural sector, are key to Malawi's economic and social development...research shows that reducing gender inequality increases agricultural yields by up to twenty percent, thereby increasing export earnings. (CIDA Malawi Program, 2000a, p. 3)

This sentiment is likewise evident in the India Program Gender Equality Strategy that has been designed in part "to promote sustainable and equitable economic growth through private sector development" (CIDA India Program, 2000, p. 3).

Moreover, gender practitioners attempt to put gender equality onto whatever policy agenda has already been legitimized within an organization. All advocates at IDRC find that they are best able to promote an agenda of gender equality "mostly
through the efficiency argument” (Sonya). For example, practitioners attempt to convince their partners who are mostly scientists, to undertake gender analysis in order to achieve more accurate research results:

[gender analysis] is important because it’s going to make your research better, because your results will be better, your impact will be more sustainable if you take on this [gender] perspective. It wasn’t about, “well, this is an equity issue and this is about empowering women”, that doesn’t really fly. (Sonya)

All gender practitioners in this study working in mainstream organizations utilize political manoeuvres to demonstrate the relevance of gender equality in a way that is both “familiar and accepted” (Razavi, 1998, p. 21) by mainstream organizations and/or partners. Recognizing the heterogeneity of organizational program staff, gender practitioners alter their argument for gender justice according to their audience. For example, CIDA insider advocates recognize that to convince technical partners, it is best to employ the argument that gender analysis is “good development practice” or that other projects have failed because “women and gender issues have not been fully integrated” (Heather). Sometimes gaining bureaucratic support involves highlighting both an equity argument and an efficiency argument in order to “sell the idea...[to those] who are more top-down and want results, and to others who are more into process” (Lisa).

This research study found that all of the Transformative Feminist Advocates working in mainstream organizations (Sonya, Lisa, Danielle, Anne) and four (4) of the Gender Mainstreaming Advocates (Kim, Rena, Nagwa, Julie) intentionally utilize an efficiency and/economistic arguments as a strategic way to subvert the dominant development agenda. The other six (6) Gender Mainstreaming Advocates (Eleanor,
Laura, Heather, Rebecca, Martha, Shirley) actually espouse these instrumental views. For example, Eleanor argues that

promoting equality between women and men makes good economic and development sense. Simply put, you double your target group by two. Just that in itself. Because of the roles which women perform, the reach of certain projects may go further if they work with women, not just men but with both... You get better results. (Eleanor)

This argument mirrors Ester Boserup's 1970 call for the integration of women in development as a way to ensure the effective and efficient functioning of development projects (Boserup, 1970).

Thus, the varied use of instrumentalist arguments reveals the diversity of perspectives that exist among insider advocates. Clearly, some advocates buy into the WID (as defined by GAD) idea that women are, as Caroline Moser states "an untapped resource who can provide an economic contribution to development" (Moser, 1993, p. 2). Other advocates, most notably the Transformative Feminist Advocates strategically utilize similar arguments while remaining critical of the neoliberal agenda. These individuals employ a discourse of covert strategizing that seeks to "sell the idea" (Sonya), to "convince" (Sonya), to "compromise" (Anne), or to "make the case" (Anne) for the integration of women's interests in development.

Thus, the interview subjects in this research found instrumentalism to be a necessary and inevitable political strategy within the context of mainstream development bureaucracies. They employed non-feminist discourses with political agility in order to "exploit the slightest openings to push forward their agenda..."

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33 This instrumental view of women was originally identified as a defining WID position in critical GAD literature and has now entered general usage. However, early WID initiatives were actually very varied. They did not all seek simple instrumental integration of women into unreconstructed development. (Miles, 2001).
(Razavi, 1998, p. 38). In this way, Transformative Feminist Advocates found marginal space to sustain feminist goals, ideals and practices in mainstream development structures and processes.

Nevertheless, it is important to question whether the use of instrumentalist arguments results in neutralizing the transformative nature of the feminist agenda. While most insider advocates in this study attempt to legitimize the gender equality agenda by linking it to dominant policy concerns of economic growth and market efficiency, the theoretical literature demonstrates that “some critical items on the feminist agenda [are] lost in the process of making this political choice” (Miller & Razavi, 1998, p. 10). Although some theorists argue that instrumentalism can be considered “an attempt to subvert the neo-liberal agenda using its own tools” (Miller & Razavi, 1998, p. 10), and this certainly is the intention of many of the participants in this study, others contend that it “has the effect of de-politicizing the issue and runs the risk of making women more perfectly exploitable for development” (Miller & Razavi, 1998, p. 10). Thus, it can be argued that instrumentalism is a potentially dangerous and costly strategy which risks complete abandonment of the equality discourse and, by proxy, a feminist agenda in development.

**GAD as an Entry Tool to Transformative Feminist Work**

Transformative Feminist Advocates recognize the inherent contradictions within their work as gender practitioners in development. They understand mainstream development to be linked to a fundamentally perverse global economic system that is marginalizing and disempowering women, exploiting the environment, and commodifying human and non-human life. They maintain a highly
politicized understanding of global feminism's project for social transformation while
simultaneously working within the confines of a hegemonic system that contradicts
these very convictions. However, it is through the understanding of these
contradictions between who they are and what they do that Transformative Feminist
Advocates are able to employ subversive strategies of ideological insubordination in
order to challenge the gendered structures of Canadian mainstream development
organizations. Indeed, "it is only by understanding the contradictions inherent in
women's location within various structures that effective political action and
challenges can be devised" (Quoted in, Porter & Verghese, 1999, p. 139).
Consequently, Transformative Feminist Advocates justify the contradiction of having
to "distance yourself as a gender person from being a feminist" (Sonya) through
conceptualizing GAD as an entry tool that can ultimately lead to transformative
feminist change:

I've come to be convinced that the GAD framework(s) is a tool and like any
tool it can be used in different ways. It can be used to strengthen certain
issues, certain movements, certain ways of thinking, or it can be used to
implement a technical way of doing something which doesn't address power
issues underneath it. I think that where GAD frameworks are used
appropriately, where they are used to really generate discussion and critical
reflection about what are the power relationships that we're talking about
here, why the situation is as it is, what is at the root of the inequalities [sic], I
think that in those situations, the tool can be used transformatively, and in
that case it's definitely an ally with the ideals of the feminist movement.
(Sonya).

Some Transformative Feminist Advocates consciously choose to employ gender
mainstreaming tools because they are considered "less threatening to men" (Sonya)
than feminist theory. Nevertheless, these insiders assert that if GAD tools are
utilized properly, they can become "a really useful entry point, a non-threatening
entry point for then generating critical analysis about...power relations (Sonya).

Recognizing that “the language and substance of feminism are especially misunderstood and feared” (Smyth, 1999, p. 17) within development organizations, Transformative Feminist Advocates are promoting GAD as a strategic way to soften development machinery in preparation for the future integration of transformative feminist ideals:

If we can’t even go forward with the GAD framework, you’re not likely to be able to go forward with the feminist-ideal framework either. If there is so much resistance for just using the GAD framework then there is a lot of work that has to be done before you can come in full force with feminist theorizing. (Sonya).

This strategy of conceptualizing GAD as an entry tool to transformative feminist change depends on the presence of Transformative Feminist Advocates within mainstream development. This strategy motivates Transformative Feminist Advocates to accept such contradictory positions, and has become a subversive way for feminist-identified practitioners to converge with other gender practitioners in order to mount a strong agenda for gender equality within development processes. Their overarching goal is that the analysis of power relations through gender-based tools and frameworks will go beyond a project-based analysis and “ignite an overall debate on power in development cooperation” (Sevefjord & Olsson, 2001, p. 15).

However, the covert strategy of conceptualizing gender mainstreaming as an entry point to future transformative feminist change is complex in that it is difficult to discern who amongst the gender practitioner community actually perceives gender mainstreaming in this way. While this strategy requires the presence of politically-
minded, feminist-defined insider advocates who understand gender mainstreaming to be an ally for feminist change, it nevertheless potentially depends too much on the individual and too little on development systems and structures. Given that this strategy emphasizes process, there is the possible problem that Transformative Feminist Advocates will disengage from their feminist intentions during the course of gender mainstreaming practice. Moreover, the fact that this strategy relies on individual discretion could be problematic in the hands of non-feminist defined practitioners. Individual disengagement is highly likely given that gender mainstreaming processes operate within development structures that are neither responsible nor accountable to gender equality ideals. As Signe Arnfred asserts,

It might be more useful to realize that feminist visions regarding mainstreaming as a tool for changing gender power relations, do not match the reality of governments and development institutions. These bodies simply understand the matter differently” (Arnfred, 2001, p. 76).

The risk is that gender mainstreaming, understood as a tool for transformative change in the hands of politically minded feminists, may still result in integrating women (and their interests) into pre-defined and pre-existing development programs. Worse, it may result in a de-politicized and technocratic process, without an essential power critique:

Unfortunately, what we’re seeing is that the tool is used strictly as a technical tool [that] ends up with a description of what men and women do. But in terms of what it means for the project, often it doesn’t translate into a deep questioning of...what the power relations are and what they are supporting through the project in terms of power relations. (Sonya).

Indeed, this study found that many mainstream Canadian development organizations operationalize gender analysis partially through the non-transformative Harvard Analytical Framework, or Gender Roles Framework (GRF)
as it is more commonly called. Popularized in the 1980s, the GRF gathers data on men's and women's differential roles in society in order to delineate their specific needs in development. Project officers and development planners simplify this technical information on the gender division of labour in order to say, "men do this, women do that; let's help women do what they do better" (Joanna). This framework not only envisions women's emancipation as being derived from increased access to productive resources, according to Naila Kabeer it also suggests that "any new resource offered to women is automatically in their interests" (Kabeer, 1994, p. 292). Worse, it is devoid of a power analysis and completely neglects "tackling structural change within organizations, within cultures, within economies—all of that" (Joanna). Indeed, the popular interpretation of gender analysis as a way to delineate gender roles is grounded in an efficiency perspective of development that does not seek to challenge structural inequalities or power relations but remains entrenched within an analysis of resource access and control:

At least with the feminist theorizing, the power critique is much more explicit, and it's always been wonderful at critiquing different ideologies and discourses. And the GAD work has obviously crossed over and in the theory it's there....But I think in the practice—I mean it's the power issues, people just don't want to deal with that head on. Because it would mean a complete and total restructuring of development and possibly mean the demise of the development industry, the development business. And that's not something those people in development would want to see happening...(Sonya).

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34 The GRF utilizes two key activities—the Activity Profile and the Access and Control Profile—in order to determine gender division in production process and to delineate access and control over resources and benefits (Kabeer, 1994: p. 271). This analysis then outlines the factors influencing the division of labour and how this relates to women's and men's participation levels in development projects.
Integrating Feminist Discourse

As well as using GAD as an entry tool to change, Transformative Feminist Advocates also intentionally integrate feminist discourse within their work environment and practice. Some Transformative Feminist Advocates deliberately utilize a feminist discourse when speaking about gender mainstreaming as a strategic way of linking a transformative feminist agenda with organizational gender strategies:

Well, I see people trying to separate feminism from this gender stuff. So now I actually make a point of using the word feminism when I'm talking...about how we're going to mainstream gender [and] what our gender strategy is going to be. I use the word feminism because its feminists who are thinking this through. I'm being much more clear that we are using feminist literature to build our arguments with. There's no need to separate this quite so much. (Sonya)

Sometimes Transformative Feminist Advocates attempt to make visible the linkages between feminist literature and gender mainstreaming operations within the context of internal gender training and capacity building initiatives. For example, Danielle an IDRC intern responsible for mainstreaming gender within a particular program has implemented a mandatory informal discussion group on feminist literature. This group is looking at a range of feminist theoretical works, starting with Chandra Mohanty's article entitled "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses" (Mohanty, 1991), in order to discuss various feminist principles and concepts and then apply these to an analysis of current monitoring and evaluation tools employed by project officers. The connection between feminist concepts and gender mainstreaming processes is rarely made without the explicit intervention of Transformative Feminist Advocates. What is clear, however, is that the use of
feminist discourse and concepts is a radical choice given current hegemonic gender mainstreaming processes. Those who do intentionally integrate feminist discourse within their work, often experience this decision within a context of tension given that many organizational cultures are resistant, and sometimes even hostile, towards feminist discourse, in spite of the fact that organizations may advocate a gender mainstreaming agenda or policy. These individuals are willing to pay the costs of maintaining a counter-cultural identity within an organizational context that is averse to feminism in general, and to feminists in particular.

**Manipulating Budgets and Agendas for Transformative Ideals**

Transformative Feminist Advocates are also pushing GAD in feminist directions through the manipulation of budgets and agendas. For example, Anne is able to skillfully manipulate small budget allocations at CIDA in order to forward feminist goals:

> Within a larger [country] program you might have one little project looking at Gender Equality and it's not considered to be particularly significant to the overall program. But sometimes you can do quite interesting things with those small resources that are not carefully watched because they're not seen to be highly important....[Y]ou're given a lot of lee-way but only with small resources. (Anne)

Transformative Feminist Advocates capitalize on their control over small resources to accomplish goals that might not be endorsed by program management, such as re-directing funds to in-country women's organizations and networks.

Similarly, Transformative Feminist Advocates exploit the latest development trends in the interests of advancing a gender equality agenda. Unlike five years ago, gender equality is no longer the favorite issue of the Canadian Overseas
Development Assistance (ODA) agenda. Given that donor money is tied to an industry that seems to capriciously alter its overall agenda according to the latest development "flavour of the day" (Joanna), it is imperative for Feminist Advocates to manipulate the current development inclinations in favour of an agenda for gender equality. The current Canadian Minister for International Development, Maria Minna, is not as interested in gender issues as children’s rights. Consequently, many Transformative Feminist Advocates are working on child protection issues as a way of maintaining support for women’s rights work (Joanna).

Indeed, Transformative Feminist Advocates are utilizing non-politicized entry points in order to seek transformative change for women. For example, gender practitioners at IDRC are addressing internal gender equity issues through the least threatening means possible. Instead of overtly maintaining that they want to “figure out why we only have five female Program Officers out of seventy,” insider advocates are addressing this important question through the non-threatening entry point of a workload study (Rebecca). By making this into a workload study as opposed to an internal equity issue, insider feminists are successfully placing feminist issues on the formal agenda. Thus, Transformative Feminist Advocates are using non-feminist defined issues to subversively accomplish feminist goals.

It Matters Who Is There: The Importance of Transformative Feminist Advocates

This discussion has raised the question whether gender mainstreaming is an effective strategy with significant gains or a compromise of political will and critical analysis (or both). We must also question whether the strategies that
Transformative Feminist Advocates employ are able to influence the generally non-transformative practice of bureaucratic GAD.

My reading of the data I collected for this study suggests that individual practitioners can use these strategies for some (read: limited) transformative feminist change within mainstream development organizations. From this research it is evident that gender mainstreaming can be an effective strategy for broadening feminist spaces in mainstream development when employed by politically-minded practitioners seeking transformative feminist change. According to Signe Arnfred, the progress of gender equality as a politicized and transformative process depends “entirely on committed individuals, i.e. on the chance existence of feminists, male or female, in the departments” (Arnfred, 2001, p. 82).

Indeed, this research demonstrates that the presence of politically-minded, feminist-defined advocates is imperative to the reclamation of GAD as a transformative philosophy and practice in development. In many cases, gender equality would not be a priority if these individuals were not present within mainstream Canadian development institutions to push a women’s rights agenda. According to Kim, projects that advocate women’s human rights would not receive attention without either a marketing incentive or the presence of individuals who “scramble harder for those projects because [we] fundamentally believe they need to happen”. This research confirms the significance of individual discretion and human agency within the context of highly bureaucratized development institutions.

In short, it matters who is there. It matters that there are feminist-defined individuals in management positions so that project officers do not have to “fight
with anybody to integrate gender..." (Heather). It matters for IDRC interns that their president is "one of them who is a former [leader within Canada's] Status of Women" (Lisa). Moreover, it matters whether a Gender Mainstreaming Advocate or a Transformative Feminist Advocate facilitates a gender training session. Gender training can either impart technical skills for development planning and provide simplistic information on gender roles, or it can engage participants in a politicized process of conscientization\(^{35}\) that seeks to "deinstitutionalize male privilege within development policy and planning" (Kabeer, 1994, p. 264). Indeed, the experience reported from an IDRC training workshop demonstrates the significance of gender training as a potential transformative process of reflection and struggle, one that applies gender analysis to both macro structures and local development practice:

> [She] took the group through this amazing process of critical reflection and it ended up going far beyond gender per se and reflecting on power structures world-wide, issues of globalization, environment and the linkages. Everybody was commenting that "gender is way more than just women and men at the local level...[I]t's all about power relations at a very global level." (Sonya).

It matters whether a gender trainer has had "experience in popular education and participatory methodologies and can take the group through a process of reflection and critical thinking..."(Sonya), and whether they are committed to the questioning of personal (gendered) perspectives and fundamental power relations (Porter & Smyth, 1998, p. 64).

\(^{35}\) The concept of conscientization, or critical awareness, is foundational to Paulo Freire's radical pedagogy. Freire connects reflection and action together as a process that promotes the recognition and transformation of social, economic and political contradictions. Freire maintains that critical consciousness of reality is imperative to human action and social transformation. Freire asserts that critical awareness is made possible through praxis, which he defines as "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it." (Freire, 1998b, p. 33).
However, the presence of politically minded Transformative Feminist Advocates who push the boundaries of GAD to embrace transformative feminist ideals depends on an understanding of development structures and systems that are neither monolithic nor impermeable, but are conducive to challenge and change. In a discussion on political power and state machinery, DAWN asserts that the state is most commonly understood as a "monolithic organization that cannot be pressurized to change from within" (DAWN/Viviene Taylor, 1999, p. 1). Like globalization, state-driven development is often conceptualized as a natural, unalterable, and irreversible process that advances outside of human agency. In contrast, DAWN maintains that the state is a contradictory and contested terrain that is amenable to change from the inside and advocates substantial engagement:

we have not engaged with the state in a substantive way. We have allowed ourselves to differ from the state and its power rather than to challenge the state in any meaningful way (DAWN/Viviene Taylor, 1999, p. 13).

Similarly, this research suggests that international development machinery is not impervious; rather, it is a contested arena defined by complexity and contradictions that enables some change to occur from within. The presence of Transformative Feminist Advocates is imperative so that the existing cracks and contradictions within mainstream organizations "can be used to lever spaces for alternative strategies" (Arnfred, p. 85). Anne describes the significance of insider feminist advocates working within the confines of CIDA:

[Being a feminist] is one of the reasons that it's kind of exciting to be working inside the government of Canada, despite all the frustrations of it being a marginalized and submerged thing. There are a lot of people with feminist policy inside the government of Canada and inside CIDA. And they open up little openings and doorways. But I guess what I'm saying is that you can't
then expect to follow through all the way consistently with them because these are not consistently feminist organizations. (italics mine).

Indeed, the presence of politically-minded insider feminist advocates who utilize both formal and informal strategies is necessary if little openings and doorways for transformative feminist space in GAD are to be negotiated and sustained within mainstream organizations. However, Anne's quotation demonstrates that these openings and spaces are limited given that the structure, systems and principles of CIDA are not consistent with feminist organizations. Although the formal and informal strategies of Transformative Feminist Advocates are significant, it is nevertheless important, as Goetz contends "not to romanticize these subversions, to make more of them than they are. By any standards of measurement, they represent minute, molecular expressions of oppositional perspectives" (Goetz, 1997b, p. 194). These informal and formal strategies must be understood in light of the fact that most mainstream donor agencies will probably never be feminist in orientation. While Transformative Feminist Advocates are broadening the spaces for feminist change, these strategies are ultimately insufficient without connections to broader women's movements, as we shall see in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 4: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Transformative Feminist Advocates working from within mainstream development organizations are often frustrated by the limitations of an institutional context which marginalizes women's concerns and promotes gender hierarchy within its very structures, systems and processes. They find themselves enwrapped within an institutional system that allows for little change in favour of women's self-defined interests. Regardless of the strategies they employ, Transformative Feminist Advocates are indelibly linked to the formal mechanisms and discourse of gender mainstreaming which has become, according to Signe Arnfred, "an issue of checklists, planning and 'political correctness'" (Arnfred, 2001, p. 76) rather than political will and consciousness. Caught within a self-absorbed system of gender planning frameworks, gender disaggregated data, gender reports and gender training programs, they find themselves disconnected from the energy, issues, and questions emerging from within women's movements. In short, Transformative Feminist Advocates are trapped within the mechanisms of gender mainstreaming which has become a technocratic and professionalized career, disconnected from political processes.

This situation is especially problematic for those who hope that their presence within mainstream development will contribute to broader movements of feminist action for social change. Transformative Feminist Advocates working in mainstream contexts are conscious that the mainstream development machinery can potentially assimilate and weaken, even annihilate, their feminist ideals,
identities and motivations. Furthermore, they are acutely aware that the strategies discussed in Chapter Three (3) are ultimately insufficient in isolation from women's organizing and activism that occurs outside the confines of the development industry.

Consequently, some feminists are going outside of the mainstream development framework and forming (or joining) alternative feminist-defined development organizations that are making connections with broader women's movements and activist organizing. Through these alternative organizations, Transformative Feminist Advocates are finding ways to create and sustain transformative feminist space within the context of development processes. This alternative space is important because it exemplifies feminist-defined institutional structures and because it allows Transformative Feminist Advocates to establish linkages with autonomous feminist organizations36 in the Global South, something rarely done by feminists in mainstream organizations. These linkages broaden the possibilities for Transformative Feminist Advocates in mainstream organizations to connect with outside women's movements and activism. This is especially crucial for insider feminists to be better able to push the boundaries of mainstream GAD in favour of transformative feminist work. This chapter will demonstrate that the presence of Transformative Feminist Advocates in alternative contexts is necessary to exert pressure on resistant bureaucracies in order to expand spaces for feminist change within mainstream contexts.

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36 Autonomous organizations are generally differentiated from those with political affiliations. Autonomous groups are "generally small, with a strong emphasis on internal participatory democracy" (Calman, 1992, p. 13).
By examining the experiences and perspectives of Transformative Feminist Advocates in alternative feminist-defined organizations in the Canadian context, this chapter will examine the ways that these alternative organizational spaces broaden the possibilities for transformative feminist values, ideals and principles in the structures and systems of international development. A number of questions will guide the discussion throughout this chapter: What do feminist-defined organizations do differently? What alternative strategies do they employ to accomplish transformative feminist work in development? What do these strategies require? What can these strategies mean for Transformative Feminist Advocates within mainstream organizations?

The Structure and Priorities of Alternative Feminist Organizations

In contrast to the patriarchal structures of mainstream development agencies, some alternative organizations embody feminist values and principles within their very structures and ways of working. In particular, Inter Pares, an alternative feminist-defined organization, aspires to function with principles of parity and accountability in which all staff participate in the operations of the organization “as equals in its management” (Inter Pares, 2000b, p. 1). Their commitment to mutuality and parity is evident within all procedures of the organization:

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37 All four (4) alternative feminist-defined organizations in this study (ACPD, AWID, MATCH and Inter Pares) share important priorities and commitments to developing feminist space in development. However, because the participants from MATCH and Inter Pares actually engage in funding activity, they will feature more heavily in the following discussion. Although AWID and ACPD are alternative feminist-defined organizations, neither of these organizations actually fund projects in the Global South given that their mandate is specifically advocacy-focused.

38 Unless otherwise indicated, the information provided about the structure and priorities of Inter Pares work has been gleaned from interview data in addition to organizational documents (Inter Pares, 2000a, 2000b).
We all receive the same salary, except for people with dependents, because all of the work is equally valued. We still have titles—finance officer, program officers, executive director—but these titles represent functions, and not a differential in terms of some work being more important than other work. (Beth).

The organization's name Inter Pares means “among equals” and its co-operative management structure reflects the organization's commitment to “learn from and promote feminist thought” (Inter Pares, 2000b, p. 2). Beth asserts that this co-management structure enables Inter Pares to actively engage with feminist thought and process (Beth). Unlike the gendered and hegemonic power structures that dominate mainstream organizations, power and responsibility at Inter Pares is shared and all decision-making is undertaken through consensus (Beth). The commitment to consensus decision-making demonstrates one of the ways that alternative feminist-defined organizations are integrating human/feminist values such as respect, dialogue, honesty, encouragement and personal growth within development processes. Inter Pares is a “values-led organization” (Beth) that considers the building of relationships to be of immeasurable worth. Indeed, these organizational strategies are broadening the parameters for feminist-defined work in development by transforming conventional institutional cultures and structures, and by building intentional linkages/relationships with outside women's movements and organizations.

**Building Profound Relationships of Equality**

In fact, the building and strengthening of relationships with local women's organizations and networks is the central priority within the program strategies and policy goals of all the alternative feminist-defined organizations in this research.
study. This is reflected in the most recent Inter Pares Program Submission to CIDA:

The most critical task of Inter Pares staff is to seek, develop and maintain relationships of long and profound collaboration. These relationships are developed with people and organizations who share our values and preoccupations and are eager for us to work and learn together for a common cause. (Inter Pares, 2000a, p. 31).

Transformative Feminist Advocates working in alternative feminist-defined organizations intentionally and consciously seek out women's groups that hold similar feminist commitments and have women in leadership roles. For example, Inter Pares currently works in collaboration with local women's organizations around the issues of women's health; violence against women, migrant rights, mining issues; trafficking of women and children, and more general issues pertaining to women's human rights. Some of the organizations that Inter Pares is currently building relationships include UBINIG in Bangladesh (a development policy research organization concerned with women's rights and alternative approaches to rural development); Likhaan in the Philippines (a national women's health organization); and FEMUCAY in Peru (a federation of over 300 rural peasant women's groups). Similarly, MATCH International Centre (MATCH) specifically works in consultation with various women's organizations in the Global South such as Women's Voice in Malawi that provides civic education and advocates for women's rights; the Tanzania Women Lawyers Association; the African Feminist Initiative in Zimbabwe; the Ahmedabad Women's Action Group (AWAG) in India; the Rural Women's Organization Network (RWON) in Sri Lanka; women's shelters
in Peru; and Women's Media Watch (WMW) in Jamaica, among others (MATCH, 2000, p. 6-9).

These linkages with women's organizations do not reflect conventional ‘donor-client’ relations. Rather they are “intensive relationships” (Beth) that aim to embody feminist ways of interacting with transparency, honesty, intensity and unity. According to Miriam, the relationships that MATCH builds with local women's organizations are characterized by a deep level of intimacy through the development of mutual respect, understanding, openness, and appreciation. Miriam feels that unlike traditional donor-client partnerships, these intimate relationships enable MATCH staff members to gain a depth of insight into the cultural, political, social and gender relations of the countries wherein MATCH works.

Transformative Feminist Advocates in both alternative and mainstream contexts are critical of the dominant ‘partnership’ discourse that pervades mainstream organizations. They believe that this language of “partnerships” masks the existing equal power relationships in development which are defined solely by money transfers from wealthy donors to so-called 'needy beneficiaries'. These fund transfers (usually with many attached requirements) do not exemplify Transformative Feminist Advocates' commitments to consensual or mutual interactions. Beth commented that the conception of donor-client social partnerships has been increasingly perverted as the mainstream development industry has moved closer to private corporations and their interests (Beth). In contrast, Transformative Feminist Advocates seek to build profound relationships
(as opposed to partnerships) characterized by equality and sharing rather than dominance and manipulation. These two-way, long-term commitments explicitly built upon solidarity and a mutuality of interests in terms of “shared risks, shared values, [and] shared benefits” (Beth) are more possible within the context of alternative feminist-defined organizations. Indeed, Inter Pares’ organizational documents explicitly state that these transformational relationships are based upon the strengthening of feminist structures that nurture “collaborative action, learning and advocacy” (Inter Pares, 2000a, p. 31). Ideally, decisions on the use funds between alternative organizations and local women’s organizations are collaborative, so that money is merely one component of a multifaceted relationship. Indeed, Transformative Feminist Advocates working at alternative feminist-defined organizations do not conceptualize themselves as “funders” in the conventional sense of the term, but rather as “co-conspirators” (Beth) in relationship with women’s organizations that together are seeking to forward a politicized feminist vision of structural transformation and progressive social change. By re-conceptualizing conventional donor-client relations Transformative Feminist Advocates are making crucial connections between women’s movements/feminist activism and development processes. However, these profound relationships built and strengthened on feminist-defined values of cooperation, collaboration, and sharing, require fundamental changes to the way that development structures, systems and processes conventionally function.

39 According to a Program Officer at Inter Pares, the organization tries to “get beyond that donor-beneficiary relationship. We get to a point where we decide together how best to use the funds available” (Beth).
Who Sets the Agenda?—Re-defining Power Structures

The strengthening of linkages and building of relationships between alternative development agencies and local women's organizations requires a complete departure from existing hegemonic development processes. Transformative Feminist Advocates working in alternative organizations seek to develop relationships based upon principles of equality and thus they are radically reconceptualizing the conventional ways that power operates in development. Inter Pares not only espouses values of equality within its external relationships, it is simultaneously putting those values into practice in its internal organizational structures (Beth). By deconstructing the dichotomy between 'beneficiaries' and 'donors' (the conventional "us/them" discourse prevalent in mainstream organizations), alternative feminist-defined development agencies are interpreting local women's organizations as equal counterparts in the process of social transformation. By democratizing power, the thinking, values, interests and goals of local women's organizations become significant and crucial contributions to the work of ACPD, AWID, Inter Pares and MATCH so that social change ("development") becomes a process of collaboration rather than subjugation.

The building of mutual and respectful relationships requires the democratization of power structures in development through the valorization of local/indigenous knowledge. This is based upon an understanding that knowledge is never value-free and is always related to issues of power (Kabeer, 1994, p. 70). Indeed, the alternative feminist organizations in this study (AWID, ACPD, Inter

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40 According to Beth, "Inter Pares is a Latin term which means 'among equals', and the name is meant to imply the nature of the relationships we seek to develop with organizations in the Third World".
Pares, MATCH) remain critical of the hierarchy of knowledge in the dominant
development paradigm which privileges outsider's technical/positivistic knowledge
over local/experimental knowledge. All four (4) of the alternative feminist-defined
organizations represented in this study are critical of the proliferation of WID/GAD
'experts' and practitioners that have emerged in multilateral, bilateral and NGOs in
the past fifteen (15) years. See (Marchand & Papart, 1995). These organizations are
challenging the dominant development discourse which universalizes Western
scientific knowledge and defines people by what they do not know or what they do
not have. They understand that this dichotomy between 'popular knowledge' and
'expert knowledge' has serious implications in terms of how power in development
is exercised and who decides what constitutes legitimate knowledge. Moreover,
they recognize that this dichotomy contributes to the creation of a totalizing
worldview and apparatus in which the dominant development discourse produces
knowledge about, and exercises power over local people, including local women's
organizations (Escobar, 1995).

Through the valorization of local knowledge, alternative feminist-defined
development agencies seek to deconstruct and demystify this prevailing "cult of
expertism" (Floresca-Cawagas, 1996, p. 163) by creating and sustaining
transparent subject-subject relationships with local women's organizations. These
organizations are challenging mainstream development's paternalistic control over

41 An interpretation of 'the people's' knowledge as undifferentiated and homogeneous has prevailed in
much development thinking. According to Shapiro, "there is a tendency to take the vast complexity of
human experience and reduce it to two categories: that of the dominant elites, and that of the masses,
each with its own form of knowledge" (Shapiro, 1995, p. 39). This reductionist tendency excludes the
dynamics of social difference, the importance of value systems and the complexity of personal experience.
Consequently, the existence and significance of different ways of knowing are de-valued so that some
groups participate in development at the expense of other groups' silenced voices.
the ideas, visions and priorities of local women. In their funding relationships with local women's organizations, Inter Pares and MATCH do not simply incorporate a process of participatory needs identification within a pre-determined development agenda. Rather they are creating autonomous spaces for women to define and interpret their own needs and interests in the processes of social transformation. According to Selena:

[The women's organizations] define what the issues are in their reality and how they plan to change what they're experiencing. So our effort is really as a facilitator and as a catalyst for change....That's one of the things that sets MATCH apart from many other development organizations because we do not claim to know what change is necessary for the women that we work with.

Thus, Inter Pares and MATCH are widening the spaces for transformative feminist work in development by working to ensure that funding relationships do not shift control of community priorities and agendas from local women to dominant development institutions and their priorities (usually economic growth and market efficiency). In so doing, alternative feminist-defined organizations challenge the universalizing tendencies embedded in the dominant development discourse by attempting to root development processes within the specificities of people's daily lived experience. Indeed, the valorization of local knowledge requires alternative feminist-defined organizations to relinquish power by respecting and honouring local women's decisions/agendas:

We are very sensitive to let the women from the South define what they need and what their idea of change is. We don't impose it from here...Very few donors really are prepared to support initiatives that are designed, thought

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42 This research is not suggesting that that the situation of women in the Global south is homogeneous or ahistorical; rather the local realities of women's lives cannot be reduced to one singular or monolithic construct but are representative of and affected by the various political, geographical, religious, caste and class differences and identities which exist in all societies. See (Mohanty, 1991).
out and implemented by their partners. The word 'partners' has been bantered around these days, but true partnership is where you sometimes have to support [ideas] which you don’t particularly agree with (Selena).

From this statement it is evident that alternative organizations provide the space necessary for Transformative Feminist Advocates to attempt to build sustained egalitarian relationships with local women’s organizations based on principles of reciprocity and freedom. Indeed, women’s autonomy, understood as “the capacity and freedom to decide, to give one’s opinion, and to act” (Inter Pares, 2000a, p. 23) is a vital aspect of the relationships that Inter Pares and MATCH are seeking to build with women’s organizations in the Global South.

For the Transformative Feminist Advocates working with alternative feminist-defined organizations, the principle of women’s autonomy entails the right to choose one’s (understood as the individual and/or the community) path of development and to define one’s priorities. It also includes the right to choose not to engage in processes of development. It is about ensuring that women can attain greater power and control over their lives in order to challenge, and ultimately transform, the structures and institutions that oppress and subordinate them. Beth conceptualizes the role of alternative organizations in increasing local women’s autonomy is to create opportunities “for women to define themselves and who they are in society...to define themselves for themselves...and to define the kind of needs women have” (Beth). Similarly, Maria at ACPD maintains that development must be about “marginalized voices having a say and being respected and being able to realize their full potential” (Maria).
Re-conceptualizing Women’s Empowerment

In order to ensure these opportunities for greater autonomy exist, alternative feminist-defined organizations are seeking to create women-specific space in development. Both Inter Pares and MATCH not only establish linkages with women’s organizations, but they also contribute in varying ways to bringing women together to organize collectively for feminist change. Indeed, MATCH specifically supports the physical meeting of women outside of their regular every-day work to look at what they are doing, to share and cross-fertilize ideas....We see this as an opportunity, as a space to meet, to share ideas, to change strategies. (Selena).

Transformative Feminist Advocates in alternative organizations recognize that these autonomous spaces enable women to make changes to their individual and collective power and therefore challenge the structural causes of oppression and subordination (economic, political, intra-household, ideological, material) in their lives. As decentralized, autonomous and informal structures, local women’s and feminist organizations validate the primacy of women’s agency in decision-making processes of development. They recognize that autonomous women’s organizations are effective strategic allies with the potential to act as political forces that transform unequal power structures at both the local and state/policy levels. Unlike most development institutions which perceive poor women in the Global South as powerless, disenfranchised and oppressed, alternative development organizations and the Transformative Feminist Advocates working there recognize the power of these women to build social networks, strengthen solidarity, and create
new forms of critical consciousness.43 By creating spaces for the collective organization and mobilization of women, Transformative Feminist Advocates in alternative feminist-defined organizations are connecting feminist activism and women’s movements working for social change with development processes. In so doing, they contribute to the re-conceptualization of women’s “empowerment” altogether. Interpretations of “empowerment” differ according to the ways in which power is understood which explains why “people and organizations as far apart politically as feminists, Western politicians, and the World Bank have embraced the concept with such enthusiasm” (Rowlands, 1995, p. 104). By building relationships with local women’s organizations, Transformative Feminist Advocates in alternative feminist-defined organizations are challenging the assumption that empowerment is limited to, or definitively linked with, economic growth. Indeed, mainstream organizations often conceptualize power and powerlessness within a narrow economic framework. However, alternative feminist-defined approaches maintain that empowerment must address multiple sites of power and all relevant structures, systems and institutions that systematically subordinate poor women.44 Alternative feminist practice in development goes beyond an understanding of empowerment as a quantifiable process that enables access to formal decision-making spheres. Feminist interpretations of power

43 Indeed, women’s collective organizing efforts challenge the portrayal of poor rural women as a homogenous and powerless group who are victims of oppressive systems. This perception is based in a welfare approach to development that is rooted in an idea of women’s pre-conditioned total absence of power. However, Naila Kabeer argues that “...powerlessness suggests a total absence of power whereas in reality even those who appear to have very little power are still able to resist, to subvert and sometimes to transform the conditions of their lives” (Kabeer, 1994, p. 224).

44 This assertion can also be found in feminist literature. For example, Srilatha Batiwala argues that empowerment must be understood as “...a process that addresses all sources and structures of power” (Batiwala, 1994, p. 6).
include women's access to *intangible* processes of collective organizing and mobilization (Batliwala, 1994). While mainstream development agencies rarely identify women's empowerment as a goal unto itself, Transformative Feminist Advocates in ACPD, AWID, MATCH and Inter Pares see empowerment and women's collective organizing as a crucial component of the larger process of social transformation.

### Politicizing Development as Activists

Thus, Transformative Feminist Advocates in alternative feminist-defined organizations are re-politicizing development processes through establishing intentional connections with broader women's social movements. These linkages enable the reconceptualization of women's empowerment and re-definition of donor-client relations in ways that expand the possibilities in development for transformative feminist change. These Transformative Feminist Advocates do not see themselves as 'gender specialists', but rather as activists who are consciously engaging with women’s movements for social change. Beth asserts that “We don’t see ourselves as employees so much as activists who want to work together because we think we can do more together than on our own” (Beth). Indeed, all of the participants in this study working in alternative feminist-defined organizations are simultaneously committed to, and integrated in, feminist organizing within the Canadian context. Unlike Transformative Feminist Advocates working in mainstream organizations which are apolitical in orientation, those working in alternative feminist-defined organizations have organizational support for specifically and intentionally political identities. In other words, intimate
relationships with highly political counterparts in the Global South are only possible for individuals and organizations with activist orientations and politicized perspectives.

In particular, Inter Pares is forging linkages between women's movements organizing for change in the Global South and feminist/activist organizing in Canada. Inter Pares supports national women's movements like NAC and seeks to internationalize Canadian women's movements by providing forums for women from around the world to interact and dialogue about their common and different concerns and visions (Beth). Given that "most Canadian NGOs don't have a mandate to focus on social change in Canada" (Beth), Beth from Inter Pares sees the organization's commitment to building linkages between women's movements in the North and South as unique. However, it is not only this commitment but its particular form that is unique. Only Inter Pares funds both Northern and Southern activities and groups. However, staff members at MATCH are highly involved and very committed individually to women's social organizing in Canada and the organization supports information sharing, communication, and increasing mutual awareness between Northern and Southern women's groups and movements (Selena). ACPD is building an international feminist campaign around development and population with participants from the South and North. AWID is maximizing the linkages between those in GAD and those outside of GAD, and is constantly and actively pursuing the re-politicization of GAD.45 This includes coordinating an

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45 According to Joanna, AWID is attempting to reinvigorate and re-politicize development practice by "trying to get people to ask: What are we all doing this for?...To be very provocative, to ask pretty challenging questions about the kind of things that we're doing and how we could be doing them more
international gathering of gender practitioners and feminist activists from North and South every two years.

Mainstream GAD programs often operate in terms of donor-client relations which, according to Angela Miles, potentially “displace/disrupt/interrupt political connections among autonomous women’s groups and activists in ‘third’ and ‘first’ worlds” (Miles, 1996, p. 168). However, the varied practices and global commitments of these four feminist agencies demonstrates the possibilities of development processes that effectively promote both North-South and South-South coalitions:

by linking the actions of our overseas partners to social action in Canada, and by bringing an international perspective to Canadian activism, we contribute to analysis, collaboration and community action on issues that affect us all. (Inter Pares, 2000a, p. 32).

**Re-Defining Development as Social/Economic Justice**

Thus, activist-oriented feminists are working with a completely different understanding of human development than the mainstream development industry. By building profound relationships with local women’s organizations, Transformative Feminist Advocates in feminist development agencies are able to radically reconceptualize development as “social and economic justice and equality” (Beth) and “freedom from violence” (Selena). Transformative Feminist Advocates are re-interpreting development as a process that complements, expands, and broadens the women’s movement’s possibilities for transforming the dominant economic system. At both an organizational and personal level, the relationship between effectively. So to be a provocateur [and] get us all to keep being critical and analytical about what works and what doesn’t work.”
global economic power dynamics and the dominant development system are being questioned. Together with women's organizations in the North and Global South, alternative feminist-defined development agencies are articulating direct and forceful challenges to the dominant one-dimensional, economistic, patriarchal, and linear conception of development, progress, and growth. Their programs maintain a critical perspective on the fundamentally perverse basis of the global system which they see as having de-humanized the economy; displaced and impoverished women; de-legitimized women's reproductive labour; exploited the environment; commodified human and non-human life; centralized decision-making power; dichotomized values and ethics into separate domains of the public and the private and provoked mass human rights violations. They are demonstrating the harsh and life-threatening effects of structural adjustment programs, increased privatization, the debt crisis, increased global militarization, and the commercialization of the economy—all of which have worked to inhibit women's access to resources and their ability to satisfy basic needs for women, their families and communities.\(^{46}\)

We believe that underdevelopment is not a natural thing, poverty has been created and perpetuated by those whose interests are served by the status quo — elites in North and South. People are impoverished and kept impoverished by the dominant economic system, by patriarchy and by unequal power relationships within and among countries; We want to try and change this in Canada as well as globally by working in concert with other groups. (Beth).

Alternative feminist-defined development organizations provide contacts which enable the promotion of holistic, non-dualistic, non-hierarchical, non-

\(^{46}\) Sen and Grown reveal the detrimental effects of development on food production, local self-sufficiency, and the access and availability of food, fuel and water in the Global South. Specifically, Sen and Grown discuss the impact of cash cropping, the results of privatization on rural energy shortages, the debt crisis and global militarization. (Sen & Grown, 1987).
anthropomorphic, ecologically-oriented, anti-colonial, anti-modernizationist, and women-centred view of human "development". To this end, they are actively changing their own institutional structures in favour of feminist-defined ways of working/being as well as making important connections with women's movements and feminist activist organizing.

**The Advocate/Activist Dichotomy**

Transformative Feminist Advocates working within mainstream contexts recognize the radical significance of the relationships alternative feminist-defined organizations are building with local women's organizations. They know that the insular, technocratic and quantitative processes of gender mainstreaming disconnect the GAD industry from the energy and visions of feminist/activist organizing. The limited space within which Transformative Feminist Advocates are able to manoeuvre through various formal and informal strategies (Chapter Three) highlights the contradictions between the theory of GAD and the reality of GAD as it is operationalized in mainstream organizations. In theory, GAD emphasizes the importance of women's local organizing and collective consciousness raising in order to effect structural change (Rathgeber, 1990, p. 494). For instance, GAD theorist Kate Young writes of the "transformatory potential" of gender planning which links GAD in a tangible way to global women's movements and collective empowerment through the formation of locally-based alliances of women (Young, 1997, pp. 370-371). Similarly, Naila Kabeer's progressive "Social Relations Framework" links gender planning with political mobilization, structural transformation and the redistribution of power within all social institutions where
power and resources are located in society (Kabeer, 1994).

Although the theoretical discourse of GAD links development with women’s collective mobilization, in reality, however, gender mainstreaming is generally disengaged from political processes. Transformative Feminist Advocates working in mainstream contexts are aware of these disconnections and the ways in which their work in gender mainstreaming does not establish substantial linkages with local women’s organizations. While the policies of mainstream organizations pay lip service to linkages with local women’s organizations, in reality most gender equality work is done in alliance with large research institutions, technical partners and private corporations. Though most Transformative Feminist Advocates assert that they should be working more closely with women’s organizations, the institutional context of mainstream organizations and the technocratic focus of gender mainstreaming processes prevents this from happening in any substantive or sustainable way (Anne, Sonya, Lisa, Danielle). Consequently, Transformative Feminist Advocates in these organizations recognize that they are situated within a

47 For example, CIDA’s 1999 Gender Equality policy states that “Partnership with women’s organizations is necessary to assist the process of promoting equal participation” [CIDA, 1999 #66].

48 It is important to note that many CIDA country programs have recently implemented Gender Equality Funds (GEF) as a responsive mechanism which provides monetary support to a cross-section of local organizations that are addressing gender equality issues (CIDA Brazil Program, 2001; CIDA India Program, 1999; CIDA Malawi Program, 2000b). The India GEF works closely with various civil society and governmental organizations that are undertaking community-based initiatives to enhance women’s empowerment, advocacy and networking, and are seeking to mainstream gender equality in both public and private sectors (CIDA India Program, 1999, p. 2). However, the GEFs do not represent a substantive commitment to gender equality given that these funds are not characteristic of an overall program focus and constitute only a very small portion of a program’s comprehensive budget (Anne). For example, the project budget for the India Program GEF of $500, 000 over three years is comparatively insignificant compared to the program’s $24.8 million annual budget (CIDA India Program, 1999). Furthermore, the goal of the India GEF to “support the social and economic policy reform process” (CIDA India Program, 1999, p. 1) does not reflect a relationship of mutuality and equality between CIDA and local organizations but demonstrates that the GEF is often an extension of a pre-determined dominant agenda. For example, Laura asserts that while the GEF of another country program at CIDA seeks to support local women’s groups to achieve their own purposes, it nevertheless supports “the kinds of the things we like to do...our own purposes and our own projects” (italics mine).
context which considers linkages with local women's networks and organizations as the “last strategy” (Sonya) in development operations. Sonya from IDRC noted that internal gender analysis capacity-building, the integration of gender sensitive research and gender disaggregated data are much more acceptable actions than attempting to “explicitly focus our energies on targeting women’s groups for the sake of women’s empowerment”.

Indeed, Transformative Feminist Advocates in both mainstream and alternative agencies maintain that the whole notion of women’s empowerment as collective mobilization is completely overlooked in mainstream development contexts. In the last ten years women’s empowerment has emerged as a fashionable development ideal so that even research and programs which remain extractive and top-down in orientation are described as 'empowering to local peoples' in order to match the current industry trends. As women’s empowerment has been popularized and its policy discourse has proliferated, its grassroots origins and political meaning have been diluted; creating a concept that is often overused and lacks conceptual clarity and analytical power (Anne, Joanna).

Transformative Feminist Advocates recognize that mainstream organizations do not address the many facets of women’s subordination; rather, these organizations maintain a narrow understanding of empowerment that reflects

49 According to Kabeer: “The concept [of empowerment] has traveled beyond the grassroots. The major international development agencies now routinely refer in their policy declarations to the empowerment of the poor and of women. However there is no consensus on the meaning of the term and it is frequently used in a way that robs it of any political meaning, sometimes as no more than a substitute word for integration or participation in processes whose main parameters have already been set elsewhere (Kabeer, 1994, p. 224).
internal priorities of economic growth and efficiency.\textsuperscript{50} Most commonly understood as a rationale for bringing women into the male-dominated productive economy, mainstream agencies often operationalize empowerment by providing women with skills training and access to economic resources through credit loans (Anne, Rena).\textsuperscript{51} According to a Transformative Feminist Advocate working within CIDA, women's empowerment is understood at CIDA to mean that, "those women now have some more resources to be part of the economy" (Anne). Ensuring that women have economic credit and training is "as far as [women's empowerment] often goes" (Anne). Anne's observations are reflected in organizational program documents that focus on "empowering women to maximize their important contribution to the nation's economy" (CIDA Malawi Program, 1998, p. 5). This suggests that mainstream organizations are co-opting the women's empowerment discourse as political capital to promote business as usual.\textsuperscript{52} It is not, then,

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{50} Naila Kabeer's delineation of power is central to an understanding of women's empowerment (Kabeer, 1994). Specifically, Kabeer delineates four distinct categories of power: power-over, power-to, power-with and power-within (Kabeer, 1994, p. 225-245). 'Power-over' borrows from Foucault's understanding of power (Foucault, 1980) that is evident through discourse and thus defines the relationship of domination and subordination evident in the decision-making processes of development. 'Power-to' is a form of empowerment that is entrenched in a WID approach that seeks to confer power to women through improving their access to economic resources. The notion of 'power-within' refers to the development of a critical consciousness through empowerment efforts in order to gain new perspectives on women's daily-lived situations: "New forms of consciousness arise out of women's newly acquired access to the intangible resources of analytical skills, social networks, organizational strength, solidarity and sense of not being alone" (Kabeer, 1994, p. 246). Of particular interest to this paper is Kabeer's final definition of power, namely 'power-with', which she defines as the collective strength that results from the building of alliances and the strengthening of solidarity between women. This power, which is derived from a collective decision to challenge the structures of subordination, is considered to be "...the most important transormatory resource" (Kabeer, 1994, p. 253) at the disposal of women. Countering the dominant individualistic understanding of empowerment prevalent in mainstream development institutions, the notion of power-with stresses the importance of women's organizations to promote transformative change within society. (Oxalo & Baden, 1997, p. 4).

\textsuperscript{51} Kate Young asserts that skills training and credit loans address the symptoms of disadvantage rather than the structural causes of oppression (Young, 1993, p. 134).

\textsuperscript{52} The idea that agencies are overemphasizing the economic aspects of women's empowerment discourse is not new (El-Bushra, 2000, p. 56). Indeed, since the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women, empowerment discourse has become a popular, and albeit subversive, way for mainstream agencies to
\end{footnotesize}
surprising that these organizations are not attempting to strengthen already-existing women's organizations in the Global South, nor are they recognizing the significance of collective organization which results from the building of alliances and the strengthening of solidarity among women.

Thus, it is evident that Transformative Feminist Advocates in mainstream organizations are situated in a context that does not value women's collective organizing or attempt to build relationships with local women's organizations and networks. Naila Kabeer has described the resulting gap between women's movements and GAD as a "Bureaucratic-Activist Divide" (Kabeer, 1994, p. 87). This gap is aggravated by the fact that few Transformative Feminist Advocates in mainstream agencies are personally engaged with Canadian women's movements or activist organizing. In fact, in this study only three (3) out of the fourteen (14) women working in mainstream organizations are involved in Canadian women's movements in one capacity or another. The disconnection between the realities of Canadian issues and practitioners' work in development is crucial because it further deepens the divide between women's activists and gender equality advocates in mainstream development contexts. According to Maria:

in Canada [there are] a lot of people who may be doing gender work but they don't necessarily come from movements. They may come at it through academics and then they end up at CIDA being an officer and having to do gender as part of their work...How can you be working on poverty issues outside of Canada if you don't understand what's happening in Canada. To

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53 To clarify, Transformative Feminist Advocates are disconnected from both local women's organizations/networks and alternative feminist-defined organizations that are building relationships with local women's movements.
me that's just basic. And I think for a lot of the gender consultants...a big part of what is missing from their analysis is the reality of Canada. (Maria).

Transformative Feminist Advocates in mainstream development operate in a technocratic, professionalized, and apolitical gender machinery that quantifies women's empowerment and is “not listening to the women's movement; they are not soliciting those voices at all” (Joanna). Furthermore, they exist within a development industry that is impervious to their own feminist commitments to structural transformation for women's emancipation. According to Joanna, the mainstream GAD model is operating within a “WID agenda” that is pushing women's economic empowerment and not tackling the harder issues of structural transformation. Mainstream Transformative Feminist Advocates recognize their complicity in this agenda and the reality of the Bureaucratic-Activist divide which contributes to the de-politicization of women's movements.
CONCLUSION: BUILDING ALLIES...TRANSFORMING STRUCTURES

The experience of Transformative Feminist Advocates in development shows that profound relationships of equality, solidarity and mutuality between women's organizations and development agencies are imperative to the broadening of feminist spaces in development. However, Transformative Feminist Advocates are acutely aware that the conservative mainstream development industry will never be wholly aligned with feminist principles, goals, or ideals. Consequently, Transformative Feminist Advocates recognize the importance of building alliances with alternative feminist-defined organizations and with local women's organizations if they are to push the boundaries of GAD in favour of feminist goals. Furthermore, they recognize that connections with advocates and activists outside mainstream development are necessary support for their own formal tactics and informal strategies for feminist change in mainstream contexts. According to a Transformative Feminist Advocate working at IDRC:

I would like to feel that the feminist movement or certain [women's] groups [sic], that I was responding to their voice, that we had contact, that they wanted to know what was happening inside and I could find a space to find out what was happening outside and there could be some linkages. (Sonya)

The significance of these alliances is confirmed in the literature on the relationship between GAD and global feminism(s). Many theorists argue that this relationship must be complementary if solidarity is to be forged between mainstream development agencies and women's movements/feminist activism (Miller & Razavi, 1998; Oseen, 1999; Razavi, 1998; Smyth, 1999). Indeed, Miller
and Razavi asserts that “bridge-building” between “femocrats” and women’s movements is necessary to bring external pressure on mainstream agencies for transformative change (Miller & Razavi, 1998, p. 6). Similarly, Collette Oseen argues that an organizational strategy of “entrustment” is essential for an egalitarian relationship between feminist activists and insider femocrats to be useful for political action (Oseen, 1999, pp. 108-110). Likewise, Razavi maintains that transformative feminist work in development is utterly dependent on a complementary relationship between insider advocates and outsider activists:

The role of the internal advocate is thus inevitably conservative, as she works within the constraints posed by her institution. Her work can only become transformative if and when institutional outsiders—activists and scholars—through political pressure and/or new knowledge, facilitate a re-definition of the organization’s strategies for achieving its mandate, thereby stretching open those boundaries. As such the roles of the practitioners and scholars/activists are different, but complementary. What is needed is more tolerance of the different strategies of feminist advocacy, and a clearer recognition of the fact that policy discourses are context specific. (Razavi, 1998, p. 22).

However, it is insufficient to outline the relationship between GAD and feminism as purely complementary. The Advocate-Activist divide reflects the distinct contexts within which GAD and women’s movements are situated. Recognizing that GAD is potentially harmful to women’s movements, women’s organizations are often reluctant to become too closely associated with bureaucrats—feminist-defined or not—working in mainstream development contexts. Furthermore, the history of co-optation of women’s organizations by the development industry has, according to many theorists and activists, “rendered difficult relations of solidarity between women’s movements in North and South” (Arnfred, 2001, p. 79). Consequently, a complex and “often mutually distrustful”
relationship has been fostered between the two entities (Miller & Razavi, 1998, p. 9). Thus, the relationship between GAD and transformative feminism is complementary yet simultaneously defined by tension. This complex relationship of connection and tension is not one of antagonism but rather of “co-operative conflict” (Young, 1993, p. 165) between women’s movements and transformative gender practitioners. GAD and feminism will always exist in a state of conflict given that GAD is situated within a development industry that is itself inimical to women’s movements/activist organizing. Nevertheless, Transformative Feminist Advocates and women’s movements are interdependent because of their differences, not in spite of them. These interconnections are evident in Lisa’s analysis of the relationship between outside women’s movements and a dominant gender machinery:

And what the head of the [national] women’s bureau didn’t seem to understand is that the women’s activist groups in the country were very important in terms of saying things that she couldn’t say officially. They were very important in terms of pushing the envelope and creating space for her to move into. And she didn’t understand that there’s an important relationship between her and those activist groups [and] that they needed to strategize so that the women’s groups could say the things she couldn’t say, so that she could then begin to pressure the government to bring policies on board that were much needed and weren’t even on the policy debate. And that’s where I feel the relationship is between policy makers, legislators, decision-makers and activist groups. And I don’t feel that relationship is always well understood between the actors. Too often you see activist groups castigating people in official positions because they’re not taking a lot of stance, and too often people who are in the official positions are castigating the activists for being unrealistic. What these two groups of people have to understand is that they’re interdependent. They rely on each other to move the agenda forward.
Thus, it is imperative for both Transformative Feminist Advocates and outside women's organizations to recognize that the inherent tension between them is reflective of different contexts and not necessarily different visions of change.

It is crucial for Transformative Feminist Advocates within the context of mainstream organizations to remember why they are engaged in their work as gender practitioners and to seek as far as possible to re-politicize GAD through direct contact with women's movements. It is also crucial for Transformative Feminist Advocates to recognize that they cannot infuse development with feminist goals, ideals and principles in isolation from outside pressure for change. As Signe Arnfred contends: “The important thing is for feminists in the North to realize that we too, if we want to change the male bias of the market system, need the support of feminists and women's movements in the South” (Arnfred, 2001, p. 80).

The formal tactics and informal strategies that Transformative Feminist Advocates employ, though important in negotiating increased space for incremental feminist change in development, will never be adequate alone to politicize gender mainstreaming processes or transform hegemonic development structures. My interview data and analysis of organizational documents demonstrates that building allies through connections with women's movements is crucial for insiders to make mainstream development more amenable to transformative feminist goals, values and principles. It is through these relationships of co-operative conflict that GAD can become less about planning, monitoring and checklists and more about political struggle and critical analysis. Indeed, politically-minded Transformative Feminist Advocates working within the bureaucratic, hierarchical and oppressive structures of
mainstream development institutions need to be linked with outside women's movements and feminist activist organizing (either through direct linkages with local women's organizations and/or through connections with alternative feminist-defined organizations that are themselves building profound relationships with women's movements/activist organizing) to push the boundaries of GAD to embrace the energy and spirit of women's organizing and political processes.
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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS*

**Background**

- Could you summarize how you are involved with gender issues in the work that you do at this organization or in previous jobs/experiences?
  - What are some of the central GAINS or successes that have been made in terms of gender equality in this programme? How were you involved? [Please be specific].
  - What is your deeper motivation for being involved in gender equality work in development?
  - Would you define yourself as a feminist? If so, how does this identity affect the work that you do at this organization? Do you integrate a feminist perspective into your work? How?
  - Do you consider gender-development to be a place for real change for women, or a site of struggle? Why? What is your sense of possibilities for gender goals in development in the work that you do?

**Policies**

- Does this organization have a specific policy on gender? What are some of this organization's key commitments to gender?
  - Were women's organizations included in the policy-making process—how? If not, how were local women's interests addressed when formulating this policy?
  - Do you feel that these policy goals are translated into practice at the project level?
  - Would you say that feminist ideals/commitments/goals are integrated into the gender programmes/policies/strategies in this organization? Does this policy reflect the concerns of women's movements? How? [please be specific].

*The semi-structured interviews included various open-ended questions to provide for an unanticipated range of unbiased responses and to ensure that respondents vocalize opinions in their own words. This appendix provides examples of questions that may or may not have been asked depending on priorities that emerged and how the dialogue evolved. The first question in each category signifies the central question that was asked, whereas the indented questions signify the supplementary questions that were asked only if the information was not covered spontaneously by the participant. These indented "questions" represent thematic areas that I kept in mind throughout the open-ended interview and were specifically directed as questions to the interview subject only if the material had not yet been covered.
In your opinion, where does the policy fall short? In what ways, if any, is it limited?

What would you change, if anything, about this organization's gender policy?

Practically, how can women's voices be increased at the policy-making level in both a substantive and sustainable manner?

**Challenges**

- Have you faced any challenges/constraints/resistance in trying to forward gender equality goals/projects in your work?

  - What have these challenges been? Why do you think these challenges [still] exist? How do you deal with them?

  - What are your main concerns with GAD? [What are its limitations?]. What are your greatest frustrations/concerns doing gender work in development?

  - Do you feel that gender issues/projects are given adequate recognition and support at this organization? Why/not? If not, how does this lack of support manifest itself?

  - Are there adequate resources designated for gender-development projects in your programme? If not, why do you think this is?

  - Are there any ideological constraints that you have faced in your attempts to do gender-development work?

  - Have you experienced any outright resistance to your attempts to do GE work? Could you give an example?

  - Is feminist discourse utilized here in this programme—how? Do you think that feminist discourse is intentionally kept at a distance from development institutions? Why do you think this is? What keeps feminism at a distance from development organizations?

  - What would happen if gender activists/feminists gained more power and influence in development organizations...what would change?
**Strategies**

- What sort of strategies do you utilize in order to forward gender or feminist goals/values/ideals/commitments in your work?
  
  o Do you attempt to build linkages through project planning with local women's organizations?

  o Are you involved in any formal or informal alliances with other GE practitioners? How have these alliances been built? What purpose do you think they serve?

  o What arguments do you use in order to put gender equality or feminist issues on the formal agenda of this organization?

  o How have you, or others you know, tried to change the structures or processes of the way this organization does development work to make them more amenable to gender goals or to make them more friendly to feminist goals?

  o Are there compromises that you have made, in terms of modification of language or agenda, in order to forward GE projects?

  o Are there any political or personal dilemmas that you have faced as a gender practitioner at this organization?

  o How could GAD be strengthened or changed to be a force for progressive social change?

**On Global Feminism and Gender Equality**

- How do you perceive the relationship between global feminism and its ideals and GAD ideals/concerns/goals?
  
  [tension/complementary/antagonistic/synonymous/ambiguous/compatible]

  o Do you see global feminism's project for social change as the same or different from that of gender equality in development? How so?

  o Do you see any difference in the issues and concerns taken up by GAD discourse in development organizations and the issues and concerns of feminist activists and women's movements...What would these be?

  o Do you think tensions exist between GAD and Global Feminism? If so, what would these be? Why do you think tensions exist?
Do you think that feminist values/goals should be integrated into, and ultimately transform, development? How could this happen?

Do you think spaces for transformative feminist perspectives/values/projects currently exist within gender mainstreaming programmes? Where? Do you think that GAD can be used as an entry point to more feminist transformative work?

How can spaces for feminist values/goals/commitments/projects be strengthened within GAD?

Do you think that gender equality in development or GAD is connected or disconnected from the women’s movement(s) in particular? How so?

Do you think GAD has a place within global women’s movements...what would this be?

Do you think gender-development has been helpful to local women’s movements and grassroots women’s concerns? Or has it been damaging? How?

Do you think that gender-development processes strengthen or weaken relations between women’s movements in the North and South?

Are you personally linked/involved with women’s movements in Canada outside of your work at this organization? How so?

On Women’s Empowerment

• What is your understanding of women’s empowerment?

• How is empowerment conceptualized and then operationalized within this Programmes at this organization? Does this differ from your own understanding?

  Do you think this interpretation of empowerment means real change for women? Why?

  Would collective mobilization/women’s collective organizing be considered part of this organization’s definition of women’s empowerment?

  How would you measure whether women’s empowerment goals are being attained? What sort of indicators would demonstrate this?
Do you think that GAD limits or expands the possibilities for women's empowerment in development?

On Donor-Client Relations

- Are intentional linkages being forged with women's organizations and networks in this organization? Why/not?
  - What is the nature of this organization's relationship with women's organizations in the global South?
  - Does this organization fund local women's organizations? In general, which types of women's orgs?
  - How do you think that women's movements/organizations perceived by this organization?
  - Does this organization work towards strengthening spaces for collective organization and mobilization of women? How? Are there any specific projects which focus on building the capacity for women to organize together?
  - What would a closer relationship/stronger linkages with women's organizations require? What are the challenges to the creation and sustainability of such linkages?
  - How and on what basis can solidarity be developed between development institutions and local women's organizations?
### APPENDIX B: LIST OF PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Pseudonyms</th>
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<th>Organizational Identity</th>
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<td>Maria</td>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>Alternative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWID**</td>
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<td>Joanna</td>
<td>International network</td>
<td>Alternative</td>
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<td>Kim</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Mainstream</td>
</tr>
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<td>Mainstream</td>
</tr>
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<td>Selena Miriam</td>
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<td>Martha Shirley</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Action Canada for Population and Development
** Association for Women's Rights in Development
*** Canadian International Development Agency
**** International Development Research Centre
Greetings:

I am writing to invite individuals working with [this organization] to participate in a research study on Gender and Development (GAD) that I am undertaking as part of my Master's thesis at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). For this study I am interested in gathering various perspectives which gender practitioners hold on both the potential and the limitations of the GAD framework and women's empowerment ideals. Moreover, I am interested in the linkages between donor agencies and local women's organizations or networks, especially in relation to gender planning practices. I believe that it is important for practitioners and theorists alike to determine the ways in which GAD can be strengthened as a force for progressive social change. Through this research process, I hope to offer a reconceptualization of the GAD framework which maximizes its potential as a transformative framework for women.

In order to address these issues effectively in the context of my thesis, I have undertaken a thorough review of pertinent academic literature and development documents. In addition to this background work, I hope to include interviews and documents on gender equality from your organization that will provide an important perspective necessary to a holistic understanding of these issues. However, I would like to emphasize that this project does NOT constitute a case study of [this organization]. Rather, I am trying to interview a variety of gender practitioners from a diverse range of development organizations. It is the individual perspective and experiences, in addition to reflections on the agency, of which I am interested.

I recognize that any research project places demands upon participants for precious resources, especially that of your time. It is my hope that this process will be mutually beneficial and engaging. Moreover, I intend to conduct these interviews at a time and place that is suitable for you. Please send me an e-mail to indicate whether you would be interested in contributing to my research work. Lastly, I would appreciate any suggestions you might have as to other individuals at [this organization] whom I might be able to interview.

Many thanks,

Sarah E. Hendriks
MA Candidate: Adult Education and Community Development at OISE/UT
shendriks@oise.utoronto.ca
APPENDIX D: LETTER OF CONSENT AND PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Dear ************,

Thank you for your consideration in contributing to my research. As I noted in our first contact, I am currently working on a Master of Arts degree at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT) in the department of Adult Education and Community Development. Specifically, I have chosen to focus this research on furthering my understanding of the theoretical framework of Gender and Development (GAD) and the social practices and policies of development agencies. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with further information that you will need to understand my proposed research project, and to decide whether to participate.

The nature and purpose of the research is:

- To examine whether the empowerment claims of the Gender and Development (GAD) framework are realized in the policies, practitioner experiences, and donor-client relations of diverse Canadian development agencies. In so doing, to consider an alternative conceptualization of gender that offers a transformative framework for women.
- To interview gender practitioners and/or policy-makers for their perspectives on the limitations and/or possibilities of GAD to be a transformative framework for women and a force for progressive social change.
- To recognize how GAD practitioners and/or policy-makers understand the role between donors and local organizations. To better understand and analyze the relationship, or lack of relationship, between formal development agencies which maintain a policy commitment to gender equality, and local women’s autonomous organizations and networks.

Essentially, I will analyze organizational policies on gender equality. In addition, I hope to meet with you in order to discuss in an open interview format your perspectives on the strengths and limitations of the GAD framework. I will be taping these conversations; transcribing the tape to a document; and analyzing this document for information that is pertinent to my thesis. Please see the attached document entitled “Participant Information” for further detailed information on the research process.

You participation will be completely voluntary and anonymous and, should you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time. However, my ability to guarantee anonymity may be limited by the size of the specific department where
you work. Other limitations such as a break-in to my office or e-mail are possible, but highly unlikely.

It is hoped that this research project might benefit yourself in many positive ways. I foresee this research providing an interesting opportunity to discuss a topic that is relevant to your work and to the gender policy goals and operations at your organization. Moreover, I hope that the research findings will be useful to future gender planning strategies and/or policies. Lastly, I believe that this project offers an exciting opportunity for you to contribute to the linking of two important fields of research, namely feminist political theory and development studies. Please read through the enclosed document and then sign the bottom of this letter indicating your consent, should you choose to participate.

Thank you again for considering my request. Please feel free to contact me with any additional questions.

Sincerely,

Sarah E. Hendriks

Angela Miles
Thesis Supervisor OISE/UT
252 Bloor Street West
Toronto, ON., M5S 1V6
(416) 923-6641
amiles@oise.utoronto.ca

Please check the appropriate box and return one signed copy to me and keep the other for your reference. If you choose to participate, I will contact you shortly in order to set up an interview time that is conducive to your work schedule and location.

I agree to participate in the ways described above. If I am making any exceptions or stipulations these are:

I do not wish to participate in the proposed research project.

_________________________________________ Signature
_________________________________________ Printed Name
_________________________________________ Date
_________________________________________ E-mail address
Participant Information

1. Interviews

This study involves you participating in one (1) informal interview with me that will last approximately 1-1.5 hours. We will be engaged in an open interview, which will progress much like a conversational dialogue. Areas, which I hope to touch on during the course of this interview, include:

- Donor-Client relations re: Gender and Development (GAD)
- Women's empowerment in development.
- Global feminism and global women's movements

I will be taping this conversation; transcribing the tape to a document; and analyzing this document for information pertinent to my thesis. Once the audio tape of the interview has been transcribed, the original data will be stored in my office. Only my thesis advisor, Dr. Angela Miles, and I will ever have access to this raw data. These tapes will be destroyed in September, 2001. In the transcripts, names and other identifying information about you will be systematically falsified. However, the name of your organization will not be falsified.

As an interviewee you are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and you may request that the entire transcript of your interview be destroyed. Upon request, a copy of the final paper will be sent to you. Please note that I expect to utilize information from this study for my MA thesis, however if the information is not applicable it may not be used.

2. Document Analysis

Part of the research involves you providing me with pertinent documents for analysis. Specifically, what I am requesting are organizational gender policy guidelines and relevant project reports that incorporate a gender analysis framework that might be useful to my research. I will be analyzing these documents in order to evaluate whether the empowerment claims of GAD are reflected in policy and project documents. This will form part of the background information for my MA thesis.

I will seek to take every possible measure to maximize your personal anonymity and privacy. I will store copies of these documents in a secure place. I will ensure that you are not identified in the analysis or final paper, however the name of your organization will not remain anonymous. After completion of the project, these documents will be stored in my research files to be utilized for possible further research or expansion of the project in the future.

Sincerely,

Sarah E. Hendriks.

MA Candidate: Adult Education and Community Development (OISE/UT)
s hendriks@oise.utoronto.ca
## APPENDIX E: PARTICIPANT CATEGORIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Organizational Type</th>
<th>Uncritical Gender Mainstreaming Advocates</th>
<th>Critical Gender Mainstreaming Advocates</th>
<th>Transformative Feminist Advocates</th>
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