“TOUGH BUT NECESSARY”?
AN ANALYSIS OF NEOLIBERAL AND ANTI-FEMINIST DISCOURSES USED IN THE ELIMINATION OF THE NEW BRUNSWICK ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

A Thesis Submitted to the Committee on Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in the Faculty of Arts and Science

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“Tough but necessary”? An analysis of neoliberal and anti-feminist discourses used in the elimination of the New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women

Karolyn Martin

This study demonstrates that the New Brunswick government rationalized the 2011 elimination of the New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women (NBACSW) by discursively framing it as a duplication of services and as a non-essential service. The study relies on interviews with women who had been involved with the NBACSW, as well as literature about the use of neoliberal and anti-feminist discourses at the national level. I argue that the two rationalizations offered by the New Brunswick government rely on similar neoliberal and anti-feminist discourses to those used at the national level to eliminate women’s institutional machinery and thus diminish women’s capacities for advocacy and political representation. I argue that this discursive move positioned the province’s largest women’s advocacy group as an impediment to the common good of the province and as a threat to “Ordinary New Brunswickers,” signalling a negative step for women in the province.

Keywords: New Brunswick, Anti-feminist backlash, neoliberalism, Canadian feminism, Canadian women’s movements, Discourse Analysis
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<td>AACWI</td>
<td>Alberta Advisory Council on Women’s Issues</td>
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<td>ASWAC</td>
<td>Alberta Status of Women Action Committee</td>
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<td>CACSW</td>
<td>Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women</td>
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<td>CCP</td>
<td>Court Challenges Program</td>
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<td>CRIAW</td>
<td>Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women</td>
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<td>FFQ</td>
<td>Fédération des Femmes du Québec</td>
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<td>NAC</td>
<td>National Action Committee on the Status of Women</td>
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<td>NAWL</td>
<td>National Association of Women and the Law</td>
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<td>NB</td>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
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<td>NBACSW</td>
<td>New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women</td>
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<td>NSACSW</td>
<td>Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women</td>
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<td>NWAC</td>
<td>Native Women’s Association of Canada</td>
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<td>OACWI</td>
<td>Ontario Advisory Council on Women’s Issues</td>
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<td>OWD</td>
<td>Ontario Women’s Directorate</td>
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<td>PC</td>
<td>Progressive Conservative</td>
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<td>RCSW</td>
<td>Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada</td>
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<td>SWS</td>
<td>Saskatchewan Women’s Secretariat</td>
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<td>VOW</td>
<td>Voice of Women Canada</td>
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<td>WEB</td>
<td>Women’s Equality Branch of the Executive Council Office of New Brunswick (was WIB prior to May 2013)</td>
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<td>WIB</td>
<td>Women’s Issues Branch of the Executive Council Office of New Brunswick (renamed WEB in May 2013)</td>
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<td>Women’s Labour Bureau</td>
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INTRODUCTION: A ‘TOUGH BUT NECESSARY’ DECISION?

The New Brunswick (NB) provincial government announced in its Budget Speech on March 22, 2011 that it would be eliminating funding to the New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women (NBACSW) as of April 1, 2011. The NBACSW was an arm’s-length organization that was legally mandated in 1975 through the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act to advise the NB government on issues pertaining to women. Considering that this Act was still in effect in 2011,¹ this announcement was unanticipated by the four NBACSW staff members, thirteen appointed Council members, and the Council’s supporters (Beth, personal communication, June 16, 2011). Moreover, the Progressive Conservative (PC) NB government, led by Premier David Alward, had promised during their 2010 election campaign that, if elected, they would “actively engage” with the NBACSW to increase government transparency and accountability surrounding issues prioritized by women in NB (Progressive Conservative Party of New Brunswick, 2010, p.33). Instead, the funding cut effectively eliminated the NBACSW in its thirty-fourth year of operation. Two of the NBACSW’s full-time staff positions were “absorbed” into the Women’s Issues Branch (WIB)² of the NB government’s Executive Council Office (CBC News, 2011C, para. 10).³

In this study, I focus on two rationalizations the NB government used to justify the elimination of the NBACSW: 1) that it duplicated the services of the WIB, and, 2) that it is a non-essential service. The first rationalization was delivered by NB Finance

¹ So far as I can gather, this Act has yet to be struck down or modified in any way since its creation.
² The WIB was renamed the Women’s Equality Branch (WEB) in 2013, the significance of which I discuss in the Conclusion of this study.
³ In NB, this is the central agency controlled by the Premier, informally called the Cabinet (Government of New Brunswick, 2012).
Minister, Blaine Higgs, following the Budget Speech. The second was offered by then-NB Minister on the Status of Women, Margaret-Ann Blaney. In the first rationalization, Finance Minister Higgs argued that, in an effort to “right-size” (Weston, 2011, para. 3) government bureaucracy in a time of fiscal austerity, the NB government had to absorb the NBACSW into the WIB. Higgs claimed that the NBACSW and WIB provided “overlap[ping]” services and were, therefore, duplicate services (Higgs, 2011, p. 12). According to Higgs, NB citizens and stakeholders had stated their “priorities,” included “right-sizing” and elimination of “duplication of services,” during government-led pre-budget consultations (Higgs, 2011, p.10-11). About the elimination of the NBACSW’s funding, Higgs said:

[I]t comes down to priorities for New Brunswick. You know, we have, for so long, watered down our effectiveness because we try to be everything, everywhere, to everybody. And that’s what we’re trying to set here—where are the priorities? […] How do we consolidate activities, and what makes sense for us? So we – we really can be good (NB Department of Finance, 2011).

The absorption (of the NBACSW into the WIB) was framed as one such “consolidation,” fitting with New Brunswickers’ priorities for the common “good” in the province. In so doing, he positioned the existence of more than one women-focused service as a threat to New Brunswickers’ economic security in a time of austerity.

The second rationalization was delivered by Minister Blaney during the first Question Period in the Legislative Assembly following the budget announcement. Blaney stated that the NBACSW was eliminated because the “alternative [to cutting its funding]

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4 The current Minister is Hon. Marie-Claude Blais, who is also the Justice Minister.
was cutting funding for 14 outreach workers who counsel victims of abuse” (CBC News, 2011C, para. 7). As a Cabinet Minister, Blaney explained on behalf of the NB government that the decision to eliminate the funding to the NBACSW was “tough but necessary,” because, “[i]t really did come down to, OK, do we fund advocacy, or do we continue to put these front-line workers front and centre with the work that they do?” (Blaney, as cited in CBC News, 2011C, para. 7). In this statement, Blaney dichotomizes advocacy and front-line work; positioning front-line work as essential, and advocacy as non-essential. The NBACSW’s continued existence, then, was positioned as a competitor with essential services for women.

In both rationalizations, the NBACSW was positioned as a threat to the well-being of New Brunswickers. In Higgs’ pronouncements, the NBACSW is positioned as a threat to their economic security, and in Blaney’s, it is positioned as a threat to essential services for women in the province. In this study, I show that both of the government’s rationalizations rely on neoliberal and anti-feminist discourses, and that they work together to frame the NBACSW as an impediment to the common good of New Brunswickers. Using literature that shows how neoliberal and anti-feminist discourses have resulted in the women’s movements’ diminishing capacities for political

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5 States and governments are not neutral, monolithic or unified objects; they are sites in which unequal power relations are institutionalized and legitimized (Chappell, 2003; Franzway, Court, & Connell, 1989). Certainly, the oppression of women, non-white men, and First Nations peoples has been institutionalized in the Canadian state (Franzway et al., 1989, p. 3; Razack, Smith, & Thobani., 2010, p.x). However, states are “node[s] within a network of power relations” (Franzway et al., 1989, p. 37); as such, they exist among several institutional that legitimize power imbalances, such as the family. When I refer to “the state” and/or “the government” in this study, I recognize that they are fluid, contradictory, and ripe with opportunities for change (Franzway et al., 1989). Indeed, Atlantic Canadian feminist movements have historically recognized the state as a conduit for change (Guildford, 2010; Tulloch, 1985). What I contend with in this study, then, are instances in which the “NB Government” is presented in policy and/or media as an authoritative subject with the ability to speak, or act, on behalf of “New Brunswickers.”

6 In this study, I refer to women’s movements in the plural to acknowledge the diversity and multiplicity of views, endeavours, and actors within them (Adamson, Briskin, & McPhail, 1988; Backhouse, 1992; Dobrowolsky, 2008, p. 159). When I refer to “women’s movements,” however, I am most often referring to...

3
representation, advocacy, and equity-seeking on a national level, I bring this analysis to bear on the elimination of the NBACSW.

In order to begin discussing the elimination of the NBACSW, it is critical to provide some context for its creation. I provide a brief history of women’s Advisory Councils in Canada, and then a more specific introduction to the creation and role of the NBACSW. Following this, I provide an introduction to the literature about neoliberalization and anti-feminist backlash on a national level (described in greater depth in Chapter 1) that will provide the framework for my analysis. These national trends have resulted in the dissolution of many other women’s Advisory Councils in Canada. I conclude this introduction by discussing my own situatedness in NB as a scholar and feminist, my research methods, and I introduce the women who participated in this research through interviews about their involvement with the NBACSW and/or protests of its elimination (hereafter referred to as “interviewees”).

**Women’s Advisory Councils, Institutional Machineries, and Women’s Movements**

Women’s Advisory Councils existed among other women’s institutional mechanisms, or machineries meant to expand women’s political representation using a liberal/human rights framework, which had gained international primacy since the end of the Second World War in the form of rights-based movements (e.g. Civil Rights, Gay and feminist movements. While I pick up my discussion of Canadian feminism more thoroughly in Chapter 3, my discussion is by no means exhaustive. For more complete accounts of women’s movements in Canada, see: Adamson et al., 1988; Backhouse & Flaherty, 1992; Brodie, 1995; Burt, 1986; Dobrowolsky, 2008; and Rebick, 2005.

7 The term “neoliberalization” allows for neoliberalism to be viewed as a process of “diverse and interlinked […] practices” (Heynen & Robbins, 2005, p.6).

8 The terms institutional mechanisms and state machinery refer to the institutional, governmental, or parliamentary structures created to promote women’s human rights and to support their advancement in the state (Rankin, 2004). In this study, I use “institutional mechanisms,” “institutional machineries,” and “women’s machineries” interchangeably.
Lesbian Rights, Women’s Rights) (Smith, 2010). Among these institutional machineries were: government policy bureaus (at the federal and provincial/territorial levels) like Status of Women Canada (SWC); advocacy and action groups, such as the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC); the federal Women’s Program, which provided funding for women’s equity-seeking organizations; the Women’s Labour Bureau (WLB), a federal agency focused on women in the paid labour force; as well as their provincial/territorial counterpart agencies (Rankin & Vickers, 2001). Women created these machineries because, although some women had won the right to vote federally several decades earlier in 1919, in the 1960s gendered and sexist systemic barriers still deprived women of legal and political autonomy (Brodie, 2008B, p. 151).

Women successfully utilized the dominant political and legal ideology in Canada at the time, liberalism, to make their case for independence from their husbands and fathers (Brodie, 2008B). In Canada, while protections, rights, and freedoms are offered to individuals, these systems have also “recognized the extent to which the interest and identities of individuals are tied to membership in certain groups” (Kymlicka, 1996, p.63, in Dobrowolsky, 1998, p.712). In the 1960s, then, women sought to be identified as an “interest group” that had been denied human rights and entitlements vis-à-vis the state (Brodie, 2008B, p.151; Fudge & Cossman, 2002, p.26; Dobrowolsky, 1998, p.709; Sawer, 2008, p. 132). Dobrowolsky (1998) argues that interest groups are created when

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9 Generally speaking, a liberal/human rights framework is one in which all people are considered equal, and are entitled to freedom and liberties so that they may lead the lives they choose (Schwartzman, 2006, p. 4). Realistically, there are multiple “liberalisms” and human rights frameworks (Mullaly, 2007, p. 92), but it is beyond the scope of this study to discuss them in detail.

10 First Nations people were not allowed to vote until 1963 unless they chose to forego their First Nations status and the rights therein (Tulloch, 1985, p. 4). Until 1967, people who did not own land were barred from voting municipally and provincially in New Brunswick unless they paid a poll tax (Elections New Brunswick, n.d.). Incarcerated women were not allowed to vote until 2002.
there is an absence of representation for particular groups in Canadian formal political parties (p.707). Using a liberal/human rights framework, then, “women […] formulated their demands in terms of equality, autonomy, and individual rights” as an interest group (Schwartzman, 2006, p.1). Several women’s mechanisms developed as a result (Andrew & Rodgers, 1997, p. xii).

The Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW) was one such interest group that was formed to represent women within Canada’s post-Second World War liberal democratic political paradigm (i.e. embedded liberalism\textsuperscript{11}), with the end goal of achieving women’s equality through a rights-based approach (Arscott, 1998; Brodie, 2008B, p. 150; Guildford, 2005, p. 283; Sangster, 2011). It was appointed in 1967 by Liberal Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson in response to national and international pressures, especially by burgeoning Canadian feminist women’s movements, to address women’s unequal political representation and other inequalities (Rankin, 2004). It “depicted women’s subordination as a problem of inadequate access [and] unwarranted discrimination” in all aspects of life, and its mandate was to make recommendations for how to improve women’s situation (Brodie, 2008B, p. 152). As part of the RCSW’s investigative process, individual women from all over Canada submitted private letters to Florence Bird, the Chair, in which they “identified ideological barriers and structural inequalities in society, and they articulated a sense of collective grievance and desire for

\textsuperscript{11} Embedded liberalism, also called Keynesianism, is a political and economic paradigm that materialized in Canada and elsewhere after the Second World War. It was “designed to prevent a return to the catastrophic conditions that had so threatened the capitalist order in the great slump of the 1930s” (Harvey, 2005, p.9). It was characterized by a “class compromise” between capital, labour, and government (Bakker, 1994, p.2; Harvey, 2005, p.10; Mullaly, 2007, p. 3-4). Relatively liberalized economic policies were “embedded” in a strong social state, which offered (male) workers and their families some protection from the ups and downs of the market (Jones, 2005; Walters and Haarh, 2005). It is explored further in chapters 1 and 2.
change” (Sangster, 2011, p. 143). Briefs submitted by many organizations to the commissioners were seen as providing legitimacy to the individual women’s letters, and were viewed as “evidence” of women’s inequalities (Sangster, 2011). Its 1970 Report made 167 recommendations to the federal government for how to address women’s inequality, including social policy change and the implementation of social programs such as national childcare (Guildford, 2010, p. 230; Morris & Pedersen, 2012). It considered the dearth “of women elected and appointed to public office to be the strongest available ‘weapon’ to support their demand that in future women take a prominent place in the life of the nation” (Arscott, 1998, p. 145). Many women’s groups believed that lobbying government to implement the Report recommendations would generate change; because of this, the Report shaped the goals of Anglophone Canadian feminist women’s movements in the 1970s (Brodie, 2008B, p.147). It recommended the formation of women’s institutional mechanisms, such as Advisory Councils, to lobby for the implementation of its recommendations at provincial/territorial and federal levels (Arscott, 1998, p. 146).

Women’s Advisory Councils were originally interest groups created to ensure that governments implemented the Report recommendations (Brodie, 1995, p. 43; Brodie, 2008B, p. 152; Burt, 1986; Rebick, 2005, p.23). Moreover, women’s Advisory Councils, along with other women’s organizations, made recommendations on issues they found lacking in the Report, such as violence against women (Din & Cho, 2012). As such, they advocated for a stronger social state to provide services that would improve the lives of women, such as childcare, healthcare, and legal services (Rebick, 2005). However, because women had been recognized as a political interest group, the federal government
implemented the recommendation of the RCSW to create a women’s Advisory Council that would do more than ensure the RCSW’s recommendations were implemented; it would advise policymakers on issues pertaining to women, based on its own independent research (Brodie, 1995, p.41; Brodie, 2008B, p.153; Sawer, 2008, p. 132; Rankin, 2004; Rankin & Vickers, 2001, p. 7). Government (at least federally) agreed that women’s machineries were best positioned to act as policy advisors on the issues women face as an interest group—including pay equity, male violence against women, daycare, reproductive choice, and divorce law—due to their close proximity to women’s organizations and movements (Brodie, 2008B, p. 153; Rankin & Vickers, 2001, p.9). In the 1970s, women’s Advisory Councils were created on both national and provincial/territorial levels to provide women with a platform for political representation in a system which had, until this point, largely excluded them (Rankin, 2004). Women’s groups demanded that the Advisory Council be arm’s length to afford it independence from the federal government (Lipkin, n.d.).

In 1973, a national arm’s-length Advisory Council called the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW), with fifteen regional representatives, a three-member executive, and a staff of thirty, was created to advise the federal government and educate the public about the issues pertaining to women in the areas of parental benefits, pension, taxation, health care, employment practices (including affirmative action), sexual assault, and many others (Burt, 1998, p. 115; Lipkin, n.d.; Newman & White, 2006, p.80). Because it was arm’s length, the CACSW could publish research reports without the consent of the federal Minister on the Status of Women, to whom it reported

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12 Manitoba’s provincial committee on the status of women was formed in 1967, making it the first provincial committee of its kind (Rebick, 2005).
(Lipkin, n.d.). In the 1970s, all provinces and territories except British Columbia\textsuperscript{13} formed advisory councils that reflected the sociopolitical contexts in which they were formed.\textsuperscript{14} Each was unique, and yet, each contended with the issues championed by feminist women’s movements in Canada, including male violence against women, and matrimonial property law (Guildford, 2010, p. 229; Rankin, 2004, p. 83).

The NBACSW

The NBACSW was appointed by government in 1977. Like its federal counterpart, the NBACSW was arm’s-length. Its mandate was to promote “equality of opportunity, freedom from discrimination, equal treatment, equal benefit, equal status, equality of results - as well as respect of differences - between women and men in all sectors of New Brunswick society” (NBACSW, n.d.). Its mission was to be “an agency for consultation and study on matters relating to the status of New Brunswick women” (NBACSW, n.d.). Its purposes were to: advise governments; increase awareness of the NB population on issues, programs and services pertaining to women; recommend legislation, policies and practices to the NB Government; facilitate networking among provincial women’s groups (both grassroots and more formally structured); hear suggestions from individuals and groups regarding women’s status, and; gather and disseminate information on women’s status in NB (Guildford, 2010, p. 244; Lyons, 2011A, para. 5; NBACSW, n.d.). Council members were appointed from eleven provincial regions. Because the NBACSW was arm’s-length to government, its core

\textsuperscript{13} While British Columbia did not establish a provincial women’s advisory council, they did develop many government ministries on the status of women, and smaller regions of the province (e.g. Vancouver Status of Women) have developed non-profits dedicated to improving the status of women in the province (Guildford, 2005; Rebick, 2005, p. 23).

\textsuperscript{14} Provinces varied on whether they formed an arm’s-length advisory council or a policy unit on women’s issues; some developed both (Guildford, 2010; Rankin & Vickers, 2001).
funding came from the provincial government, but it was not officially housed in government. As a result, it was able to publish independent research that, at times, was critical of government (Lyons, 2011A, para.6). At the time of its closure, its funding was approximately $418,000 annually (NB Federation of Labour, 2011). The NBACSW employed a full-time executive director, a full-time researcher, an administrative assistant, and a part-time researcher/event coordinator (Beth, personal communication, 16 June, 2011).

In addition to providing invaluable research and advocacy for NB women, the NBACSW also functioned as a networking hub for the “disparate and geographically separated women’s groups” in the province (Campbell, n.d., para. 1). Each week, it distributed bilingual e-newsletter containing information such as event notices, research callouts, and relevant research and statistics. The NBACSW prioritized service provision in both official languages, and promoted discussion between Francophone and Anglophone women’s groups by performing translation services (French and English) (Tania, personal communication, 13 June, 2011). Francophone women were often leaders of the NBACSW\textsuperscript{15}; in fact, it was Francophone women’s movements that led to its creation (Guildford, 2010, p. 236; Janovicek, 2007, p.95). Its roots can be traced back to the 1974 conference called “New Directions for New Brunswick” organized by a Francophone women’s group named \textit{Les Femmes Acadiennes de Moncton (Les FAM)}, where over two hundred women from across the province gathered in Memramcook, NB,

\textsuperscript{15} Leadership of the NBACSW has largely been by Francophone women. For instance, founding Chairperson, Madeleine Delaney-LeBlanc, is a Francophone woman from Moncton who served from 1977-1985 (Tulloch, 1985, p. v). Another founding member of the NBACSW and of Les FAM is Corinne Gallant, an Acadian philosophy professor devoted to ending violence against Acadian women (Janovicek, 2007). Further, Rosella Melanson, participating in the NBACSW beginning in 1979 and taking the role of Executive Director from 2002-2011, is also an Acadian activist for women’s rights (Rosella, personal communication, November 14, 2011).
and made demands for a provincial women’s advisory council (Guildford, 2010, p. 236).

Participants at the Memramcook conference “agreed that a council affiliated with the
government would be in a stronger political position to lobby for women’s issues than
grassroots groups” would be (Janovicek, 2007, p. 96). In our interview, Anne, founding
Vice Chair of the NBACSW, recalls that:

Acadian women had been – they were very forceful (chuckles) and very, uh,
community-centered. And aware. And of course, as Acadians, they had been
fighting battles with regards to equal representation for quite a long time already.

So they had a longer history of activist organizing, in fact, in this province, than did
Anglophone women. So fortunately, uh, yeah, I do think this conference in
Memramcook was originally sort of planned by Acadian women (Anne, personal
communication, September 8, 2011).

Due to the persistence of groups such as Les FAM and an Ad Hoc Committee,¹⁶ the
Council was finally appointed in 1977 (Tulloch, 1985, p.70). Its creation “marked the
beginning of a new voice of [NB] women’s influence in the political sphere” (Tulloch,
1985, p.70). Initially, the NBACSW was “based in Moncton, the most bilingual and
bicultural of the province’s cities, and thus signalled the importance of addressing both
anglophone and francophone women’s concerns” (Guildford, 2010, p. 236). At the time
of its closure, it was located in Fredericton, NB, the provincial capital.

The NBACSW used many strategies to fight for women’s equality throughout its
history. It produced a “plethora of briefs, reports, newsletters, pamphlets, and fact sheets

¹⁶ An Ad Hoc Committee was formed to establish the Council, and in December 1975, the New Brunswick
government passed an act “to create the New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women”
(Tulloch, 1985, p.70). The Ad Hoc Committee also had an active Francophone presence (Tulloch, 1985, p.
70).
protesting the inequality of women” in all facets of life, fulfilling its mandate for research, education, and advocacy (Guildford, 2010, p. 229). In the 1970s, it founded a toll-free domestic violence hotline (Lyons, 2011A, para. 7). In the early 1980s, it helped ensure that the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* contained “strong protections for the equality of women” (Guildford, 2010, p. 233). In the 1990s, it focused on violence prevention and women’s health (Guildford, 2010, p. 233). While it was less visible in the public eye in the 2000s, it continued to develop policy analysis and research demonstrating women’s inequalities in areas such as wages, sexual assault, domestic violence, social assistance, and access to education and training (Guildford, 2010, p. 244-45). Moreover, it continued to host lunch-and-learns into the 2010s, in conjunction with other local women’s groups, on issues such as human trafficking, the gendered discrimination in the *Indian Act*, child care, poverty, and women in politics (NBACSW, n.d.).

The NBACSW was one organization within a wider Canadian network of women’s institutional mechanisms and machineries formed to ensure women’s representation in government during the 1960s and 1970s (Andrew & Rodgers, 1997, p. xi; Guildford, 2010, p.230; Rankin, 2004, p. 85). These organizations, along with grassroots initiatives, were the forces behind Canadian women’s movements. Situating the NBACSW within this wider network contextualizes its creation and its elimination. In

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17 For instance, it published a Report Card on the status of women in NB every year or so “to establish what work has yet to be done and to take stock of where change is occurring” (Stirling, 2002, as cited in Melanson, 2002, para. 2).

18 Women’s organizations in Canada, of course, had existed prior to the 1960s, and had interacted with the state (Andrew & Rodgers, 1997). There were women-centered bodies within the state; for instance, the Subcommittee on the Post-War Problems of Women (1943) and the Women’s Bureau in the Labour Department (1950) (Dobrowolsky, 2008, p. 163; Tulloch, 1985, p. 69). However, lack of government commitment at the time “and a lack of public support in general” led to many of the demands and recommendations made by these bodies being ignored (Tulloch, 1985, p. 69).
other words, although the NBACSW had unique attributes, it was an Advisory Council and, hence, it was connected to other Canadian women’s institutional machineries. These connections gave the NBACSW legitimacy, but also made it vulnerable to funding cuts within a neoliberal and anti-feminist paradigm. In what follows, I examine broader national trends that highlight how this sociopolitical paradigm shift has impacted women’s political representation at the national level in Canada.

**National Neoliberal and Anti-Feminist Trends**

Although the relationships between women’s Advisory Councils and government have never quite been harmonious, in the 1970s and 1980s, many governments included Advisory Councils in their policymaking (Guildford, 2005). Women’s machineries were considered by many governments to be legitimate political interest groups that represented a segment of the population that was underrepresented in formal politics (Brodie, 2008B; Rankin & Vickers, 2001). Since the mid-1990s, however, governments of all three major political parties\(^\text{19}\) have cut funding to women’s Advisory Councils across Canada, regardless of whether local women’s organizations found them effective (Guildford, 2005; Rankin, 2004, p.86).

On April 1, 1995, the federal government eliminated the CACSW and transferred some of its functions to SWC, a federal government agency that was created in 1976 and is now the central federal body dedicated to advancing women’s equality (Brodie, 2008B, p. 147; Burt, 1998, p. 115; Rankin & Vickers, 2001, p. 9). Governments in Alberta, Ontario, and Saskatchewan have likewise eliminated their advisory councils on the status of women (Guildford, 2005, p. 282). In 1996 and 1997 respectively, the Alberta

\(^{19}\) The Conservatives, Liberals, and the New Democratic Party (NDP).
provincial government eliminated the Alberta Advisory Council on Women’s Issues (AACWI), and the Alberta Status of Women Action Committee (ASWAC) closed due to lack of funding; these closures effectively dismantled Alberta’s women’s institutional machinery (Faulder, 1996; Harder & Trimble, 2005, p. 302). Similarly, the Ontario Advisory Council on Women’s Issues (OACWI) and the Saskatchewan Women’s Secretariat (SWS) were absorbed into government departments; the OACWI into the Ontario Women’s Directorate (OWD) in 1996, and the SWS into the Department of Labour in 2002 (Braun & Quinney, n.d.; Green, 2002; Rankin & Vickers, 1998). As of February 2014, women’s Advisory Councils remain in Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island (PEI), Newfoundland and Labrador, Northwest Territories, Yukon, Nunavut and Québec. These councils have struggled against serious funding cuts and “continue to be under considerable pressure and/or threat of closure” (Rankin, 2004, p. 86).

Many governments that have eliminated their women’s Advisory Councils’ funding have rationalized their decisions by claiming that Advisory Councils duplicated services provided by government, and/or, that these services were non-essential. In Alberta, for instance, the Klein government argued that “women’s groups have multiplied and grown in strength, and they can and want to speak for themselves to government without a publicly funded intermediary” (cited in Harder, 2003, p.142). This statement implies that the AACWI was duplicating the services of the province’s women’s groups, and that it was non-essential because it had become obsolete. Women’s groups, however, had told the AACWI during its final consultations with them that they were not being listened to by the Klein government (Harder, 2003). In Saskatchewan, government
similarly rationalized the merging of the SWS with the Department of Labour by citing the need to reduce “bureaucratic size and costs,” signalling that “gendered or feminist analysis” is considered “expendable,” or non-essential, to the provincial government (Green, 2002, para. 4). In Ontario, the OACWI was eliminated by the Harris government, along with twenty-two other advisory bodies on social issues (Girard, 1996). Government representative, David Johnson, justified the eliminations when he said, “[w]e think we can get this advice for free” (in Girard, 1996, para. 4). Johnson’s statement rationalizes the closure of the OACWI by claiming that it duplicated services that are offered elsewhere “for free,” and as such, he rationalizes it as being non-essential.

Rankin and Vickers (1998) attest that the OACWI “fell victim to the Conservatives’ ‘Common Sense Revolution’” (p. 358). In doing so, they link its closure to the neoliberalization of the state; the Common Sense Revolution in Ontario was a “textbook case of a neoliberal policy strategy and project,” marked by privatization, downsizing of government, environmental deregulation, and cuts to welfare and social programs (Keil, 2002, p. 588). Similarly, Johnson’s claim that advice on the status of women could be acquired at no cost links the elimination of the OACWI to neoliberalism, as it is representative of fiscal austerity. Further, this remark is rooted in anti-feminist discourse, as it devalues the expertise and legitimacy of women’s organizations by suggesting that women ought not to be paid for their services.

It is crucial to situate these closures as neoliberal and anti-feminist moves, and the rationalizations given for their eliminations—that they are duplicate and non-essential services—as further examples of the prevailing logic of neoliberal and anti-feminist discourses. Indeed, “right-sizing” and eliminating duplicate and non-essential services
can be read as neoliberal austerity measures (Hart, 2002, p. 261), and the fact that women’s organizations are targeted as non-essential can be read as anti-feminist. The two discourses work together in order to justify the closure of these organizations. In general, “neoliberalism” refers to a political and economic paradigm that advocates for an unrestricted, globalized, capitalist economic market which, it argues, is the ultimate common good (Bashevkin, 2009, p.7; Brodie, 2008A, p. 169; Dobrowolsky, 2009, p. 1). It is often called a “new world order,” marking a paradigmatic shift away from its predecessor, embedded liberalism (Brodie, 2008A; Fairclough, 2006; Harvey, 2005, p.10). Since the 1970s, virtually all states worldwide have undergone massive restructuring to facilitate global economic trade (Bezanson & Luxton, 2006, p. 4; Brown, 2005, p. 35; Fudge & Cossman, 2002, p. 6; MacLellan, 2009, p. 52; Walby, 2011, p. 21). Neoliberal ideology has become discursively normalized as common sense, and as truth (Brodie, 1995, p. 13; Brodie, 1998, p. 32; Workman, 2002. p. 32). “Neoliberal” values, such as individuality, self-sufficiency, competition, and consumerism, have been idolized in Western society (Fairclough, 2006, p. 148; Mullaly, 2007, p. 92). States’ economies have been deregulated to promote global entrepreneurial freedom and competition, and fiscal austerity in social spending has led to the retrenchment and privatization of social services (Brown, 2005, p. 38; Fudge & Cossman, 2002, p. 18; Guildford, 2010, p. 231; Keil, 2002; Larner, 2000, p. 6). Social welfare, once the responsibility of the state, has

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20 These values are not exclusively neoliberal, but are representative of the shift away from the values of embedded liberalism, toward neoliberalism (Mullaly, 2007). For instance, Brodie (1998) argues that, prior to neoliberalism, there was a shared understanding that “poverty was not always an individual’s fault and that all citizens had the right to a basic standard of living,” and that “the national community was responsible for the basic well-being of individual citizens” (p. 30).
been downloaded onto the individual and the nuclear family unit (Brodie, 2008A, p. 170).

Throughout this study, I use a gendered lens in my approach to neoliberalism, because experiences of neoliberalism vary depending on considerations such as one’s geographic location, gender, race, and class (Abu-Laban, 2009; Brodie & Bakker, 2007, p.20; Fudge & Cossman, 2002, p. 18; Dobrowolsky, 2009, p. 2; Hankivsky, 2009, p. 118). I argue that neoliberal discourses have been utilized in Canada to delegitimize women’s movements, and to de-fund women’s organizations; neoliberalism aligns with anti-feminist discourses in this way. Neoliberalism has significantly altered how gender is considered in policy, and these alterations have negatively affected women’s capacity to do advocacy and political organizing (Brodie, 2008A; Brodie, 2008B; Cossman & Fudge, 2002; Dobrowolsky, 1998). This is because neoliberalism has both 1) intensified, and 2) eroded gender to create a new gender order (Haraway, 1991, p. 167). A “gender order” refers to a set of relations “which defines ‘normal’ gender identities, behaviours, and roles as well as ‘natural’ family forms,” and is enforced in part through social policy (Brodie, 2008A, p. 166).

In terms of intensifying gender, we have seen that paid labour and unpaid social reproduction work have been increasingly “feminized.” Feminization refers to a global shift in the labour market marked by an increase of women’s employment, and yet, a decrease in safe working conditions, remuneration, and job stability (Adamson, Briskin, 21

This restructuring has resulted in the social welfare state and other social services becoming more punitive (Bezanson and Luxton, 2006, p.4; Brodie and Bakker, 2007, p.19). Additionally, the provinces are now responsible for delegating the diminishing federal transfer payments to healthcare, social services, and education, thus eliminating national standards and deepening regional disparities (Brodie and Bakker, 2007, p.24; Marchildon, 2004). Decreased social supports and economic crises in the 1980s and 1990s have led to the privatization of many formerly-public services, and there exists a constant threat of full privatization (Fudge & Cossman, 2002, p. 3; Marchildon, 2004).
& McPhail, 1988; Kolarova, 2006). Although in the embedded liberal political and economic paradigm, women had been relegated to the private sphere and were discouraged from seeking paid employment (a gender role which was highly contested by feminists), welfare provisions were available to women considered “deserving” of them (e.g. widows) (Adams, 1997; Bezanson & Luxton, 2006). In a neoliberal paradigm, women continue to perform most of the unpaid work of maintaining life, such as the provision of food, clothing, shelter, and childcare; however, they are also expected and required to earn an income (Bezanson & Luxton, 2006, p. 3). Labour markets rely upon women’s desperation for paid work and their unpaid social reproduction work (Brodie & Bakker, 2007, p.20; Fudge & Cossman, 2002, p.27; Dobrowolsky, 2009, p. 13).

Gender has also been eroded insofar as it has been both erased (i.e. invisibilized) and depoliticized (i.e. individualized) in policy and government discourse. Generally speaking, invisibilization refers to the attempted erasure of gender from policy since the late 1980s (Brodie, 2008A). When gender is invisibilized, policy is “formulated without consideration for asymmetrical relations of power based on gender” (Bakker, 1994, p. 1). Most economic policy, for example, does not account for the aforementioned intensification of gender: women’s overrepresentation in low-wage jobs or poverty, nor for the disproportional amount of women’s unpaid social reproduction labour (Franzway et al., 1989, p. 5; Waring, 1988). Certainly, while gender has been invisibilized as a variable in policy, neoliberalism has not erased the experiences of unequal gender relations from everyday life (Brodie, 2008A, p. 182; Brodie, 2008B, p. 161; Bakker, 1994, p. 1).
Individualization “refers to the process whereby a broad range of social issues [including gender inequality] [are] being reconstituted, both with respect to causes and solutions, in highly individualized terms” (Fudge & Cossman, 2002, p. 21).

Individualization has decontextualized and depoliticized gender-based differences from the social and structural processes that cause them; often meaning that problems previously considered to be of social/collective responsibility (e.g. pay inequity) are reframed as “arising from [the] personal deficits” of individual people (Brodie, 2008A, p. 178-9). In this respect, social group identity is invisibilized, and people are reframed as individuals responsible solely for themselves and their own families (Brodie, 2008A, p. 179; Fudge & Cossman, 2002, p. 21). Further, individualization positions the private economic market as the most efficient mechanism for meeting personal needs (Brodie, 2008A, p. 181; Fudge & Cossman, 2002, p. 4). Healthcare, for instance, has been cited as a prime example for how individual needs could be met more efficiently in a private system (Marchildon, 2004).

Neoliberalization has aligned in many ways with anti-feminist backlash that has been increasing since the 1980s in Canada (Bashevkin, 1998). A resurgence of fundamentalism and “biological determinism” are aiming to re-assert that women’s “place” in society is within the private sphere (Walby, 2011, p.16). The anti-feminist seeds that had been planted by politically and socially Conservative and fundamentalist governments in North America and Western Europe (e.g. Thatcher, Reagan, Bush Sr., and Mulroney) were fed by the continuance of neoliberal social and economic policies of the more politically Centrist and Liberal governments (e.g. Blair, Clinton, and Chrétien) (Bashevkin, 1998). Indeed, “[l]eading women’s organizations portrayed the Liberals as
wolves in sheep’s clothing, as aggressive budget slashers who talked about caring and compassion while they dismantled the fragile Canadian welfare state” (Bashevkin, 1998, p.201). While they were once vocal opponents to neoliberal policy changes, particularly to social welfare, throughout the 1990s and 2000s women’s organizations were defunded in a seemingly systematic fashion; even as federal and provincial governments claim to be prioritizing women’s interests more than ever (Newman & White, 2006, p. 141; Rankin, 2004, p.85). This anti-feminist backlash expedited when Prime Minister Stephen Harper came into power in 2006. Indeed, “women’s rights and the entire feminist movement has been severely under attack” (Granke & Legault, 2010, para. 2), evidenced by funding cuts to many organizations that provided voice for women in Canada that I will discuss throughout this study; especially those with mandates for advocacy and research.

These moves have had “deleterious” consequences for women in Canada (Hankivsky, 2009, p. 119). Women’s oppression has deepened, evidenced by increases in poverty, stress, decline of overall health, and violence, experienced most profoundly by women facing multiple oppressions (Hankivsky, 2009). Brodie and Bakker (2008) argue that even during times of economic surplus in Canada in the past two decades, cuts made to social programming has not been reversed, which provides further evidence of anti-feminism’s alignment with neoliberalism. As I will demonstrate in Chapter 1, the literature suggests that Canadian women’s organizations have been discursively framed by the federal government and media as “special interest groups,” duplicated services, and non-essential services since the mid-1990s (Dobrowolsky, 1998; Guildford, 2005;
Rankin, 2004). These moves have delegitimized Canadian women’s movements and have diminished women’s capacities for political representation, advocacy, and equity-seeking.

This study adds to the existing Canadian literature on the effects of neoliberalization and anti-feminism on women’s political representation insofar as it explores their specific manifestations in NB. The elimination of the province’s largest women’s advocacy group signals that the NB government continues to privilege neoliberal economic interests above women’s political representation, as has been the case in the wider Canadian context.

**Methods**

In this study, I use a material-discursive approach to emphasize the rootedness of lived experience within social, cultural, political, and linguistic contexts (Stoppard & Lafrance, 2007; Ussher, 2000). Indeed, lived experience and context are inextricable, and must be examined together (Sangster, 1994). According to Ussher (2000), “to talk of materiality is to talk of factors that exist at a corporeal, societal, or institutional level” (p.219); to do so, I use scholarly research, as well as semi-structured qualitative interviews, to discuss the effects of the delegitimizing of women’s movements and elimination of women’s organizations. Interviews were done in this study to connect with people\(^{22}\) who have a vested interest in the NBACSW and women’s organizing in NB; however, interview data is particular and contextual knowledge\(^{23}\) and as such is not representative of the position of *all* women in NB. The discursive aspect of this study “consider[s] social and linguistic domains — talk, visual representation, ideology, culture,  

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\(^{22}\) Although my callout was non-specific regarding the gender of individuals I was looking to interview, only women responded to my callout, and so only interviews with women are included in this study.

\(^{23}\) See Gubrium and Holstein, 2003, p.4, for a discussion of how knowledge is never complete and is always contextual.
and power” (Ussher, 2000, p. 219). I use Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explore official government discourse (NB and elsewhere in Canada), and popular news media publications, in order to analyze how they construct reality using neoliberal and anti-feminist discourses. In what follows, I introduce my own motivations, the interviewees, my interviewing strategies, and CDA.

Motivations for Study

According to Adamson et al. (1988), social science should “openly acknowledg[e] its point of view” (p. 17). I am an Anglophone, white, queer, and cis-gender24 woman from Fredericton, NB. My family, Western European white settlers,25 and I are complicit in stealing unceded lands from the Wabanaki Confederacy of First Nations (Mi’kmaq, Passamaquoddy, Wolastoqiyik/“Maliseet,” Abenaki, and Penobscot peoples), and also from Acadian people.26 It was not through public education, but rather, through feminist activism in NB, that I learned these difficult realities. I believe the elimination of the NBACSW represents a significant challenge to the feminist activism and advocacy that has shaped me.

I see the NB women’s movement as a complex and symbiotic network of grassroots and institutional organizations and initiatives, and I believe that the NBACSW fostered connections between them. While I mourn the loss of the NBACSW, I am most

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24 Generally speaking, someone is considered “cis-gender” when their self-perceptions of their gender identity and expression are congruent with the gender they were assigned at birth (Schilt & Westbrook, 2009).

25 White settlers are “Europeans [who live] on non-European soil” (2002, p.1). White settler societies position white people’s values, needs, and ideologies at the apex of a racialized hierarchy (Razack, 2002, p.1). White people (particularly men) are considered the original inhabitants of Canada, and thus, as “entitled to the fruits of citizenship” (Razack, 2002, p. 2). Descendants of white settlers, like myself, are rarely asked about our heritage, our ethnicities, or our ancestry; we are assumed to be rightfully “Canadian” and we benefit from the privileges that assumption entails.

26 Known in French as Le Grand Dérangement, and in English as the Expulsion, beginning in 1755, British Loyalists in NB forcibly deported almost the entire Acadian population (see Parette, 1991,p. 42-54).
unsettled by the rationalizations used to eliminate it, as similar rationalizations have been used to delegitimize women’s movements, at the expense of women’s political representation, elsewhere. Thus, I am motivated to make the connections between the NBACSW’s elimination, neoliberalism, and anti-feminism explicit, and to give voice to those New Brunswickers who, like me, see its significance as extending beyond the loss of one organization.

Interviewees in the Study

Eleven women were interviewed for this study between June and November 2011: Tania, Beth, Evelyn, Tracy, Beatrice, Monique, Peggy, Anne, Grace, Caroline, and Rosella. Some names and details in this study have been changed or withheld at the interviewee’s request. Interviewees hail from relatively diverse backgrounds and locations around the province. Some identified as having lived, or were living at the time of our interview, in rural areas. Several self-identified as bilingual, two self-identified as Francophone, and two others identified as having Acadian heritage. One interviewee self-identified as First Nations. Interviewees ranged in age from early twenties to retirement age. One interviewee self-identified as a gay woman, and two others self-identified as queer women. 27 Ten of the eleven women self-identified as feminists. 28 Four interviewees had been involved with the NBACSW as Council members and/or NBACSW staff at

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27 I did not ask interviewees about their sexual orientation, so apart from those who self-identified, the sexual orientation of other interviewees is unknown.
28 Regarding the eleventh, Caroline, a First Nations women’s activist from Tobique First Nations, responded, “we do not use this kind of label [“feminist”] much in our world. I do not like injustice of any kind no matter who it is happening to” (Caroline, personal communication, October 24, 2011). In our interview, she recalled some of her experiences growing up in the Tobique First Nations community: “[…] the Government of Canada was telling, ah, the leaders—which were all men on reserves—that […] the Indian Act said you didn’t have to provide services for women […] I saw a pattern of discrimination against women” (Caroline, personal communication, October 24, 2011). Although Caroline does not call herself a “feminist,” she is acutely aware of the effects of sexism, particularly as it intersects with racism and colonialism.
some point in its thirty-four year tenure. All interviewees had some form of connection to the NBACSW; some had used its translation and networking services, some had attended its lunch-and-learns, and some had used its research in their work. All interviewees have been involved with social/political activism pertaining to women in NB, and they all protested the elimination of the NBACSW.

Interviewees became involved with this study in a variety of ways. I was previously acquainted with four of the eleven interviewees prior to this study through feminist activism in NB.²⁹ I posted a callout in French and English (see Appendix A of this thesis) on a Facebook page, which was later reposted by a former NBACSW member on a web blog created for the Council; some interviewees reached out to me after reading this callout (three of eleven). I also used snowball sampling, or referrals from people I had already interviewed (four of eleven) (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2010). Interviews for this study were done in person; over web-based video technology (Skype); over the phone, and; through web-based text correspondence (real-time messaging and e-mail). One was translated from French to English.

**Interviewing Strategies**

I conducted my interviews on an individual basis using a semi-structured approach.³⁰ Semi-structured interviews are often considered to be *conversations* between interviewee and interviewer, situated in a particular context (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003,

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²⁹ These four women I met through my affiliation from 2008-2010 with the NB RebELLEs (Fredericton). The RebELLEs movement is a decentralized, pan-Canadian movement of young women that promoted local grassroots feminist activism across multiple locations in Canada and Quebec. While very active from 2008-2011, the RebELLEs movement has taken a hiatus as of April 2013 due to several reasons that cannot adequately be addressed here (Rebelles Montreal, personal communication, 10 April 2013).

³⁰ It becomes more difficult to use a semi-structured approach when interviewing via e-mail; however, in that situation, I did send follow-up questions and asked the interviewee to provide any details I had not asked in the formal questioning.
p.3; Warren & Karner, 2005, p.157). I prepared potential interview questions for each interview but modified, omitted or added questions based on the interviewee’s situation. The interviews are rooted in historical context (e.g. NB in 2011), and thus, are inextricably connected to discourses (dominant and alternative alike) operating in those contexts. Thus, I examine the interview transcripts and other documents (e.g. government correspondence) using critical discourse analysis to concentrate on some of these discourses and the implications they have for women in NB.

**Critical discourse analysis (CDA)**

CDA examines the role of discourse in creating and maintaining unequal relations of power (Fairclough, 2003; van Dijk, 1993, p.249). CDA views power imbalances as discursive and constructed—albeit with very real and material consequences—rather than as inevitable realities (Fairclough, 2006, p.147). CDA is based on post-structural theories that argue that language is formative, not just reflective, of our realities (Austin, 1962; Scott, 1988; van Dijk, 1993, p. 250). For instance, if we talk about provincial economies, budgets, and deficits as though they are in crisis, we may view social services as added expenditures that will exacerbate the deficit (Mullaly, 2007). Language is organized into discourses, or, “historically, socially, and institutionally specific structure of statements, terms, categories, and beliefs” (Scott, 1988, p.35), to shape our worlds, and what is considered acceptable (and unacceptable) behaviour within them (Parker, 1992, p. 5; Parker & Burman, 1993, p.1). We interact with discourses through texts: the partial, material manifestations of a discourse that can be read, seen, heard, watched, and mass produced and, therefore, can be analyzed (Parker, 1992, p. 5; Smith, 2006, p.66). The
Discourses are constantly competing with, interacting with, and/or complementing one another (Parker, 1992, p. 13). Discourses derive their power from sociopolitical context; dominant discourses are those that serve the interests of the dominant group (Janks, 1997, p.329). CDA asks critical questions about the “special social conditions [that] must be satisfied” for discourse to “contribute to the reproduction of [the] dominance” of those who dominate (van Dijk, 1993, p.250). For instance, CDA asks which discourses have become normalized in everyday life as taken-for-granted truths with master status (Fairclough, 2003; van Dijk, 1993, p.250). These discourses compete with alternative discourses to maintain their status. CDA is a multi-level analytical process that shifts between analysis at textual, processing, and social levels of analysis in order to provide insight into how this master status is achieved (Janks, 1997). I have included in Appendix B a list of steps and strategies that I have followed in my analysis.

In this study, I demonstrate how proponents of neoliberalism have attempted to normalize neoliberal discourse, to the detriment of women and women’s movements. I argue that neoliberal discourses intersect with anti-feminist discourses to establish a reality in which women’s groups and machineries are impediments to the common good. In what follows, I outline how each chapter will advance this argument.

**Chapter Outlines**

In Chapter 1, I describe this wider Canadian context in depth. I explore how the Canadian federal government has undermined women’s organizations by framing them as
unworthy of public funding, using the rationalizations that they duplicate government services and that they are non-essential because they are no longer necessary. I utilize feminist political theory literature to explain that the individualization and invisibilization of gender have allowed claims that gender equality has been achieved to go unchallenged in policymaking. In cases where gender inequality is apparent, gender mainstreaming strategies (in the form of gender-based analysis, or GBA) are used by government as a strategy for ameliorating inequality. GBA, a government-controlled process that does not require consultation with women’s organizations, has replaced women’s institutional machineries as the government’s gender advisor. Women’s machineries (such as advisory councils), then, have been framed as “special interest groups” that duplicate government services (e.g. GBA). Thus, they are argued to champion interests outside of those shared by “Ordinary Canadians” (who are constructed as affluent, white, male capitalists). This chapter builds the foundations for the following two chapters, which look more closely at the NB context and how the elimination of the NBACSW meshes with eliminations of women’s machineries in the federal Canadian context.

In Chapter 2, I bring this analysis to bear on the NBACSW and the NB context, focusing particularly on neoliberalization and the contrast between special interests and ordinary interests. The NBACSW was eliminated long after most institutional machinery of its kind at the federal and provincial levels, and it is important to contextualize this delayed closure as a part of a larger plan for a “new direction” for NB that brings it into economic prosperity (Higgs, 2011). I provide a detailed account of the historical context which led NB to its current position as a dependent province, as well as an account of the efforts to re-define the province, in order to contextualize the elimination of the
NBACSW as a step toward further neoliberalization. Neoliberalization has been posited as that which will serve the common good in NB, and using CDA I demonstrate the ways in which the 2011 Budget Speech constructs the “Ordinary New Brunswicker” as someone who sees neoliberalization as the common good for the province, and who sees the closure of the NBACSW as a necessary step towards this end. In its rationales for the closure of the NBACSW, the interests of women in the province are pitted against the interests of the “Ordinary New Brunswicker” in much the same ways that we see the interests of the “Ordinary Canadian” pitted against women’s special interest groups at the federal level.

In Chapter 3, I continue to apply the framework established in Chapter 1 by picking up the thread of “non-essential services” in my analysis of the elimination of the NBACSW. I do so by exploring the protests that occurred after the announcement of the elimination of the NBACSW, and the mixed sentiments expressed by the women I interviewed about the closure. The women I interviewed all expressed anger about the closure, but some also expressed uncertainty about the NBACSW’s effectiveness. I analyze these critiques of the NBACSW’s effectiveness, placing them in the context of the wider Canadian feminist movement. I argue that while there is significant debate about the NBACSW’s effectiveness, its elimination signalled that there is backlash against women in the province. Its loss was not necessarily mourned, then, because of its work or perceived effectiveness, but because of what the interviewees interpreted that this elimination meant symbolically for the future of women’s advocacy in the province.

I conclude this study with a discussion of the newly-created Voices of New Brunswick Women Consensus-Building Forum, an independent, yet government-funded,
body for women’s political representation, research, and advocacy slated to commence in 2014. I consider this forum a victory of sorts for NB women, as it is because of their constant activism and advocacy that the forum was created. While the forum contains many promising elements, it needs to be assessed against feminist critiques of women’s machineries and state feminism more generally. I assess the proposed details of this forum, and while it is too early to conclude whether it will effectively replace the NBACSW in its work, I end this study with words of advice that hail from my interviewees regarding some of the barriers to women’s activism in NB that this forum may help to address.
CHAPTER 1: NEOLIBERAL AND ANTI-FEMINIST DISCOURSES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

This chapter builds the analytical framework for this study by exploring the national context. In our interview, Beth linked the elimination of the NBACSW to wider national trends when she said that, “for the past couple of years I’ve been very concerned about the Canada-wide level, under Harper—but now the New Brunswick microcosm is imitating what’s happening on a national level” (Beth, Personal Communication, June 16, 2011). She elaborates that:

Beth: [...] [T]he National [sic] Advisory Council on the Status of Women was dismantled, and we were promised that Status of Women Canada would take over their work. And then, years later, Status of Women Canada no longer does advocacy or research, or funds them. And now, in New Brunswick, we have our Advisory Council, a provincial one, and it is dismantled, and we are told that our version of the Status of Women Canada, the Women’s Issues Branch, is going to be doing advocacy and research, but it can’t. And it won’t (Beth, personal communication, June 16, 2011).

In the introduction to this study, I established that the NBACSW belonged to a network of pan-Canadian women’s institutional machineries, equity-seeking groups, and grassroots organizations, formed in the 1970s to represent women as a political interest group. In this chapter, I investigate deeper into Beth’s concerns about occurrences at the “national level.” I explore the literature pertaining to post-1990s federal Canadian governments’ use of discourses of neoliberalism and anti-feminism to eliminate women’s organizations and delegitimize women’s movements. These organizations were often
highly critical of neoliberalism, demanded a stronger social state, and relied upon
government funding to operate. Their elimination has led to women’s diminishing
capacities for political representation, advocacy, and equity-seeking at the federal level
(see Brodie, 1998; Burt, 1998; Guildford, 2010; Jenson, 2008; Walby, 2009).

I begin this chapter by describing the shift in women’s political presentation at the
federal level, from the inclusion of women as an interest group within the embedded
liberal political and economic paradigm, to the de-gendering of policy that has occurred
through a shift toward neoliberalism. I further show that the federal government has used
this de-gendering in policy in order to promote the message that gender equality has been
achieved, in spite of government-funded research that documents widening disparities for
women. Using Canadian feminist political theory literature, I argue that, in light of these
findings, government has attempted to “[put] gender back in” (Brodie, 2008A, p.165) to
policy on its own terms by implementing “Gender-Based Analysis” (GBA); which,
scholars have argued, is under-resourced, and largely ineffective. GBA has allowed the
federal government to cut ties with women’s machineries, particularly those that are
arm’s-length, because it can discursively frame them as “special interest groups” that
duplicate its GBA services. This discursive framing of women’s machineries as “special
interest groups” positions the issues they contend with outside of the interests of
“Ordinary Canadians” (Brodie, 1995), and as unworthy of public funding in a time of
neoliberal austerity. I conclude this chapter by describing the serious repercussions these
moves had for women’s capacities for political representation, advocacy, and equity-
seeking at the federal level.
Neoliberalism and De-gendering

From Embedded Liberalism to a Neoliberal Gender Order

Although feminists in the 1960s and 1970s were highly critical of embedded liberalism’s restrictive and patriarchal gender order, within this paradigm, women had grounds upon which they could demand political representation as a group (Brodie, 2008B; Fudge & Cossman, 2002, p.26). As discussed in the introduction to this study, women worked tirelessly to achieve political representation as an interest group during this time (Thrift, 2009). Within the paradigm of embedded liberalism, it was understood that women’s interest groups represented a portion of the population that was underrepresented in mainstream politics and policymaking, and on this basis, women’s machineries, such as Advisory Councils, were included in government decision-making (Dobrowolsky, 1998).

As discussed in the previous chapter, in a neoliberal gender order, gender is no longer considered a significant factor in policy creation or in political organizing (Brodie, 1998. p. 22; Brodie, 2008A, p. 166; Fudge & Cossman, 2002, p. 4-6; Jenson, 2008; Rankin, 1996). In addition to intensifying gender inequalities, neoliberalism has eroded “the political and social relevance of gender in daily life and in policy making by constructing both men and women as genderless individuals and, optimally, as self-sufficient market actors in pursuit of self-interest, freedom, and choice” (Brodie, 2008A, p.170). Gender has been invisibilized and individualized in policy and government discourse, leading to a political de-gendering process (Brodie, 2008A, p. 175). Feminists have actively protested this de-gendering process by demonstrating the necessity of including gender and other variables in policymaking (Abu-Laban, 2008, p. 2).
Neoliberalism has “left the women’s movement in the paradoxical position of having to
defend the same welfare state [and accompanying political paradigm] that it had
previously criticized for being inadequate, sexist, classist, and racist,” because, at the very
least, it offered grounds upon which women could politically organize (Brodie, 1998, p.
23).

Government Claims to Gender Equality

Government has fallaciously interpreted and constructed the de-gendering of
policy as indicative of women’s achievement of equality to men, rather than as
symptomatic of its erosion. Since the mid-1990s, the federal government has been
working to discursively establish the idea that women and men have achieved equality for
several years, as evidenced by the cuts to women’s equity-seeking groups deemed
redundant by government (Brodie, 2008B). In 2006, the federal minister responsible for
the status of women, the Honourable Beverley Oda, expressed that the government
believes all men and women are equal, and that “the government as a whole, rather than
designated agencies, was ‘responsible for the development of policies and programs that
address the needs of both men and women’” (quoted in Beattie, 2006, A12, as cited in
Brodie, 2008B, p.145-6). Oda’s statements were rationalizations for removing “equality”
from SWC’s mandate, mission, and website, as well as for cutting funding to equity-
seeking groups, such as women’s advisory councils (Brodie, 2008B, p. 145-6). As Faludi
(1991/2006) writes, similar moves have been made by American lawmakers and
politicians, who claim that “women are so equal now […] that we no longer need an
Equal Rights Amendment” (p. 1).
While the reality that gender equality has been achieved is prevalent in Canadian society (Brodie, 2008B, p. 147), government must also contend with the alternative reality that their own departments and research bodies produce: that equality has not been achieved even among genders, let alone between genders (Brodie, 2008B, p.146). Federal government agencies and departments have produced research pointing to “the persistence of longstanding indicators of gender inequality as well as the emergence of new barriers to equality, linked to women’s increased workforce participation, multiple family forms, widening income gaps, inadequate social policy supports, and ethnic and racial discrimination” (Brodie, 2008B, p. 146). Statistics Canada, for instance, has demonstrated that inequalities for women (and among women) continue to exist in many areas; their data was, in part, collected using the long-form census (Brodie, 2008B, p. 146-7; Statistics Canada, 2006, p. 17). Further, in 2005 SWC reported that progress towards women’s equality was “uneven and, in some cases, reversing” (Brodie, 2008B, p. 147), due to wider barriers, such as social exclusion (Status of Women Canada, 2005, p.2).

In spite of its own contradictory evidence, then, the federal government expressed that gender equality has been achieved (Brodie, 2008B; Dobrowolsky, 2009). Certainly, because the government is not monolithic, its discourse contains “fault lines,” where alternate discursive realities encounter one another (Parker, 1992, p. 13; Smith, 1987, p.49). Indeed, the “contradictions within a discourse open up questions about what other discourses” it colludes with—and competes with—to construct a coherent material reality (Parker, 1992, p. 13). Oda’s reality, in which women and men are equal, competes with the reality of Canadian women’s deepening inequalities (Brodie, 2008B, p. 147).
Oda’s reality is indicative of neoliberal discourse that invisibilizes and individualizes structural inequalities, such as gender inequality, so that those who face structural barriers are re-positioned as failures who did not work hard enough (Brodie, 2008A, p. 179). Further, she uses discourses that support neoliberal discourse, such as classical liberalism. When she asserts that the government as a whole, rather than designated agencies, is responsible for addressing the needs of “both women and men,” she evokes the classical liberal assumption that everyone begins on level ground, and thus, that providing specialized attention for one group gives them an unfair advantage (Mullaly, 2007, p.92).

**Neoliberalism and Anti-Feminist Discourse**

The illusion of gender equality, in spite of contradictory evidence, is pivotal to the success of neoliberal federal policies. Dominant discourses, such as neoliberalism, often maintain their dominance by silencing or delegitimizing competing alternative discourses and by aligning themselves with other dominant discourses (Brown, 2005; Fairclough, 2006). Indeed, anti-feminist discourse and neoliberal discourse align in the US and Canadian-based mass media, where feminism has been pronounced “dead” on several occasions in order to silence women’s movements (Adamson et al., 1988, p. 9; Faludi, 1991/2006, p. 1). When its existence cannot be denied, feminism is delegitimized in the media; feminists are written off as angry, ugly, irrational, and otherwise unworthy of public attention (Adamson et al., 1988; Faludi, 1991/2006; Hogeland, 2000). At the level

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31 Neoliberalism often draws heavily from discourse of classical liberalism for added legitimacy and support (Brown, 2005; Mullaly, 2007, p. 94). Mullaly (2007) defines classical liberalism as being “similar to conservatism, as both developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, mainly in Britain and Western Europe, and both used the same writers and thinkers as the source for many of their ideas and theories” (p. 92). Classical liberalism believes in free market economic policies, and believes in a small government with little to no social protections so that people are not provided disincentive to working (Mullaly, 2007, p. 93).
of the federal government, neoliberalism has maintained its dominance in part by
delegitimizing feminist discourses and by aligning itself, albeit not always overtly, with
anti-feminist discourses.

The reality of women’s deepening inequalities is disseminated by federal
government-funded agencies, such as Statistics Canada and SWC, and these findings are
discursively linked to feminist discourse (Brodie, 2008B, p.154; Sawer, 2006; Scott,
1988). Indeed, it has historically been through feminist discourse that the inequality of
women is brought to the attention of government (Scott, 1988). Feminist and neoliberal
discourses, however, have historically opposed one another (Brodie, 2008B, p. 150, 154-
5; Hankivsky, 2009, p. 117). Feminist discourse, however, does not have the same
authority or political influence as neoliberal discourse; thus, it is often silenced, and/or
appropriated by neoliberal discourse\footnote{For instance, Faludi (1991/2006) writes that feminism and women’s supposed “equality” are often blamed for the deteriorations in women’s physical and mental wellbeing. Along these lines, she writes, “The women’s movement, as we are told time and time again, has proved women’s own worst enemy” (Faludi, 1991/2006, p. 2). She positions such rhetoric as evidence of anti-feminist backlash that accompanied the rise into power of such neoliberal governments as Reagan, Thatcher, and Mulroney.} to weaken it (Brodie, 2008B, p.154). As Parker
(1992) notes, the use of some discourses, such as neoliberal discourse, can “attac[k] or
subvert[t]” others, such as feminist discourses (p. 19). In recent years, governmental
bodies that remain connected to the feminist connotations of “equality” (i.e. that
inequality exists due to structural barriers) have seen their funding retrenched and/or their
mandates altered to remove feminist connotations, and feminists continue to be
positioned as antithetical to national ideas of progress in the mass media (Brodie, 2008B,
p. 154-5). For instance, not only was “equality” removed from SWC’s mandate but, more
recently, Statistics Canada’s mandatory long-form census was replaced with a mandatory
short-form census and voluntary long-form, limiting future data collection (Roman, 2010). There is an ever-growing list of agencies that have met similar fates, including women’s advisory councils, which I expand upon later in this chapter.

It appears, then, that government is attempting to eliminate feminist discourse (and the realities it demonstrates) from its agencies, in order to maintain the neoliberal reality that all genders are equal, despite a vast amount of evidence that suggests otherwise (Brodie, 2008B, p.154-5; Hankivsky, 2009, p. 119). Feminists and other researchers, however, continue to assert the existence and deepening of women’s inequalities, even though they are faced with many challenges in disseminating these messages (Abu-Laban, 2008, p.2). In light of this pressure, government must acknowledge women’s inequality. It has, however, sought greater control over how inequality is discussed and addressed (Rankin, 2004, p. 88). In the next section, I discuss the primary strategy the Canadian federal government has adopted for addressing gender: Gender-Based Analysis (GBA). I explore how utilizing GBA has allowed government to maintain the appearance of meaningful action on gender inequality, while also removing the control over the discussion from women’s movements.

**Gender-Based Analysis: “Putting Gender Back In” on Neoliberal Terms**

*Social Investment*

Because ignoring women’s inequalities does not ameliorate them, all states must eventually contend with gender in their policymaking (Brodie, 2008B, p. 160-61; Franzway et al., 1989, p.5). In fact, the invisibilization and individualization of gender in Canada has exacerbated many problems women are facing, including illness, divorce, and

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33 Brodie, 2008A, p. 165.
infertility (Bakker, 1994, p.16). These adverse effects have led some Western countries\footnote{A resulting policy trend in the United States, for instance, has been to re-focus social policy on strengthening the heteronormative and patriarchal nuclear family structure (Brodie, 2008A, p. 172).} (including Canada) to implement social policies aimed at improving “social reproduction processes and the gender order that underlies them” (Brodie, 2008A, p. 174).\footnote{Such policies include the Caregiver Credit, extended parental leave, and the Universal Childcare Benefit (Brodie, 2008A, p. 174).} Some scholars argue that this social policy shift indicates the emergence of a “post-neoliberal” paradigm, referred to as social investment, which promotes government investment in social policy to build “individual skills and capacities” for self-sufficiency (Brodie, 2008A, p. 175). According to Simon-Kumar (2011), the social investment state, a name coined by Anthony Giddens, is characterized by “a re-emphasis and investment in social policy areas especially in poverty and welfare,” a “modernizing” of the public sector, and “greater involvement of citizenship participation and community partnerships in the formulation and delivery of policy and services” (p. 443). Most of these social investment policies are aimed at developing programs for children (Jenson, 2006).

Scholars debate whether these changes truly indicate a “post-neoliberal” paradigm, or, alternatively, a new manifestation of neoliberalism (see Dobrowolsky, 2009). Although the implementation of these policies may indeed indicate that our current dominant political and economic paradigm is a hybrid of neoliberal and social investment ideologies, such hybridity is not novel; in fact, neoliberalism has never been an omnipotent force, but rather, has always been contingent upon many other discourses and ideologies, such as classical liberalism, embedded liberalism, and liberal democracy (Brown, 2005; Dobrowolsky, 2009, p. 3; Jenson, 2008, p. 186; Simon-Kumar, 2011). According to Parker (1992), multiple discourses can cooperate to reinforce one another
and reproduce relations of power (p. 19). I follow scholars who argue that neoliberal discourse and social investment discourse are aligned in Canada (see McKeen, 2007).\footnote{McKeen (2007), for instance, argues that “federal-level actors” in the area of child and family policy “are changing their approach and practices in this field in a way that further privileges the market over the social entity” (p. 153), and thus, argues that social investment and neoliberal discourses align.}

An analytical “step” in CDA is to ask who benefits, and who does not, when two discourses collude (Parker, 1992, p. 19). In the case of social investment and neoliberal discourses, who does not benefit may be more clearly identified. The allegiance between social investment discourse and neoliberal discourse can be seen most effectively when one considers the narrow focus of social investment discourse on assisting “the child,” not its parents, who, in neoliberal terms, should be self-sufficient; or, if services are offered to parents, they are educational in nature, predominately directed at skills training to enter, or re-enter, the workforce, rather than aimed at systemic intervention (Brodie, 2008A; Jenson, 2008; McKeen, 2007). Indeed, many of these new social policies aimed at children continue to disadvantage women, particularly women considered to be “at-risk,”\footnote{“Difference” has been made highly visible in some policies; in these instances, people are tokenized into “high risk groups” and then “targeted” by risk-reduction policy (Abu-Laban, 2009; Brodie, 1998). Because the systemic and structural causes of “risk” (e.g. racism, colonialism, and capitalism) remain invisible within these policies, they “may simply have the effect of pathologizing difference,” instead of effecting transformational change (Brodie, 1998, p. 31).} because they fail to address the structural links between children’s and women’s inequalities (McKeen, 2007, p. 164). For instance, policies such as the National Child Benefit (NCB) of 1997 focus primarily on improving life for “the poor child” without considering the social contexts of children’s lives, nor the lives of their caregivers\footnote{While investing in solutions to child poverty is important, “the elevation of the abstract ‘poor child’ as the focus of social policy reform” effectively invisiblizes the differences among children as well as the structural causes and gender relations of poverty (Brodie, 2008A, p. 176).} (Brodie, 2008A, p. 172-5; Dobrowolsky, 2009, p. 13; Jenson, 2008, p. 186; Jenson, 2009, p. 25). Such child-centered policy fails to acknowledge that children in poverty most
often live with women in poverty; that women are more likely than men to live in poverty; and that women experience poverty differently than do men. This is particularly true of single mothers, who head the households of thirty-six percent of Canada’s poor children, compared with three percent of single fathers (Brodie, 2008A, p. 176-7; Dobrowolsky, 2009, p. 13; Jenson, 2009; Newman & White, 2006, p. 221). The re-inclusion of gender into social policy, then, does not indicate an emergence of a “post-neoliberal” paradigm, but rather a hybridization of neoliberal discourses. Because the reality of gender inequality, described by various government documents, cannot be so easily dismissed, it must be contended with in neoliberal policy.

Gender-Based Analysis

By the mid-1990s, the federal government had realized that it needed to “[put] gender back in” to policy and programming (Brodie, 2008A, p. 165). It was facing international pressure to do so. Indeed, in 1995, the UN had unveiled new international standards for advancing gender equality at the Fourth United Nations Conference on Women, a conference attended by thousands of representatives of women’s organizations (government and non-government) from countries worldwide (United Nations, 1996). According to these standards, national governments were advised to implement “gender mainstreaming,” which entails “a commitment to developing a systematic process to inform and guide future program and policy development through an assessment of the differential impacts of public policy on women and men” (Rankin, 2004, p. 86-7). With the unveiling of the 1995 document Setting the Stage for the Next Century: The Federal Plan for Gender Equality (“the Plan”), the federal government began implementing gender mainstreaming through the process of Gender-Based Analysis (GBA) (Rankin,

GBA, then, is a government policy discursively rooted in feminism and international women’s movements. Theoretically, GBA “constituted a more systematic approach to addressing gender equality than had ever been attempted previously in Canada” (Rankin, 2004, p. 87). Its international creators intended for it to be a strategy for “substantive equality” and accommodation for the differential impacts of gender (Hankivsky, 2009, p. 116). In the Canadian context, however, GBA has had limited effectiveness in working for women’s equality (Hankivsky, 2005; Hankivsky, 2009, p. 114). Hankivsky (2009) writes that GBA has had little impact because it operates within the context of the increasing neoliberalization of the Canadian state. Indeed, she writes that:

> […] the main concerns of neoliberalism—the emphasis on personal duty and responsibility, reduced public spending, work-tested benefits, a fiscalized view of policy, decentralization, and increasing privatization, do not appear particularly conducive to creating an environment in which gender mainstreaming, with its aim of gender equality, can thrive (Hankivsky, 2009, p. 118).

Hankivsky’s statement aligns with that of critical discourse analysts who suggest that different discourses construct what is ostensibly the same object in vastly different ways (Parker, 1992, p. 14). While the creators of GBA have constructed women’s inequality as a structural and/or systemic issue resulting from women’s oppression, neoliberal discourse does not consider gender to be a relevant factor at all (Brodie, 2008B). With
efficiency and government downsizing as two main neoliberal objectives, a neoliberal
government may consider GBA to be a compromise that appears less costly than funding
women’s organizations (Hankivsky, 2009). The decision, then, to operationalize GBA
was not only based on international feminist efforts toward achieving women’s equality,
but also on the increasing neoliberalization (and thus downsizing) of the Canadian state
(Cohen & Pulkingham, 2009, p.4; Hankivsky, 2009, p.117; Rankin, 2004, p. 87). Indeed,
scholars argue that GBA “has been co-opted” by the federal government’s “neoliberal
agendas” because it allows them to remain (at least formally) in accord with international
standards, and yet, it allows them complete control over the framing of the issue of
women’s (in)equality (Hankivsky, 2009, p. 119-20).

The federal government has, indeed, used their investment in GBA to justify de-funding
women’s institutional machinery and grassroots organizations (Rankin, 2004, p.
87-8). Evidence for this argument can be found in how GBA has been implemented in
Canada. GBA has been demonstrated to be most effective when policymakers, women’s
institutional machineries, and women’s grassroots organizations work collaboratively to
ensure that both expertise in policymaking and expertise on gendered realities are
represented in the process (Bakker, 2009). In spite of this, in Canada women’s
machineries and community-based organizations received significant and devastating
funding cuts, and thus, are not able to collaborate with government to implement GBA.
Instead, they have been framed as duplicating services provided by GBA. If achieving
women’s equality was the primary goal of government, its priority would be to
implement the formation of GBA proven to be most effective. In Canada, however, GBA
has replaced, rather than supplemented, women’s arm’s-length institutions as the advisors

By replacing women’s machineries with GBA, then, government has restricted the “institutional framework within which women’s equality demands” can be addressed, retaining control over how gender is discussed in government (Rankin, 2004, p. 88).

Moreover, even the future of GBA within the federal government is uncertain. While some departments have formed “gender units,” the Plan delegated the implementation, coordination, and monitoring of GBA in the federal government to SWC (Rankin, 2004, p. 88). Since the implementation of the Plan, however, SWC has been stripped of feminist frameworks (e.g. removal of “equality” from its mandate), and denied adequate resources and inter-governmental support (McNutt & Hawryluk, 2009, p. 119; Rankin, 2004, p.88-9). Doubt has been cast upon whether scrutinizing individual policies for their gendered impacts will truly effect transformative change in the absence of efforts to change the broader contexts in which these policies operate (Cohen & Pulkingham, 2009, p. 25; Hankivsky, 2009, p. 114).

Despite its ineffectiveness, the semblance of GBA has meant that governments are no longer obligated to fund, or consult with, women’s machineries or other organizations in order to appear in support of gender equality (Rankin, 2004, p. 89). Since the implementation of GBA, women’s machineries and grassroots organizations have been framed as “special interest groups” that duplicate the services performed by the government’s GBA infrastructure. In the next section, I discuss how women’s institutional machineries, such as Advisory Councils, have been framed in opposition to the interests of “Ordinary Canadians”. I argue that they are now framed as extraneous,
non-essential services because they are not shared by all Canadians, and that as such they are deemed unworthy of precious government funds.

“Special Interest Groups” vs. “Ordinary Canadians”

*Special interest groups*

In the late 1980s, the federal government and mass media began framing equity-seeking groups as “special interest groups” in public discourse, as neoliberalism became the dominant political and economic paradigm (Brodie, 2008B, p. 155; Dobrowolsky, 1998, p.718; Pirsch-Steigerwald, 2002). Re-framed as special interest groups, women’s movements in the late 1980s and early 1990s were also demonized in national news media and in political party discourse as seeking superiority over men; as universally man-hating and anti-family; and as “making unreasonable demands on the greater society” that were unrepresentative of the majority of “Ordinary Canadians” (Newman & White, 2006, p.85-6). The NAC, for instance, was framed in the media by the Mulroney Conservative government, and later, the Chrétien Liberal government, as a “special interest group” unworthy of public consultation (Newman & White, 2006, p.86). The NAC had worked to present itself in the public eye as a collective representation of two million women’s interests, and yet both governments construed the NAC as an organization devoid of common sense and, thus, unworthy of consultation (Brodie, 2008B; Thrift, 2009; Pirsch-Steigerwald, 2002). Feminists have argued that this move was a direct response to the NAC’s critical stance on neoliberal policy changes and

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39 As I will discuss later in this chapter, it is debatable whether the NAC was truly as representative of its membership as it claimed to be. However, its effectiveness has not been the issue that government has utilized to discredit it; rather, it has been the very issue of women’s oppression that they have denied. Thus, my focus, here, is not necessarily on NAC’s effectiveness but, instead, on how it has been discredited by government.
program restructuring (Brodie, 2008B; Thrift, 2009).\textsuperscript{40} Indeed, governments employed neoliberal and anti-feminist discourses in the 1980s-1990s to “disparage” feminist organizations and movements by discursively positioning them as being “wastrels and scroungers” seeking unfounded special treatment from the state (Dobrowolsky, 2009, p. 6).

Neoliberal “special interests” discourse has been used to create a false dichotomy between “ordinary” and “special” interests, and to promote an understanding that “equal treatment” translates into “same treatment” for all (Razack, 2002, p.3; Sawer, 2008, p. 132). Indeed, in a neoliberal paradigm, any “accommodation of group difference or policy of affirmative action could lead only to a politics of privilege and special status at the expense of ordinary Canadians” (Sawer, 2008, p. 132, italics added). “Ordinary Canadians” are distinguished from “Other Canadians” in national historical and contemporary discourse (Mackey, 2002). While this identity is commonly considered “Ordinary,” it has been constructed for centuries, and is rooted in colonialism, racism, and sexism (Razack et al., 2010).

The “Ordinary Canadian”

Today, policy and legislation “hails” (Althusser, 1971/2006, p. 175) particular bodies into the “Ordinary Canadian” subject position, and particular bodies into the “Other” subject position (Dean, 1999, p. 12). National narratives and histories provide many clues as to who the “Ordinary Canadian” is.\textsuperscript{41} “Ordinary Canadians” are the

\textsuperscript{40} Beginning in 1984 and intensifying in the 1990s, “feminist organizations [like NAC] were increasingly vocal opponents of the emerging neoliberal vision of good governance,” which incited backlash from government and other neoliberal supporters, such as the mass media (Brodie, 2008B, p. 154).

\textsuperscript{41} Indeed, formative Canadian political leaders decided who was, and who was not, deserving of the status of “Canadian.” Prime Ministers John A. MacDonald, William Lyon Mackenzie King, and Official Opposition leader Arthur Meighen, for instance, publicly stated their desires to ensure the dominance and exclusivity of an “Aryan,” Anglo-Saxon race in British America (Razack et al., 2010, p.ix). The “ideal,” or
subjects of national historical mythologies taught about in public schools: “rugged” settlers—the “white men of grit”—who persevered against the harsh Canadian climate to “civilize” the nation (Razack, 2002, p. 3). These mythologies elide the horrific acts done by “Ordinary Canadians” in Canada’s colonial project. As Razack (2002) writes, “[m]ythologies or national stories [...] enable citizens to think of themselves as part of a community, defining who belongs and who does not belong to the nation” (p. 2).

Certainly, who is considered to be an “Ordinary Canadian” is greatly influenced by such mythologies. Political discourse continues to entrench the boundaries between these categories with legislation such as the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1988) and the Canadian Anti-Terrorism Act (2001). Discursive hailing has material consequences; to be hailed as an “Ordinary Canadian” privileges one’s interests above those hailed as an “Other,” based on centuries of structural power imbalances.

Women have a complex relationship with the “Ordinary Canadian” subject position. Even Anglo Saxon women have a complicated historical connection to this term. The histories of white women settlers in Canada were rarely recorded, unless an individual woman displayed qualities typically assigned to men, such as bravery and self-

\[\text{intended, Canadians, then, were not the Aboriginal peoples already inhabiting the land that was violently claimed as Canada; nor were they the non-Anglo-Saxon peoples whose existence in Canada since its origins has been denied (Razack, 2002, p. 3).}\]

\[42\] Canada’s multiculturalism policy has received tremendous critique for maintaining the distinction and hierarchy between “Ordinary” (white, with Anglo-Saxon heritage) and “Other” (non-white, and/or non-Anglo-Saxon heritage) Canadians and for stereotyping and essentializing people (Mackey, 2002, p. 20; Mahtani, 2002). In addition to the problems associated with Canada’s multiculturalism policy, Canada’s anti-terrorism policies have “deeply intensified the policing of bodies of colour,” and collude with the Immigration Act, which has become increasingly punitive towards (non-white and/or non-wealthy) refugees and people seeking residency in Canada (Razack, 2002, p. 4-5). Indeed, the “Ordinary Canadian” rhetoric has been used to justify these shifts, in that white people who feel entitled to the “Ordinary Canadian” status perceive the entrance of immigrants and refugees into the nation, as well as any provision of services to them, as threatening “special treatment” that detracts from their entitlements as Canadians (Mackey, 2002, p. 20).
sufficiency (Tulloch, 1985, p. xi). Until the twentieth century in what is now Canada, white settler women were not (or rarely) able to vote, own property, divorce their husbands, or maintain a public identity apart from their male relatives. Their status as “Ordinary Canadian” could perhaps be better described as the “Ordinary Canadian’s daughter, wife, and/or mother.” Certainly, white settler women benefit from the “Ordinary Canadian’s” privileges, but they have also been excluded from accessing some of its privileges and have certainly been excluded on the basis of their other, intersecting identities (e.g. lesbians, poor women). Women have been denied access to the category of “Ordinary Canadian” in many instances, and many women are hailed as “Other” in multiple ways on the basis of their race, class, sexual orientation, and other identifiers.

It is clear, then, that the “Ordinary Canadian” is a construct deployed to normalize the dominance and entitlement of white, Anglo-Saxon, male settlers in North America throughout the past five centuries. Political parties have used it as a way of communicating that they have the interests of an abstract, “ordinary” person in mind (Brodie, 1995, p.71). In a neoliberal context, the “Ordinary Canadian” retains its original racist, colonialist, and sexist connotations, but, in accord with neoliberal ideology, is utilized to privilege the interests of corporations and the economic market. Fitting with the neoliberal principles of individualization and invisibilization, the neoliberal “Ordinary

43 Premier Ralph Klein, for instance, often referred to “Martha and Henry,” who are “imaginary everyday Albertans who [...] have] insider status with government leaders” (Black & Stanford, 2005, p. 285). As Black and Stanford (2005) argue, Martha and Henry’s “English-language names to their apparent heterosexual couple-hood to the limits of their political demands for renewed government funding in health and education” are what make them “Ordinary” (p. 285). However, “[b]y extension of this logic, none of the thousands of Albertans who advised a recent MLA Committee to raise social assistance rates could possibly be ‘Martha’ or ‘Henry.’ The premier himself made that clear when he juxtaposed AISH recipients with ‘severely normal Albertans’ when he verbally assaulted disabled people during the 2004 election campaign” (Black & Stanford, 2005, p. 285).
Canadian” naturalizes the affluent, white, Anglo-Saxon male subject position by present-ing it as the abstract genderless, classless, raceless person who is self-sufficient and in favour of an unfettered economy (Brodie, 1995, p. 72; Franzway et al., 1989, p. 3). In contrast to the “Ordinary Canadian,” “everyone else is ‘special’ in one way or another” (Brodie, 1995, p. 72). Neoliberal “Ordinary Canadians” are consulted regarding major political decisions, such as pre-budget consultations, as they are stakeholders in the outcome; “special interest groups” are not consulted, as they are likely to “hijack” and derail public decision-making with their own specialized agendas (Brodie, 1995, p. 72).

Special interest groups versus the Ordinary Canadian

Because feminist women’s organizations in Canada have been publicly opposed to neoliberal ideologies and global capitalism, they have been framed in government discourse as “Other”—and as “special interest groups.” By differentiating between the “special interests” of women’s movements and the regular interests of “Ordinary Canadians,” the federal government denies that women’s interests are wider interests (Brodie, 1995, p.71). This move also privileges affluent, white, heterosexual, Anglophone, cis-gendered men by normalizing (and essentializing) their gendered, racialized, classed, etc. experiences into “Ordinary” experiences, rendering them the default citizens (Brodie, 1995, p.73; Razack, 2002, p.3; Rebick, 2005, p. 126). Moreover, “special interest groups” are positioned as threatening to “Ordinary Canadians,” because they seek to obtain what are positioned as scarce resources for purposes constructed as being outside the interests of the “ordinary” (Pellebon, 2010, p. 10). In times of “fiscal restraint,” in which government is being “streamlined” and “right-sized” to address the reportedly out-of-control federal deficit, governments have claimed that they could no

Certainly, according to Oda, “Ordinary Canadians” do not require advocacy groups. In reference to the closure of twelve of sixteen SWC across the country in 2006, Oda said: “What these offices don't necessarily provide is the help directly to women. There was a lot of lobbying groups, there was a lot of advocacy” (as cited in CBC News, 2006, para. 3). By shutting women’s machineries out of decision making processes, and by dismantling advocacy groups, women’s movements have been further delegitimized. The discursive framing of women’s organizations as “special interest groups” has been used by anti-feminist groups, including anti-feminist women’s groups such as Realistic, Equal, Active for Life Women (R.E.A.L. Women),44 to demonize feminism and retrench women’s equality. In fact, R.E.A.L. Women claimed that SWC only funded “special interest groups” (i.e. feminist groups) when it demanded SWC be defunded (Moore, 2006). This anti-feminist backlash, coming from outside of the government, further works to strengthen the rhetoric that women’s institutional machinery is opposed to the interests of the “Ordinary Canadian”. R.E.A.L. women even gained increased legitimacy in the public eye when the group stated their refusal to accept federal funds (Brodie, 2008B, p. 156), loaning further support to the idea that women who care about the common good do not seek specialized treatment in the form of federal funding.

44. R.E.A.L. Women defines itself as the “a pro-family conservative women's movement” (R.E.A.L. Women, n.d.), which believes that “the family is the most important union in Canadian society” (R.E.A.L. Women, n.d., para. 3).
In times of fiscal restraint, cost-effectiveness and efficiency have been prioritized and championed as the best measures for protecting the common good. When it implemented GBA to ensure equality between men and women, the government saw fit to rationalize the elimination of funding to other services whose goals involved gender equality. The federal government began framing these other services as duplicate and/or non-essential services in public discourse, despite the different programs, services, and roles they fulfilled within women’s networks and movements (Dobrowolsky, 1998, p. 712). By positioning women’s organizations as “special interest groups” that duplicate government services, the federal government rationalized the elimination of women’s advocacy groups from political conversation (Brodie, 1995, p.68; Brodie, 2008B, p.156; Newman & White, 2006, p.86).

Resisting a Unified Voice

Diversity of voices

The elimination of women’s institutional machinery based on the idea that they duplicate services is a move that conflates all women, and all women’s organizations, networks and movements. This conflation is one that women’s movements have been struggling against for decades. The entire category of womanhood has been contested for its legitimacy and its ability to represent the entirety of people who identify (or are forced to identify) with it (hooks, 1981). Women’s and feminist organizing, too, has engaged in rich debate\textsuperscript{45} around whose voices were being heard, whose were being silenced, and how

\textsuperscript{45} The history of the NAC exemplifies these debates in the English-speaking Canadian context (see Khan, 2007; Nadeau, 2009A; Vickers, Rankin & Appelle, 1993; Rebick, 2005, p. 23). What’s more, English-Canadian and Québécois women’s movements vary significantly in their histories and approaches (Adamson et al., 1988, p. 8). In Chapter 3, I elaborate on how this conversation has occurred in Canadian women’s movements.
to proceed with the movement so that those who are most marginalized take leadership roles (Adamson et al., 1988). Women’s movements are historically located and constantly changing, and are rarely, if ever, unified. Women’s organizations, too, are diverse, and have a variety of missions, visions, mandates, purposes, and roles, and operate different programs and services depending on these roles (Adamson et al., 1988).

Women’s movements are built on networks of diverse organizations that provide many different programs and services, including lobbying, advocacy and research, frontline work, as well as self-reflexivity and education. They are more than an a “special interest group” with a singular agenda or identity; they are social movements that transcend “the orthodox interest group paradigm by promoting and fostering collective identities with the intent of resisting and shaping both internal and external political norms and structures” (Dobrowolsky, 1998, p. 716). It appears that government (at least the decision-making authorities) is not versed in the history of women’s movements and does not recognize the diversity of “interests” women’s organizations address. The government continues to conflate and delegitimize women’s organizations by claiming that these organizations duplicate the services it already provides in the form of GBA. These discursive moves elide the differences that exist among women’s organizations, even as changes are made to GBA that ostensibly account for diversity.

**Gender Based Analysis Plus**

One type of organization cannot eliminate oppression and inequality, nor can one form of analysis yield these results; particularly a form that is under-resourced and has been heavily critiqued. Indeed, the critiques discussed above of GBA demonstrate its insufficiencies. For instance, it has ignored considerations such as race and class, thus
operating primarily from the perspective of white women (Bunjun, Lee, Martin, Torres, & Waller, 2006, p.5; Hankivsky, 2005). The form of GBA currently utilized by SWC, GBA+, appears to be an improvement, as it examines how gender interacts with other factors that affect people’s lives, such as: ethnicity, income, sexual orientation, age, ability, geography, culture, and language (Status of Women Canada, 2013). Certainly, GBA+ provides a more intersectional analytical framework than focusing on gender alone; nonetheless, what has not improved with the implementation of GBA+ is the sociopolitical context in which it operates. Anti-woman and anti-feminist discourses continue to proliferate in government discourse and in the mass media. Within these contexts, whether GBA+ can truly effect change must be questioned.

A look at SWC’s GBA+ website indicates that anti-woman and anti-feminist discourses continue to impact GBA+’s effectiveness and that policy and practice continue to be de-gendered in this government agency’s work. The website contains a section dedicated to dispelling five “myths” regarding GBA+ (Status of Women Canada, 2013). The fifth dispelled “myth,” that “GBA+ cannot be used in all sectors,” indicates that GBA+ can be applied everywhere government creates policy and programming (Status of Women Canada, 2013). While this is optimistic, the other four “myths” suggest GBA+ may have limited effects for transformative change and that the GBA+ that is performed is peculiarly de-gendered.

The first myth the site attempts to dispel is that women and men are equal (Status of Women Canada, 2013, para. 25). While the website acknowledges that differences exist between men and women’s realities, it does not describe any inequities or root cause of these inequities. It says only that “[m]en’s and women’s realities are different as a
result of both sex (biological differences) and gender (social differences)” (Status of Women Canada, 2013, para. 25). Thus, GBA+ still elides any structural causes of inequality. The second myth is that “GBA+ is advocacy for women,” to which SWC responds, “GBA+ is not advocacy for anyone. It is an analytical process designed to ensure that potentially different impacts for different people are discovered and taken into account during the development and review of policy, programs and legislation” (Status of Women Canada, 2013, para. 26). Here, GBA+ is distinguished from advocacy which, as discussed in the introduction to this study, has come under attack in recent years. The vague reference to “different impacts for different people” and the use of the broad term “anyone” suggests that GBA+, as used by government agencies, continues to invisibilize gender as a salient factor in inequity. Similarly, the third “myth” is that “GBA+ only applies to women and women's issues,” to which SWC responds that “GBA+ helps ensure that policies, programs or legislation have a positive impact on all Canadians” (Status of Women Canada, 2013, para. 27). While it rightfully highlights the merits of gender analysis, this statement indicates that the invisibilization of women from policy and programming is still occurring. This is further supported by the fourth dispelled “myth” that “GBA+ is biased against men.” SWC denies any bias by saying that “GBA+ is about fully analyzing impacts and options for everyone, not about promoting one group over another” (Status of Women Canada, 2013, para. 28).

It is clear from the responses provided to dispel the “myths” that context is a crucial determinant for whether an analytical strategy will effect transformative change. For instance, although GBA+ examines gender as it relates to “other factors” (Status of Women Canada, 2013), that SWC dispelled “myths” regarding its usefulness using
explanations that invisibilize women and disparage advocacy demonstrates that its effects on government policy will not transform the insidious anti-woman and anti-feminist sentiments. Indeed, GBA+ operates within a sociopolitical context in which the elimination or severe retrenchment of funding to key women’s advocacy and research organizations has occurred. Just some of the groups that were discursively framed as “special interest groups” as a rationale to have their funding cut were: the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW), Womenspace, the New Brunswick Coalition for Pay Equity, the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses, Réseau des tables régionales de groupes de femmes du Québec, the National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL), the Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC) (including the elimination of the Sisters in Spirit project), and the Court Challenges Program of Canada (CCP), (Dobrowolsky, 2009, p. 14; Gergin, 2011, paras. 16-20; Granke & Legault, 2010, para. 2; Knight & Rodgers, 2012, p. 267).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that the federal government has attempted to shut out women’s movements from decision-making processes by implementing its own gender analysis framework, GBA/GBA+, which was initially a strategy rooted in women’s movements and, in its most effective form, was intended to be a complementary analytical strategy to the work done by existing women’s organizations and machineries. The Canadian federal government, however, has assumed complete control over GBA and has discursively framed women’s organizations as “special interest groups” that duplicate the services of GBA+. In addition, “special interest groups” have been framed as opposing the interests of “Ordinary Canadians,” or the ideal subjects of a neoliberal
government: genderless, raceless, classless entities that are self-sufficient and favour an unfettered economy.

I have provided a preliminary analysis as to how governments have utilized neoliberal and anti-feminist discourses to eliminate women’s organizations and delegitimize women’s movements. Women’s movements have largely opposed neoliberalism and global capitalism, as they have led to increasing inequalities and oppressions for the majority of women worldwide (Bashevkin, 1998, p. 4; Brodie, 2008B). Indeed, women’s machineries are less favourable to include in decision-making processes than potential financial investors (e.g. corporations) because they demand government intervention and spending at a time when fiscal austerity dominates policy (Brodie, 1998, p. 19). It is, indeed, disadvantageous to neoliberalism for women to organize as an interest group, as 1) their demands often involve the formation of a stronger state and more social spending, which neoliberalism opposes, and; 2) allusion to structural and systemic inequalities clashes with neoliberal values of independence and individualism. Thus, women’s movements and feminism more generally are perceived as threats to neoliberal and global capitalist plans for the future. These are discussions I expand upon in later chapters.

As this chapter draws to a close, some important questions arise that will be addressed in the next two chapters: has the NB government also discursively framed the NBACSW as a “special interest group” unworthy of public funding and consultation? If so, what implications might this have for NB women, given that national trends have led to the delegitimizing of women’s movements and the silencing of women elsewhere in Canada?
CHAPTER 2: A NEW DIRECTION FOR NEW BRUNSWICK AND THE ELIMINATION OF THE NBACSW

When I asked interviewee Beatrice what her greatest concern was for NB women, her response was:

Beatrice: [...] I don’t feel that our resources, our financial resources of government, both provincial and municipals, um, are equally expended. I believe that when budgets are made, um, they do not take into consideration the different needs of men and women. And I think that is a huge barrier to women in New Brunswick (Beatrice, personal communication, August 24, 2011).

That Beatrice identifies inequities in the provincial (and municipal) budgets as a barrier for NB women speaks to the unequal allocation of resources at all levels of government. Yet, the NB government has claimed that its budget-making process for the 2011-2012 Provincial Budget was consultative of New Brunswickers in ways that were “unprecedented” (Higgs, 2011, p. 5). According to Finance Minister Higgs (2011), this budget represents the priorities of all of the New Brunswickers—presumably, although never stated explicitly, of all genders—who took place in the pre-budget consultation process. It was in this same budget that the funding to the NBACSW was eliminated.

In this chapter, I investigate how the NB government rationalized its decision to eliminate the NBACSW. In the previous chapter, I described the ways that the federal Canadian government used neoliberal and anti-feminist discourses to rationalize eliminating women’s institutional machineries on a national level. In fallaciously saying that women’s machineries duplicated its GBA services, and that these machineries did not provide essential services, the government has been able to rationalize the cuts to
these organizations by positioning them as “special interest groups” that oppose the interests of “Ordinary Canadians.” Such cuts have undermined women’s capacity for political representation, and align with national trends toward the dismantling of women’s advocacy groups in the country. In this chapter, I argue that the NB government has utilized a similar framework in eliminating the NBACSW, and that this signals troubling consequences for women’s political representation and women’s advocacy in NB. By discursively framing the NBACSW as a duplicate and non-essential service, the NB government positions it as a “special interest group” considered by “Ordinary New Brunswickers” to be an impediment to the common good. I argue that the NB government’s rationalization that the NBACSW duplicated the WIB’s services is unfounded.

I begin this chapter by looking to NB’s history and its neoliberalization to demonstrate that, historically, it has attempted to align itself with federal trends in order to demonstrate its worth. That the NBACSW was recently eliminated establishes that NB positioned itself once again as a follower of national trends, and is attempting to align itself with the federal government. I use Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in order to demonstrate that the 2011-2012 NB Provincial Budget Speech (hereafter “Budget Speech” or “Speech”) positions the NBACSW as an impediment to “Ordinary New Brunswickers’” vision for the common good for NB, and that this vision is, indeed, neoliberal. The Budget Speech also affirms the NB government’s renewed commitment to improving provincial-federal relations. This signals potentially troubling consequences for NB women, considering the impact of federal trends that were outlined in the previous chapter.
A History of Tumultuous NB-Federal Relations

In recent years, NB has been widely understood by other Canadians (and even by its own residents) as “second best, a special case, a province unworthy of the same standards [...] enjoyed by other places in Canada” (Tremblay, 2013, para. 10). While perhaps more obvious in public media in recent years, this reputation as an inferior, “have-not” province is not new. According to NB Studies scholar Tremblay (2013), this reputation “has plagued our province since Confederation” (2013, para. 10). The following section tells of how NB, one the first British North American colonies, became known as a “have-not” province that is financially dependent upon the federal government.

The Construction of a ‘Have-not’ Province

Like all other Canadian provinces and territories, NB was (and continues to be) built on British exploitation of many people, including women.46 Established as a British colony in 1784, the major directions for NB’s future were decided upon by a population of white settlers who felt entitled to the land and its resources based on their loyalty to the British army. British Loyalists47 plan for the province involved capitalizing on its natural resources (Frink, 1999, p.59). While these Loyalists exploited many people, the province

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46 In Canada, there has been a long, disturbing history of the deliberate exclusion of women, non-white immigrant men, indigenous men, disabled men, and trans* people from national narratives, ideals, and from many aspects of social and political life, such as voting (Razack et al. 2010, x). My focus, here, is on exploitation by British colonizers, and their Loyalist sympathizers who settled in NB after the American Revolutionary War, because they are the groups which inflicted the most harm and held the most power in the province. This is by no means an exhaustive list of exploitation in the province, British-instigated or otherwise.

47 Loyalists in the New Brunswick context are American colonists of relatively diverse backgrounds and interests who supported the British cause during the American Revolutionary war (1775-83). Particular Loyalists—primarily white, Protestant, land-owning men of high social status—had more authority and influence than others. In this study it is most often this privileged group I am referring to when discussing Loyalists.
was also exploited in wider colonial negotiations. Prior to Confederation in 1867, NB’s economy was growing. Early eighteenth-century NB Loyalist economies were centered on shipbuilding in the Southeast (Frink, 1999, p.76). The nineteenth century saw a decline in the shipbuilding industry, and a re-focusing on logging and pulp and paper (McLaughlin & Parenteau, 2009, p.15), as well as agriculture, fishing, and mining (Frink, 1999). Roads, railways, and telegraph communication lines were built to ameliorate capitalist economic exchange between NB and surrounding areas, such as Québec, New England, and Nova Scotia (Frink, 1999, p.106).

Confederation was arguably politically and economically disadvantageous for New Brunswick (Frink, 1999, p.113). As Martin (1984) notes, “[t]he Fathers of Confederation rejected complete democracy […] and neither claimed an electoral mandate nor sought popular endorsement before committing British North America to regional union” (p.575). The decision to confederate with Upper Canada was made undemocratically, in service not necessarily of everyone living in the province, but, instead, of the interests of British settlers and capitalism. Discrimination against the Maritime region resulted in the Canadian constitution being written in favour of Central Canada, putting NB at a competitive disadvantage with other regions (e.g. higher tariffs), and forcing people “in the most productive age groups” to migrate to Ontario and Québec for work (Forbes, 1993, p.14). Confederation also led to financial deficits and a loss of control (partial or complete) over NB’s industries (Forbes, 1993, p. 15-16; Frink, 1999, p.117). These financial troubles translated into reluctance on the part of Maritime

48 British colonizers had begun to feel threatened by the United States; additionally, the construction of railroads across the country was becoming crucial in order to increase economic exchange and communication (Martin, 1984, p.578).
governments to provide a sound welfare state, as attempts to do so were met by federal disapproval of spending in areas “without the possibility of [financial] return,” rather than investing in lucrative infrastructure, such as roads and hydro-electricity (Forbes, 1993, p.20). NB and other Maritime provinces were forced to “maintain their own social and education services and economic infrastructure […] [without] access to the revenues with which to do so,” relegating Maritimers to “second class citizens in their social programmes and educational and economic opportunities” for the remainder of the nineteenth century (Forbes, 1993, p.14).

In the 1920s, Maritimers came together to demand federal financial assistance and constitutional reform, which eventually led to the federal government distributing equalization (also known as “transfer”) payments. The federal government framed these payments, however, as a necessary remedy to the Maritime province’s own shortcomings, rather than as a result of a corrupt constitution. They were meant to help the region “keep up with other provinces in the support of industry” (Forbes, 1993, p.21). It can be argued, then, that Confederation disadvantaged NB in the wider Canadian context by positioning it as a dependent province in need of federal intervention and guidance.

The disadvantaging of NB in federal relations continued into the twentieth century. The First World War, the Great Depression, and increasing industrialization of economies such as farming and fishing had worsened NB’s economic conditions (Frink, 1999, p.130-135; Slumkoski, 2010, p.124). National Canadian ideas of “progress” were bound up with imperialism and capitalist development (Stiles, 2004, p.10). Within this “atmosphere of an evolutionary survival of the fittest world,” efficiency was crucial; farms in NB that adopted business models and industrial technologies thrived, while
smaller, traditional farms suffered (Frink, 1999, p.130). Although the Second World War briefly improved NB’s economy (e.g. through increased shipbuilding), its economic problems had returned by the late 1940s (Frink, 1999, p.139). Once again, NB was positioned as in dire need of federal intervention. During the embedded liberal political and economic paradigm, the Canadian federal government was “now convinced that they possessed a new arsenal of economic policy to achieve high employment and generally manage the economy” (Savoie, 1989, p.12). Newly implemented federal research boards and economic development councils offered “advice” on the future of NB’s economy with regard to its waning resource-based economy, its lack of basic infrastructure (e.g. highways, electricity sources), and its need to centralize social services such as education, health, and justice to meet national standards (Forbes, 1993, p.24-25). Because the federal government controlled the funding, they also were able to largely dictate how it was spent; this meant that investments were made in areas that would be profitable for Central Canada (Frink, 1999, p.144). What this meant for NB was the creation of hydro-electric damming, thermal plant creation, road expansion, and the transferring of social services from the individual municipalities to the province.50

49 People living in rural northern and eastern counties (predominately Acadian and First Nations people) had been hit especially hard by the depression, facing extensive poverty and unemployment (Frink, 1999, p.134). Caroline, for instance, recalls her childhood living in the Tobique First Nation community: “There was no work. There there was nothing, ah, other than, ah, seasonal work in the potato fields in the state of Maine” (Caroline, personal communication, October 24, 2011).

50 While adequate funding for education was no doubt welcomed in the northern part of the province, centralization of education meant that municipalities had to surrender more control over what their children were taught (Heylar, 2011). Based on conflicts between Anglophone-Protestants and Francophone-Catholics in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries regarding education, this centralization may have meant that smaller Francophone communities lost crucial autonomy over education (Heylar, 2011). In the late 1960s, however, Premier Louis Robichaud implemented the Equal Opportunity Program which officially made New Brunswick a bilingual (French and English) province, and this program ensured that Francophones in New Brunswick had control over their children’s education (through creation of a Francophone school district) and also had the resources to provide adequate education (Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick, n.d.).
Although increased federal assistance appeared to improve the quality of life for many in NB, in the 1940s and 1950s, it was still home to Canada’s “lowest wages and the highest rates of illiteracy and child mortality” (Huskins & Boudreau, 2009, p.82). To address these issues, NB was forced to allow the federal government more control over provincial finances in exchange for increased federal funds (Slumkoski, 2010, p.124-25). Federally-controlled regional development plans in the Maritimes, such as the Department of Regional Economic Expansion (DREE) of 1969, were intended to jump-start new industries in the Atlantic region (Savoie, 2003, p. 152). The increased federal funds meant that the NB government could both promote multinational investment in forestry, mining, and pulp and paper to bolster its exports and, simultaneously, invest millions of dollars in sweeping reforms to healthcare and education to improve NB’s social situation (McFarland, 2009, p. 45; McLaughlin & Parenteau, 2009, p.16).

Programs like the DREE, however, were also created to increase Canadian nationalism in NB to prevent conflict (Savoie, 2003, p.152). Moreover, “DREE programs […] benefitted mainly the owners of industry and have actually institutionalized the conditions of Atlantic regional underdevelopment” (Brym & Sacouman, 1979, p.11). The DREE provided Toronto-based retail corporations with incentives to “set up shop in Atlantic Canada,” but the capital generated from these corporations was not re-invested in Atlantic communities and, thus, was more for the benefit of Central Canada (Brym & Sacouman, 1979, p.11). Although federal assistance lessened NB’s autonomy over its industry, government believed there was little alternative. By the late 1970s, the federal government had begun to neoliberalize, and NB followed suit.

51 For instance, the Hatfield government implemented a major program of construction of new schools and regional hospitals.
New Brunswick’s Uncertain Neoliberalization Journey

Indeed, NB’s journey toward neoliberalization occurred similarly to the rest of Canada, in that it followed the decline of embedded liberalism. Although, as Guildford (2010) writes:

It is tempting to believe that Atlantic Canadians, living in a region that has historically been poor relative to other parts of the country, are not persuaded by the rhetoric of neoliberalism, with its emphasis on creating ideal conditions for the corporate sector under the rubric of global competitiveness. But this is hard to accept in the face of the slash and burn budgets of the last several decades. All four Atlantic provinces have instituted severe cuts to social services, ignoring a chorus of protests from provincial advisory councils and other women’s organizations (Guildford, 2010, p. 245).

The “slash and burn” budgets began in the late 1970s, when unemployment was high, the cost of living increased, and the “class compromise” between capital and labour was unraveling. A condition of this compromise had been a greater distribution of wealth between economic elites and workers; however, when the “growth collapsed in the 1970s…upper classes everywhere felt threatened” as they were no longer profiting from the compromise (Harvey, 2005, p.15). The threats were not only economic, but also political; socialism and communism had become popular options in Europe (Harvey, 2005, p.15). In an attempt to protect their wealth, ruling classes adopted rationalities formed by a small group of elites which, until that point, had been fairly peripheral (Harvey, 2005). These rationalities positioned “political ideals of human dignity and individual freedom” as “central values of civilization,” and conversely, positioned “all
forms of state intervention that substituted collective judgements for those of individuals free to choose” as threats to these values and thus to civilization (Harvey, 2005, p.5).

In an effort to sustain capitalism, governments of many countries began pushing for economic deregulation, privatization, and facilitation of global economic competition (Harvey, 2005, p.8). Fiscal responsibility and deficit reduction became prioritized over the health and well-being of human beings. The 1970s and 1980s saw a literal disembending of the economic policies that had been balanced by social policies during the time of embedded liberalism (Workman, 2002, p.39). Individuality was promoted over society, private property was promoted over public, and responsibility was shifted away from the social and onto the individual (Harvey, 2005, p.23). This individualizing of what had been a more collective (certainly not socialist, but at least more community-focused and nationalistic) political paradigm marked a shift away from embedded liberalism, to a neoliberal political and economy paradigm (Doran, 2009, p.124). Political leaders such as Margaret Thatcher in the UK and Ronald Reagan in the US combined social and political conservatism with fiscal conservatism to deregulate economies and make devastating cuts to social services and welfare (Savoie, 1994). Elected in 1984, Canadian PC Prime Minister Brian Mulroney joined suit as he privatized formerly public industry and down-sized the public sector, among other neoliberal moves (Savoie, 1994).

Neoliberalization began in earnest a few years later in NB, following the national trend, albeit in its own unique way. In 1987, the Liberals under leader Frank McKenna won every seat in the NB provincial election. McKenna’s government made cuts to social programs and promoted “low cost investment” by lowering corporate taxes and altering labour regulations to attract more corporate investors to the province (McFarland, 2009,
p.25-27). McKenna’s moves appear to be the definition of neoliberalism – clawing back state social provisions in favour of a global capitalist economic market. Indeed, McKenna is now known worldwide for his “fiscal conservatism, his reform of social assistance programs, revisions to the Worker’s Compensation Board, modifications to the education and health care systems, and, importantly, his aggressive quest to attract firms and jobs to the province” (Milne, 1996, p.13).

McKenna’s strategies, however, must be examined in the context of “a very particular positioning vis-à-vis globalization and neoliberalism… adopted by a ‘have-not’ province as a kind of desperate economic development strategy” (McFarland, 2009, p.25). Even McKenna is argued to have been initially resistant to neoliberalization in the province, demonstrated by his “reactionary” attempts at making it “self-sufficient” (Tremblay, 2009, p.248). Seeking “self-sufficiency” had been a response of newly-formed nation-states to globalization in industrializing Europe; in that context, it involved keeping production domestic, implementing high import taxes, and forming strict laws against unemployment and emigration (Tremblay, 2009, p.248-49). Similarly, McKenna initially moved to insulate NB’s economy “at a time of rising global interdependence” (Tremblay, 2009, p.249). However, as neoliberalism rolled out in the federal government, equalization payments were cut back, leaving the Maritime Provinces with large deficits (Forbes, 1993, p.13). The NB government eventually utilized “self-sufficiency” to rationalize major cutbacks to social services and the prioritization of the economic market, in that they altered it to mean “self-sufficiency” from deficit (Tremblay, 2009).

With “self-sufficiency” through deficit reduction as their primary goal, McKenna’s government welcomed an influx of low-paying and precarious employment,
as well as an increased focus on entering NB into a globalized market economy (McFarland, 2009, p.28). McKenna “boasted that the province was ‘Canada’s laboratory,’ willing to forge ahead experimentally with neoliberal policies while the rest of the country took notes” (Workman, 2002, p.29). Moreover, in 1993, McKenna ran an ad in *The Globe and Mail* proclaiming that “New Brunswick is Open for Business!” (McFarland, 2009, p.25). By the mid-1990s, McKenna “enthusiastically embraced every aspect of the neoliberal agenda,” subjecting the province to a “structural adjustment” that re-focused money away from social spending, toward global investment (Workman, 2002, p.29). For a few years, the province saw economic growth that came to be known as “the McKenna Miracle” (Milne, 1996, p.9). In an attempt to restructure the province’s economy away from declining natural resources and towards ‘information technology,’ McKenna “used neoliberal policies to turn New Brunswick into what has been called ‘the call centre capital of North America’” (McFarland, 2009, p.28). The call centre industry provides precarious, unstable, and often hazardous employment, where union busting is common and hiring practices often favour educated white men. Today, that industry, too, is failing, as multinational call centre corporations literally pack up overnight and relocate

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52 McFarland writes that “the New Brunswick call centre project was a state-sponsored initiative, in collaboration with the local private-sector telephone company, NBTel. The extensive, almost organic, partnership between a large corporation and the government was not new to New Brunswick; rather, it was the continuation of a particular form of corporatism that has existed for decades in the province’s resource-extraction and manufacturing sectors (dominated by Irving, McCain, and Noranda). … [T]he government promised to deliver a low cost workready workforce” (McFarland, 2009, p.29-30).

53 For instance, McFarland argues that “the New Brunswick government’s call centre initiative was developed as a set of neoliberal policies to accentuate the advantages to employers of operating in this labour market by: (i) lowering non-wage payroll expenses; (ii) increasing the available labour supply; and (iii) maintaining a non-union work environment in the province” (McFarland, 2009, p.32).
to locations with cheaper minimum wages and fewer labour protections (McFarland, 2009).  

It was not only the McKenna government that was set on achieving “self-sufficiency” for NB. The Liberal government under Premier Shawn Graham (2006-2010) also developed an action plan entitled *Our Action Plan to be Self-Sufficient in New Brunswick* (Province of New Brunswick, 2007) that aimed to rid NB of its reliance on federal equalization payments by 2026. While recent NB Liberal governments have been attempting to make NB “self-sufficient” from the federal government, the current PC government said in its 2011-2012 Budget Speech that it plans on building its relationship with the federal government, and says that it is appreciative of the “vital” transfer payments it receives (Higgs, 2011, p. 9). The NB government claims that it is once again in financial peril, and that it must “mee[t] the federal government’s recommendation[s]” in order to achieve the common good for NB (Higgs, 2011, p. 14). The 2011-2012 NB Provincial Budget Speech not only spoke of the NB government’s plan to follow the federal government’s recommendations; it is also the Speech in which the elimination of the NBACSW was announced on March 22, 2011.

In what follows, I use CDA to analyze this Budget Speech (and pertinent media releases) to demonstrate that it discursively frames the NBACSW as an impediment to the common good for “Ordinary New Brunswickers” using discourses of neoliberalism. I have chosen the Budget Speech as my primary text for analysis because it, as Parker

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54 On August 29, 2007, Connect North America, an outbound teleservices centre, closed its doors without warning in its Bathurst, NB, and Fredericton, NB, locations. Workers came to work to find a notice on the door saying they would be contacted (Canadaeast News Service, 2007). Hundreds of people were left jobless and without severance pay. Connect North America had been given $300,000 in forgivable loans from the NB government before it shut down its operations (McFarland, 2009, p. 36).

55 It is noteworthy that McKenna’s and Graham’s self-sufficiency plans were authored by many of the same policymakers (Tremblay, 2009, p.252).
(1992) writes, “constructs an object” (p.9): a “new direction” for NB toward the common good (Higgs, 2011). Further, it creates a “coherent system of meanings” (Parker, 1992, p. 12), insofar as it provides rationales for this “new direction,” and eliminates the NBACSW from it. It also “hails” particular discursive subjects (Parker, 1992, p. 9). In the previous chapter, I argued that the ideal neoliberal Canadian subject is the “Ordinary Canadian”—in this chapter, I argue that the ideal neoliberal subject in NB is the “Ordinary New Brunswicker,” or, the sympathetic collaborator and consultant who recognizes the necessity of strict budgeting and working together to achieve the common goal of deficit reduction in order to address their own concerns.

The 2011-12 Budget Speech and New Brunswick’s “New Direction”

The Budget Speech “outlines a new direction for New Brunswick” (Higgs, 2011, p.5) focused on “reversing [NB’s] fiscal decline and restoring New Brunswickers’ priorities and trust in government” (NB Department of Finance, 2011B, para.3). The Budget Speech declares that the “new direction” will reverse fiscal decline primarily through the proper management of funds. Higgs announced plans to decrease the deficit by 40%, from $740 million in 2011, to $449 million in 2012 (CBC News, 2011 B). One avenue for deficit reduction suggested in the Budget Speech is to increase private foreign investment in the province. However, because of an “absence of major investment projects on the horizon” at the time, economic growth in the province was expected to be “moderate” (Higgs, 2011, p.7). Thus, the budget commands spending restraint in many government departments and agencies, suggesting that “government is spending considerably more on public services than it can afford” (Higgs, 2011, p.7), and that departments need to be held “accountable for unnecessary spending” (Higgs, 2011, p.8).
The budget, according to Higgs, was developed through “unprecedented” stakeholder and public consultation and, as such, is touted as representing New Brunswickers’ priorities. The most pressing priorities are, reportedly, their concerns about the economic challenges faced by their provincial government (NB Department of Finance, 2011C).

The NB government is positioned in the Speech as having to make “tough” financial decisions (CBC News, 2011) in order to fulfill their duty of appeasing New Brunswickers’ anxieties and concerns about provincial finances. Higgs explains that the elimination of the NBACSW was one such tough decision, but that it was part of “a change in philosophy” (NB Department of Finance, 2011A) that the budget proposed for the province. This “change in philosophy” is exemplified throughout the Speech as a “new direction towards fiscal responsibility” (Higgs, 2011, p. 16). In a section of the Speech entitled “Managing Spending Growth and Implementing Efficiencies,” Higgs states:

Mr. Speaker, New Brunswickers elected this government with the mandate to *streamline* the size and cost of government operations, while *protecting core social programs* such as health, senior care and education. … Through attrition, retraining and reassignments we will look to *right-size* the public sector in a collaborative, responsible and compassionate manner (Higgs, 2011, p.10, italics added).

This excerpt shows that, ostensibly in accordance with New Brunswickers’ priorities, the budget aims to “streamline” government operations and “right-size” the public sector while protecting “core,” or essential, programs and services. Higgs justifies this “right-sizing” through the use of “efficiency” rhetoric:
We said we need to look at how we address government *efficiencies* and do it from the top. … We've been asked to look seriously at where we have *duplication in services* and that process is being carried out in a very *methodical* and *understanding* way (Higgs in Weston, 2011, paras. 3-6, italics added).

In this excerpt, “efficiency” is defined by the NB government as involving a “methodical” and “understanding” process of determining which government services and/or agencies are being duplicated. The government plans on saving $15 million in part by consolidating what they perceive to be duplication and overlap in government operations (Higgs, 2011, p.11). On Page 12, the Speech announced that the NB government would be eliminating funding to three relatively small agencies that they considered to be duplicates of other government services. One of these agencies was the NBACSW, which was merged into the WIB. Not only was the NBACSW positioned as a duplicate service; because it was eliminated, it was also positioned in the Speech as not being a “core social program” that provided essential services. Thus, it did not warrant “protection.”

**NBACSW as an Impediment to the “New Direction”**

Without further elaboration on what the “methodical and understanding” review of services entails, it is difficult to see what criteria were used to determine that the NBACSW was duplicating the services of the WIB. In order to rationalize this decision in lieu of providing the details of this “methodical and understanding” process, the NB government positioned the NBACSW as an impediment to the “new direction” in which the province is headed, a direction chosen in collaboration with “Ordinary New Brunswickers.” To do so, it established throughout the Speech and in the media its vision
for the common good supposedly developed in collaboration with “Ordinary New Brunswickers.” The Speech reports that the common good will be achieved when: there is no deficit, finances are managed responsibly, and essential services are protected (Higgs, 2011, p. 7); governments are “right-sized” (Higgs, 2011, p. 11); and constant, transparent collaboration occurs between “Ordinary New Brunswickers” and government, for instance, through the pre-budget consultation process (Higgs, 2011, p.22).

Much can be gleaned from an analysis of the language and terms used within a text (Parker, 1992). Throughout the Budget Speech, the NB government references the pre-budget consultations often (the word “consultation” appears in reference to the process approximately seventeen times in the seventeen pages that contain narrative text). The input from the process is deemed “overwhelming,” and the Speech reports that there were a “record number” of responses (close to three thousand submissions) (Higgs, 2011, p.5). The pre-budget consultation process involved a closed-ended online questionnaire, ten public meetings, and ten “stakeholder” meetings, where “stakeholders” could be “organizations that represent certain sectors of society, be they business organizations, or groups who work on behalf of the less fortunate of the province, arts and culture groups, [and] municipalities” (NB Department of Finance, 2011 C, p.1). Although the pre-budget consultation process was open to every NB resident, neither of the two publicly available documents give a breakdown of which New Brunswickers – residents, public sector workers, stakeholders, or businesses—provided which responses, which regional

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56 Two official documents containing analysis of the pre-budget consultations are available on the Department of Finance website for the Pre-Budget Consultation Process, 2011-12; a Summary of Meetings, and a Summary of Responses to the questionnaire. Each of these documents provides a breakdown of their respective responses, listing the priorities, “comments and suggestions” (NB Department of Finance, 2011 C, p. 1) which came from the consultations.
meetings the responses came from, or who was in attendance. Thus, despite language which suggests that it was an open “engagement” process, it is unclear which New Brunswickers are being represented through these pre-budget consultations.

An analytical practice of CDA involves an exploration of the subjects referenced within a text, and what actions they are capable of doing (Parker, 1992, p. 10). The Speech frames those New Brunswickers who participated in the pre-budget consultations as the “Ordinary New Brunswickers” engaged in the collaboration process, as illustrated by this excerpt:

“Our pre-budget consultations have proven New Brunswickers accept that government should provide the high quality services and programs we need and can afford, but not everything that we may want” (Higgs, 2011, p. 21, italics added).

“Ordinary New Brunswickers” are further defined as consultants who undertake approximately twelve different actions: they “help,” “support,” provide “input,” “recognize,” “elect,” “contribute,” “participate,” “confirm,” are “listened to,” “tell,” “accept,” and “express opinions” pertaining to government decision making. The New Brunswickers that did not participate in the pre-budget consultations are referenced indirectly in the Speech. While the budget is said to consist of the priorities outlined by those who did participate, the NB government anticipates resistance from those New Brunswickers who did not. Higgs says, implementing the budget “will require measures that not all New Brunswickers will support, but are necessary” (Higgs, 2011, p.10). Thus, the Speech anticipates that some New Brunswickers will not support the “new direction” (Higgs, 2011, p.10). Further, he says, the NB government is “[e]ffectively managing the
expectations of the public in terms of our ability to fund essential, high-quality services” (Higgs, 2011, p.16). Here, the NB government differentiates “the public” from the “Ordinary New Brunswickers” whose priorities (e.g. a deficit-free NB) are reflected in the budget.

Statements like these open up the possibility for resistance to the “new direction” outlined in the budget; yet, they simultaneously discredit any attempt at resistance, as the measures outlined in the budget have been framed as “necessary” in order to match with New Brunswickers’ vision of the common good. Parker notes that discourses will often offer suggestions for how they will address objections or resistance to their worldview (1992, p.12). In calling the “new direction towards fiscal responsibility” (Higgs, 2011, p.16) necessary, and in denying the possibility for alternatives, the NB government uses the neoliberal discourse of TINA—“there is no alternative”—to claim that their plans for deficit reduction are the only plans that will achieve the common good for the province (McFarland, 2009). In a neoliberal political and economic paradigm, “the responsibilities of administrative authorities tend to be framed in terms of problems that need to be addressed,” such as economic downturns, and “[t]he goal of governmental practice is to articulate the nature of these problems and propose solutions to them” (Inda, 2005, p.8). The problems created by administrative authorities are most often “solved” economically; for instance, through free trade agreements and through deficit reduction (Cohen & Pulkingham, 2009, p.17). In the 2011-2012 Budget Speech, in particular, NB’s financial situation is presented as a problem in need of fixing that was created by the global economic crisis, and by the folly of past governments. By framing the economic situation of NB as a problem, the main priority for the NB government is to correct it.
In this way, the elimination of the NBACSW is positioned as an unfortunate but necessary sacrifice in moving forward. In the introduction to this study, I explained that, in the Speech and in the days following, the NB government discursively framed the NBACSW as a duplication of the services of the WIB, and as a non-essential service that was not nearly as crucial as front-line counseling work for victims of abuse, in order to rationalize its elimination. Indeed, as the NBACSW belongs to two categories that “Ordinary New Brunswickers” reportedly positioned as impediments to the common good for the province (e.g. deficit reduction), it can be framed as a “special interest group” unworthy of government funding during a time of fiscal austerity. Its supporters, then, are positioned as part of the “public” whose “expectations” needed to be “managed” by government, and not as “Ordinary New Brunswickers.”

Alignment with National Trends

Not only NB, but the federal Canadian government, has used TINA as justification for further neoliberalization. The Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada (1985)—otherwise known as the MacDonald Commission, which was a major factor in Canada’s neoliberalization—“successfully advanced the position that free trade with the United States and a neoliberal economic agenda were the only viable economic development strategies left to Canada” (Brodie, 1995, p.17). That the NB government has rationalized the elimination of the NBACSW, the province’s largest women’s advocacy organization and one of its only institutional women’s machineries, by discursively framing it as a duplicate service of the WIB and as a non-essential service is troubling, given that these rationalizations align with the framework I established in the previous chapter.
The Canadian federal government, along with the provincial governments in Ontario, Alberta, and Saskatchewan, has utilized similar discursive framings to eliminate national women’s machineries and advocates, as I have demonstrated in the introduction to this study. Indeed, such trends are occurring across Canada, and are congruent with the effects neoliberalism and anti-feminism have on gender (e.g. individualization and invisibilization). There is extensive feminist scholarship, which I referenced in the previous chapter, which documents not only the theoretical and discursive effects of neoliberalism and anti-feminism on gender, but also their material impacts upon women living in Canada. Women in NB, too, have experienced the consequences of the cutbacks to social services, welfare, and healthcare; the closure of Moncton’s Status of Women office in 2006, which once served the entire Atlantic region; the elimination of funding to Sisters in Spirit; cuts to the funding for the New Brunswick Coalition for Pay Equity because of their advocacy functions (New Brunswick Coalition for Pay Equity, n.d.); and other hardships caused by the writing out of gender from public policy.

In spite of this breadth of scholarship and experience, the NB government attempted to, as Oda did in 2006, claim that “women’s issues” are being adequately attended to by government, and, thus, attempted to claim that independent women’s machineries were duplicate and non-essential services. Unlike Oda, who claimed outright that men and women were equal (in Brodie, 2008B, p. 145-6), “Blaney wouldn't say if an independent voice is now unnecessary, only that women’s issues are more of a priority than they were when the council was created” (CBC News, 2011C, para. 9). Indeed, the WIB, an office of the NB Executive Council (Cabinet), did provide “Gender-based Diversity Analysis” (GBDA) at the time of the elimination of the NBACSW’s funding.
Like the federal government’s GBA/GBA+, the WIB provides consultation\textsuperscript{57} to other government departments on how to implement GBDA in their policymaking (Women’s Issues Branch, 2003; NB Women’s Issues Branch, 2011). An assessment of the effectiveness of the WIB’s GBDA does not exist to my knowledge, and to undertake such an assessment is beyond the scope and purpose of this study. What is of relevance, here, is that the NB government has a gender-mainstreaming capacity, as does the federal government, which has similarly allowed them to claim that any extraneous organizations with gender in their mandates were duplicate services.

The NBACSW’s mandate was to “work at promoting equality of opportunity, freedom from discrimination, equal treatment, equal benefit, equal status, equality of results - as well as respect of differences - between women and men in all sectors of New Brunswick society” (NBACSW, n.d., para. 1). They produced many publications that provided analysis on the basis of gender; however, as Lyons (2011B) argues:

One minute, the government is saying that there was duplication in services between the Council and the Women’s Issues Branch, so they are simply consolidating the two departments to eliminate overlap. The next minute, government is saying that the functions of the Council are being transferred to the Women’s Issues Branch, implying that the Council does, in fact, do things that the Women’s Issues Branch didn’t. Maybe the government meant that for the most part these two offices did the same work, and that the few things the Council alone did, the Branch will be doing from now on? Cool! Except for the fact that

\textsuperscript{57}Provided on their website is a Gender Based Analysis Guide that “has been designed to assist departments and agencies in developing policies and programs that are equitable to both men and women” (Women’s Issues Branch, 2003, p. 1).
the Council and the Branch really do have very different mandates and really do carry out different work (para. 4)

Elsewhere, Lyons (2011A) lists several functions of the NBACSW that, at the time of its elimination, were not duplicated by the WIB:

- runs a toll-free number that women can call for information about services and organizations in the province
- produces a biennial statistical report on the status of women in the province (includes a section entitled “Questions We Wish We Could Answer” that draws attention to what statistics, such as those relating to intimate partner violence, aren’t available)
- partners with grassroots organizations to present educational workshops
- takes stances on issues based on what is best for women rather than partisan politics
- criticizes the government as necessary
- and publishes a weekly column in the Times & Transcript commenting on women’s issues (para. 10).

Thus, the NB government’s discursive framing of the NBACSW as a duplication of services, one of two rationalizations I have contended with in this study, is, ostensibly, unfounded. I contend with the second rationalization—that the NBACSW is a non-essential service—in the next chapter. For now, the question of why the NB government utilized an unfounded rationalization to eliminate the NBACSW remains. Although such a question may evade a clear answer, what is apparent is that the NB government is using neoliberal and anti-feminist discourses to pave the way for its “new direction for New
Brunswick” in ways that align with national trends that have been detrimental to women’s capacity for political representation, advocacy, and quality of life (Brodie, 1995, p.51; Cohen & Pulkingham, 2009, p. 5; Dobrowolsky, 2009, p.14).

**Building “Ordinary New Brunswickers’” Trust**

Given its alignment with these harmful, anti-feminist trends, it is disconcerting that the NB government works in the Budget Speech to gain the trust of “Ordinary New Brunswickers,” even at a time when it asks them to make sacrifices. In what he calls “an era where all New Brunswickers are asked to contribute to the province’s efforts of balancing the books,” Higgs says that some sacrifices are required of everyone (Higgs, 2011, p.11). A CBC news article claims that, during pre-budget consultations, many New Brunswickers “turned out to the public meetings demanding Higgs save budget items that they support instead of identifying items that would save the government money” (CBC News, 2011A, para.9). Higgs, however, expressed the need for New Brunswickers to self-regulate by “manag[ing] their expectations,” stating that the government “cannot be everything to everybody in every location” (Morris, 2011, para.11). Thus, through this budget and its primary focus on deficit reduction, New Brunswickers are being told that, in order to offer essential services, the government requires their cooperation as they restructure, scale back, and/or eliminate “non-essential” services. As argued earlier, New Brunswickers are assumed to be in agreement with these directives; they are said to “understand” and “support” the changes being made, “as the current model of service delivery is not sustainable” (Higgs, 2011, 16).

The Budget Speech promotes the NB government’s abilities to address this problem in need of fixing (i.e. the deficit) by positioning themselves alongside of New
Brunswickers, as hard-working and trustworthy leaders of change. In the Speech, “we” (when directly referring to NB government) undertakes approximately forty-five different actions, including: “tabling” (e.g. a budget, financial plan), “holding” (forums), “developing,” “building,” “listening,” “needing,” “recognizing,” “soliciting” (opinions), “scrutinizing,” “establishing,” “evaluating,” “undertaking,” and so on. 58 While the Budget Speech maintains a strict division between government and people where it addresses measures to be taken for addressing the concerns of New Brunswickers, Higgs makes it clear that, while initiatives are government-led, “we” are in this together:

I want to assure [public sector] employees that the government is also very well aware of the excellent services they provide to New Brunswickers, but we must all share in the corrective actions that need to be taken to address our unprecedented fiscal challenge” (Higgs, 2011, p.12, italics added).

Here, Higgs uses the singular pronoun “I” to position himself as a representative of the government, and then adopts the plural pronoun “we” to encourage public sector employees to assist with the corrective action of deficit reduction. Later, he says that “[w]e must all be part of the solution and through a sincere and collaborative effort we are putting New Brunswick first for a change” (Higgs, 2011, p.22, italics added). When its boundaries are extended beyond the “government”, then, “we” hails all New Brunswickers as collaborators in the efforts to “put New Brunswick first for a change.”

It is clear that the NB government envisions a world in which we must do away with individual concerns and “special interests” in order to “put NB first.” Though neoliberalism has been said to favour the individual over the social, neoliberal discourse

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58 “We,” in the Speech, is mentioned ninety times; seventy-nine of which are clearly in reference to the NB government. Only five out of seventy-nine refer to the entire province; six are ambiguously used.
relied upon other discourses to gain credibility (Brown, 2005; Fairclough, 2006). As discussed earlier in this study, discourses of the social (e.g. social investment) have aligned with neoliberal discourse in recent Canadian history. The NB government discursively positions itself as capable of leading “Ordinary New Brunswickers” toward its “new direction;” when referring to itself, it uses far more action-oriented process verbs (approximately forty-five), whereas New Brunswickers’ discursive actions are positioned as confirmations of the government’s actions, or choices among these actions, and are far less numerous (recall that New Brunswickers undertook approximately twelve actions in the Speech). These moves are made to build “Ordinary New Brunswickers”’ trust and faith in the NB government’s capabilities moving forward.

Another way in which the NB government seeks to build “Ordinary New Brunswickers’” trust is to differentiate itself discursively from past governments. In adding “for a change” to its statement that we must “put New Brunswick first for a change,” as well as through reprimands of past government evident in the language of “returning to fiscal health,” the Speech presupposes that past governments have not put NB first by trying to be “everything, everywhere, to everybody” by funding special interest groups (NB Department of Finance, 2011 A). In keeping with this theme, the “new direction” outlined in the Budget Speech is framed as one requiring cultural changes:

The cultural change in government spending and reducing waste is underway. So too is the cultural change in managing the expectations of New Brunswickers. But like stopping a freight train in full motion, it takes time to change course fiscally
and mentally. We are building the trust and the momentum necessary to achieve the ultimate success that collectively we are capable of” (Higgs, 2011, p.22).

Metaphors and analogies can provide insight into the worldview perpetuated through a text (Parker, 1992, p.12-13). Higgs likens the cultural course they mean to change to a “freight train in full motion” towards “ultimate success.” Trains run on linear railways; indeed, they were created to expedite the travel of goods and raw materials in industrial capitalism, and as such became a quintessential symbol of progress (Schivelbusch, 1977/1986). Trains, like roads, also “simultaneously connect New Brunswickers to the world and carry us into the future” (Rose, 2009, p.233). According to Fairclough, discourses of progress are part of neoliberal discourse which “contributes to actualizing” new forms of activities, social relations, identities, and values (Fairclough, 2006, p.148). What’s more, great environmental degradation has occurred in the name of progress, including NB’s forests, bodies of water, and mineral deposits.

In a province which is said by financial “experts” such as “Canada’s major banks” (Ballingall, 2012, para. 2) to be declining economically, the NB government proposes to leave the past behind it and stoke the engines of its freight train by implementing a series of changes.59

Central to its difference from previous government is its ability to listen to and work alongside the people who elected them in order to do so. The Budget Speech

59 The Liberals led by Shawn Graham (the current government’s predecessors) also sought to implement changes to the structure of government, to the economy, to the workforce, and to relationships among people in the province. Rose (2009) argues that the Self-sufficiency Plan report hails particular subject positions for government and for people living in New Brunswick. Specifically, it positions the NB government not as regulators of the economy, but as supporters of privatization and corporatization of services in the province (Rose, 2009, p.237-238). Government’s role, in this Plan, is to train and mould workers into a neoliberal labour force, rather than to provide social supports or other so-called “disincentives” to formal employment (Rose, 2009, p.238).
presupposes that past governments did not consult or collaborate with the public, causing a lack of trust. In the Speech’s concluding remarks, Higgs links the trust between New Brunswickers and the NB government with “ultimate success.” Moreover, by assigning itself the task of implementing these changes, the NB government position itself as a responsible, calculating manager of the expectations of “the public.” It is critical to the NB government that “Ordinary New Brunswickers” believe their priorities are truly represented in the budget-making process, and that they are consulted in decision-making. They have made the pre-budget consultations available to the public; however, as mentioned above, these consultations do not divulge who was at the table. Brodie and Bakker (2008) note that there is often a “hierarchy of interest representation” (p.88) in the budget pre-consultation process, in which financial “experts” who are trained in economics, but are not necessarily attentive to social circumstances, are given great influence (Brodie & Bakker, 2008, p.90). It is beyond the scope of this study to investigate the specifics of the NB government’s pre-budget consultation process; still, Brodie and Bakker’s observation of government consultations provide direction for further examination.

The NBACSW participated in the NB government’s 2011-2012 pre-budget consultation process in January, 2011. Its submission highlighted “some key actions needed” for the provincial budget “to protect and promote equality among women and

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60 Discourses of trust are often found in political discourse, and the issue of trust in government in NB has been an important concern. Walker (2010) argues that New Brunswickers’ trust in the government is part of what gives them their power. Alternatively, if New Brunswickers do not trust a government, they do not stay in power long. The Liberals under Premier Shawn Graham, for instance, made several decisions during their time in power which caused the public to lose trust in them, and as a result, became the first government to serve only one term. In their campaign platform (noted above), the current government capitalized on the public’s mistrust of the previous government.
men and diverse groups of women and men,” among which was a call for pay equity measures and family-friendly initiatives (NBACSW, 2011, p.1). Thus, there is a disjunctive discursive positioning that occurs when a group deemed to uphold “special interests” outside of the interests of “Ordinary Canadians” is hailed into the “Ordinary Canadian” subject position by virtue of having participated in the pre-budget consultation process. It appears, then, that further investigation is required into who actually qualifies as “Ordinary New Brunswickers,” and whose interests are actually being represented in such a process.

Ordinary New Brunswicker, Revisited

To identify the ideal “Ordinary New Brunswicker” subject position requires a re-examination of the establishment of NB as a unique British colony. At the beginning of this chapter, I explained that NB became a distinct British colony in 1784, and that the people living there at the time were exploited by British Loyalists. For white settler women, the establishment of NB as a political territory meant the “reaffirmation” of British legal, political, and ideological dominance, which meant male-dominance in all aspects of society (Tulloch, 1985, p.1).

Furthermore, powerful European men have excluded women (and non-European men) from the “public” sphere of social life by

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61 One broad rationale Loyalist men used to justify this male-dominance in New Brunswick was that women inherently lacked the capacity, intelligence, and/or the will to make decisions outside of the home (Tulloch, 1985, p.10-12). Ideas about women’s inferiority can be found in practically all aspects of Western social and political life and are continually re-instated according to the accepted theories of a time period. These ideas find their roots in Western political theory—particularly, in liberalism—where two major dualisms “have demarcated what politics is from what it is not” (Arneil, 1999, p.5). These dualisms involve binary oppositions between nature/culture, and private/public. On the one hand, politics and the world of culture (language, reason, science and arts) exist in the public realm; on the other, nature (instinct, intuition, and chaos) is seen as apolitical and is associated with the private sphere (individual or family) (Arneil, 1999, p.5). Men in western political traditions have, in creating this dualism, privileged the cultural/public over the natural/private, and unsurprisingly, have identified (white) men as belonging to the cultural and public half of the dualism. Conversely, women are seen as belonging to the natural and private (Arneil, 1999, p.7).
using “expert” testimonies to prove to women’s “innate” subordination to white men, based on “empirical” characteristics, such as skull and brain size (see Gould, 1978). Prior to the twentieth century, women in NB were denied political representation, and their interests were discussed publicly only insofar as they related to enfranchised men; as Tulloch notes, “women perhaps most often appear [in historical sources] as wives, wives of common men or wives of prominent New Brunswickers” (1985, p.xv). In the early years of the province, single or widowed European settler women (e.g. British or Acadian) were granted access to land; however, married women had no political rights of their own (Tulloch, 1985, p.7). After electoral revisions in 1843, all women were barred from voting (Tulloch, 1985, p.8). Women who were close to enfranchised men (e.g. wives, sisters, or mothers) were sometimes able to consult with them and by proxy be represented, but many women did not have this privilege.  

Thus, the goals, values, and political needs of white, Anglophone, Protestant, Loyalist settler men were the foundations of political and economic decisions in the province, including the structures of government, as they were the only inhabitants enabled to vote or claim full citizenship status during its formative years. While it would be false and naïve to say that the interests of such a small group of NB residents were the only interests contended with by government today, throughout the centuries, these

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62 Many men were also not enfranchised: Roman Catholics, Jewish people, “people of little property,” non-citizens and minors were not allowed to vote in the 1795 election, which was the first year that elections were regulated by law (Tulloch, 1985, p.3). Roman Catholic men, “virtually the entire Acadian and Irish populations,” were excluded until 1810, and universal suffrage for non-Indigenous men was not achieved until 1889; First Nations men were not able to vote until 1963 (Tulloch, 1985, p.4). Until 1967, people who did not own land were barred from voting municipally and provincially in New Brunswick unless they paid a poll tax (Elections New Brunswick, n.d.). This exclusion certainly prevented many underprivileged New Brunswickers from having a political voice.
interests have remained the *primary* interests to be contended with in the NB legislature, because it is from within this group that most political leadership has been comprised.

**Conclusion**

The NBACSW was framed by the NB government in the Budget Speech and other media discourse as being a duplication of services and a non-essential service. These discursive framings align with those used by governments elsewhere to eliminate women’s machineries. They are neoliberal and anti-feminist discourses that have been used to delegitimize women’s movements and decrease women’s capacities for advocacy and political representation. Considering this alignment, and that the NB government was unfounded in its rationalization that the NBACSW duplicated the services of the WIB, it is troubling that it is pushing NB forward in a “new direction” toward further neoliberalization, and that it does so by claiming to represent the priorities of New Brunswickers. As Beatrice notes in the excerpt from our interview that opens this chapter, NB women recognize that they are not counted among “Ordinary New Brunswickers” when it comes to provincial and municipal budget-making. Indeed, NB women have recognized how low a fiscal priority they are since the creation of the NBACSW, when NB women fought for funding for programs such as transition houses (Anne, personal communication, September 21, 2011). Indeed, interviewee Anne highlights the irony in the rationalizations that say the NBACSW was eliminated so that its funding could be directed toward frontline transition house workers. She says:

**Anne:** Now [the NB government] says that the work of the council will be carried on by the WIB and that they needed the money to redirect to pay for outreach workers for transition houses in rural areas. Well, I don’t buy that for a minute. I
think that was a very convenient excuse, but when you do a budget you don’t do trade-offs that way [...] What you do is, you get rid of programs that are inconvenient, and the [NBACSW] was inconvenient (Anne, personal communication, September 21, 2011).

Like Anne, many people in NB have questioned the legitimacy NB government’s claim that the elimination of the NBACSW was for financial reasons. In the next chapter, I examine some of the responses to the NBACSW’s elimination.
CHAPTER 3: ‘THORN IN THEIR SIDE’: THE LOCAL RESPONSE TO THE ELIMINATION OF THE NBACSW

I have thus far demonstrated 1) that the NB government discursively framed the NBACSW as a duplication of services and as a non-essential service whose existence opposed the common good in the province to rationalize its elimination, and 2) that these rationalizations align with neoliberal and anti-feminist national trends which diminish women’s capacities for advocacy and political representation. While the elimination of the NBACSW may have been an attempt to silence women’s institutional machineries, this seems a moot argument if it did not have significance for NB women. In this chapter, I explore the impact and shortcomings of the NBACSW, as expressed by interviewees and other feminists in the province, as well as evidence found in the literature. I argue that while the NBACSW was not always as effective and inclusive as women hoped, its loss was interpreted by many in the province as an “ideological attack” rooted in anti-feminist backlash. While the loss of the NBACSW’s functions was not uniformly mourned, some believe that its loss struck a significant blow to women’s (independent) political representation, equality-seeking efforts, and advocacy in the province.

I begin this chapter by exploring the literature about the effectiveness of women’s advisory councils, in general. I then describe the protest that erupted on social media following the announcement of the elimination of the NBACSW. In the days following this announcement, many people and organizations offered their views on the elimination, and debated how it would affect women in the province.\(^6\) Opinions on

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\(^6\) Several individuals and organizations wrote letters in support of the NBACSW, and in opposition to its elimination. Many of those letters have been archived on a blog dedicated to the efforts to “Save our Advisory Council” [http://advisoryactionconseil.wordpress.com/responses-thus-far-reaction-a-date/].
whether or not the Council was, indeed, effective were diverse and similar to those described in the literature. Similar, too, were the opinions expressed by interviewees in this study. While many interviewees offered their thoughts on the NBACSW’s essential functions in the province, also expressed was their disappointment in it and its ability to act as a truly representational women’s advocate. As Rankin (2004) notes, however, the local women’s movement is “best positioned to determine how the effectiveness of their respective Council should be determined” (p. 86) and, I would argue, are best positioned to determine the impact of its elimination. While the interviewees did not always support the work of the NBACSW and did not always understand it as having a significant impact, each woman described its elimination as a negative step for women in the province. Its loss was not necessarily mourned, then, entirely because of its perceived effectiveness, but because of what the interviewees interpreted that this elimination meant symbolically for women’s future in the province, given the alignment of its elimination with the national trends described in this study.

**Debating the Effectiveness of Women’s Advisory Councils**

Debates over the effectiveness of women’s advisory councils are reflective of broader discussions regarding the role(s) and effectiveness of “state” or “institutional” feminism as a tool for women’s movements (Andrew & Rodgers, 1997, p. xv). In order to contextualize such debates, I provide a brief overview of women’s movements in Canada, tracing the creation of women’s machineries and some of the inner struggles they have faced. Women’s movements in Canada have existed since (and prior to) its inception; however, there are historical periods of more formalized women’s activities
that have been classified as “waves.” The first wave roughly refers to the period from the late nineteenth century until the 1920s; the second wave refers to the 1960s-1980s; and the third wave refers to the period beginning in the late 1980s (although, by some accounts, the fourth wave began in the early 2000s).

In the first wave, mostly affluent, white, Christian women organized through their churches and ladies auxiliaries to protest their exclusion from the public sphere of life; this organizing has been called the suffrage movement, of which some goals were to enfranchise women and to have them considered “persons” in law (Newman & White, 2006). Suffragists’ struggles led to the enfranchisement of most women in the first half of the twentieth century, which offered these women some basic legal and political protections. Some suffragists, however, relied upon racist, moralistic, and otherwise bigoted tropes to argue their case for women’s enfranchisement (Brodie, 1995; Newman & White, 2006). The early suffragists felt their “moral superiority and social consciousness” was what qualified them for full citizenship rights (Brodie, 1995, p.37).

Although many women now had the ability to vote, women’s independent political representation remained minimal. Women’s auxiliaries to formal political parties were formed, but these auxiliaries did little more than to keep women out of main party organizations and decision making (Brodie, 1995, p.38).

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64 Recently, there have been critiques of the wave metaphor as being a useful framing of feminist movements. See Sawchuk, 2008, for a more in-depth discussion.
65 As Brodie (1995) notes, and as I discussed in the previous chapter, women were excluded from public life because of the gender roles that positioned them as caregivers incapable of making political decisions. Indeed, the “terms and behaviours which were deemed appropriate in the public sphere, such as equality, liberty, and democracy, were treated as incompatible, indeed as threats to the very workings of the family” (Brodie, 1995, p.35).
66 For instance, in NB, some argued that “female voters, as a force of good, could help clean up society,” meaning that they could help to enforce a particular version of white, Protestant values (Tulloch, 1985, p.13).
Even after women were able to vote, there were still “officially-held ideas regarding women’s place and abilities” which attempted to contain women as a gender to solely so-called private sphere and domestic roles (Tulloch, 1985, p.xvi). The heterosexual nuclear family, with a breadwinning husband and financially dependent wife and children, was the basis of the entire Keynesian system of paid labour and welfare, which relied upon the “unpaid domestic labour of women” (Brodie, 1995, p.39). Where women lacked rights in the labour market and in the welfare system, they also lacked bodily autonomy and the right to live in violence-free households (Rebick, 2005).

Women had been organizing for peace, and by 1960 had unified under the banner of Voice of Women (VOW) (Bégin, 1992; Rebick, 2005). In the 1950s, popular women’s media began discussing issues like violence and pay inequity (Rebick, 2005). The creation of a state-funded welfare system after the Second World War signalled to women that the state was at least somewhat amenable to addressing matters that were once considered “private” and, thus, off-limits (Brodie, 1995, p.41). Women organized a second wave of feminist actions, including large-scale protests (such as the Abortion Caravan), and the creation of community-based groups, such as rape crisis centres (Rebick, 2005). As argued throughout this study, this was a time when women came together as an interest group with demands on the state. Organizations such as the Fédération des Femmes du Québec (FFQ) and the Committee for the Equality of Women in Canada formed (Rebick, 2005). Women’s movements in English-speaking Canada and Québec were instrumental in the creation of the RCSW which, as I stated earlier, was instrumental in shaping the direction of Canadian feminism (Bégin, 1992, p. 34).
As discussed in previous chapters, women’s institutional feminism was responsible for representing women politically, and has helped women to achieve many political and legal advancements. In the 1980s, however, anti-racist feminists argued that the women’s machineries the second wave were largely comprised of affluent white women achieving equality with affluent white men; these critiques were instrumental in forging a third wave, in which the debate regarding the effectiveness of women’s machineries began. For instance, when Sunera Thobani became the first woman of colour to become President of the NAC, there was backlash from some white NAC members regarding her ability to “represent Canadian women” (Khan, 2007, para. 10). The entire idea of Canadian womanhood was problematized by women like Thobani, who argued that:

In order to transform the status quo, which for me is central to the goals of the women’s movement, you need to be addressing the issues and priorities of the most marginalized women, and the oppressive and exploitative relations that hold women back (in Khan, 2007, p.11).

In the early 1990s, Thobani, along with many dedicated women, changed the NAC’s focus to better represent intersecting issues in women’s lives, and thus, helped it become a real force in the Canadian women’s movement and in formal politics (Leyland in Gottlieb, 1993, p.373). In the 1990s, the NAC represented over five hundred groups and three million people (Gottlieb, 1993, p.371).

Conflicts within national machinery stem in part from their investment in liberal feminist ideas of equality as tied up with “human rights,” ideas which many women have argued are problematic, as liberal rationalities focus on individual people and thus often
ignore systemic reasons for inequality, such as race, class, ability, sexuality, and gender (Borrows, 1994). An example of this conflict can be found between the NAC and “most parts of the francophone women’s movement in Québec” in the mid-late twentieth century, in which the “NAC was committed primarily to an individualist [rights] notion of women’s equality, while the francophone movement was rooted in the belief that liberation must be based on collective rights” (Vickers et al., 1993, p.7). Additionally, “rights” discourse offers limited protections\(^67\) to those not considered “citizens” (Yuval-Davis, 1997). Conflicts such as these have expanded the scope of Canadian feminism beyond the purview of middle-class, heterosexual, Anglophone white women. As a result, many Canadian and Québécois’ women’s movements have adopted an intersectional framework (Bunjun et al., 2006), and have expanded their definitions of womanhood, embraced diversity, and changed their focus from contending with pre-conceived ideas about “women’s issues” to issues which concern women with different lived experiences.

The adoption of intersectional frameworks and subsequent changes within feminist women’s movements have, in some cases, led to the formation of a dichotomy between women’s institutional machineries and community based/grassroots organizations, where the former is considered to be reformist and the latter is considered to be more radical (Dobrowolsky, 2008, p. 162). Indeed, as Thobani eloquently illustrates above, women’s institutional machineries have been critiqued for failing to acknowledge the intersectional dimensions of women’s oppression, claiming to speak for all women when they have most often represented primarily Anglophone, upper-middle class,

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\(^67\) As the subject of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is the Canadian citizen, people who do not have permanent residency in Canada or full citizenship are often not protected by the Charter or other Canadian law.
heterosexual white “liberal feminists”⁶⁸ (Backhouse, 1992; Gottlieb, 1993; Mahrouse, 2010; Mullaly, 2007; Nadeau, 2009A; Nadeau, 2009B; Rankin, 2004, p.82). Critiques of women’s machineries reflect the wider challenges to the category of “woman” as a basis for political representation altogether, given that there is no universal “woman’s experience,” and given that the experiences of privileged white women have often been positioned as such universal experiences (Bashevkin, 2009, p.7; Brodie, 2008B, p.160; Trimble, 1998, p. 258). Women’s institutional machineries have also been critiqued for seeking reform, rather than transformational change, of the structures that create inequality (Brodie, 1995, p. 43; Brodie, 2008B, p.160; Nadeau, 2009A; Nadeau, 2009B).

In spite of these critiques, it is important to note that, as women’s policy bureaus were established within government, women’s advisory councils’ roles expanded to not only lobby and advise government, but also, to forge “inside-outside connections” between women’s governmental machinery and grassroots/community-based feminist groups (Dobrowolsky, 2008, p. 163). Women’s institutional machineries did, in fact, have access to women’s movements, although because of the contention between community-based/grassroots and institutional/state women’s organization discussed above, this relationship was complex. Women’s machineries and grassroots/community-

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⁶⁸ Generally, I refer to liberal feminism as striving to gain equal access and power for women, where “equality” is seen as uniform and based on “an understanding of universally shared characteristics” of womanhood (Newman & White, 2006, p.16). Liberal feminists believe in “solidly [politically] liberal principles” such as equal human rights and individual autonomy/rationality (Newman & White, 2006, p.28). I recognize that other understandings and definitions of liberal feminism exist, and do not intend to suggest that the category is without nuance.

⁶⁹ The RCSW, for instance, is argued to have been lacking an explicitly feminist analysis and connection to grassroots feminist women’s movements, especially those in communities not dominated by white, middle-class, Anglophone women (Brodie, 1995, p. 42). Additionally, NAC is argued to be “a space founded on racial and national hegemony” concerned primarily with the needs of white women (Nadeau, 2009B, p. 11).
based organizations struggled together as a network; institutional machineries often attempted to resolve conflicts between different women’s organizations in order to present government with a “unified” statement on women’s issues (Rankin & Vickers, 2001, p.9). Their structures were unique in that they were arm’s-length to government, but were created to advise government on issues deemed important by women and women’s groups. These structures have influenced women’s advisory councils’ effectiveness within government and within women’s movements in Canada.

Some feminists, community-based/grassroots women’s groups, and even former leaders, have found women’s machineries, such as advisory councils, to be highly corruptible and ineffective in advocating on behalf of women (Burt, 1998, p.136; Rankin & Vickers, 2001, p.7-8). For instance, both the CACSW and the Alberta Advisory Council on Women’s Issues (AACWI) were considered to be ineffective due to structural “weaknesses,”71 internal struggles, patronage appointments,72 mismanagement, and having too-broad mandates (Burt, 1998, p. 135-36; Rankin, 2004, p. 83; Rankin & Vickers, 2001, p.9). Further, some women’s advisory councils were argued to be too far removed from women’s organizing in the community (Rankin, 2004, p. 81-82). Scholars attribute the discrepancies in the effectiveness of women’s machineries to differences in governance and the contexts in which they operate (Findlay, 1988; Rankin, 2004, p. 81).

70 However, this “unified” statement unfortunately often disproportionately reflected the opinions of affluent, white, heterosexual women (Rankin & Vickers, 2001).
71 Rankin and Vickers (2001) write that the CACSW’s inability to report to Parliament directly weakened its effectiveness; instead, it reported through a minister responsible for the status of women (p. 7). Further, leadership of the council was problematic, because instead of being led by “presidents of major women’s organizations,” leaders were often appointed out of patronage, thus weakening “the representational capacity of this state feminist institution […] and the relationship between women’s movements and the bureaucracy” (Rankin & Vickers, 2001, p.7-8).
72 The ineffectiveness of women’s advisory councils is often linked to the appointment process, as it is thought that governments often appoint “safe” women with views similar to their own (Burt, 1998; Guildford, 2010, p. 231; Rankin, 2004, p. 81-3).
In the case of the NBACSW, Rosella, who served as Executive Director from 2002 until its elimination, felt there were periods when it was quite effective, and times when it was less so:

Rosella: ... I think the Advisory Council did not work that well for a number of years. I left at one point because I didn’t think we were doing much, much to help women, uh, and weren’t doing much to earn our keep, but we regained our status and, uh, that’s why there was such a reaction when it was abolished.

Karolyn: What do you mean by “not earning their keep” for those few years? Can you speak a bit more about that, and what were the years you’re referring to, would you say?

Rosella: Yeah. I became frustrated with the work of the Council, uh, because I did not see, uh, that it was producing what it should be producing, in the early 90s or so. I was not the ED at the time, I was just a communications person, in the council. One of the weaknesses—it can be a strength, and it can be a weakness—is that the members of the AC are appointed by government. And, so, if the government wanted to make it not-very-effective, they could not pay much attention to who they appoint. If the members don’t know what their role is supposed to be, or what is a woman’s issue, or what women are fighting about, anyway, then it can reduce the effectiveness of the organization. But, I mean, the great majority of members of the AC were very good, and no matter how much they knew about women’s issues when they were appointed, once they were there, um, the position taken by the Council throughout the years has been very consistent. It’s not like most people who came in and didn’t know anything about women’s issues changed everything
around, because they were forced by the structure, and by the staff, to study the issues before taking the position, the position has been consistent. But, um, what we did, day in, day out, in terms of publications and public events and, uh, commenting, or not commenting, that’s where I got a bit frustrated because I thought we could have been, uh, much more of an ally for women’s groups. And anyway, I left, but I came back when they changed the structure and created the position of Executive Director which I thought might help the situation, because otherwise, if you don’t have an Executive Director, the Chairperson, who is appointed by government, has to also be the boss—the boss of the staff, manage the budget, and everything, and that’s asking a lot of someone who’s just coming in for a three year mandate or whatever, and you’ll get some that can do the whole job, and others that are overwhelmed, or, whatever, so, the division of the work with a paid, full time, Executive Director and a Chairperson, I thought, had more of a chance of working, and that’s when I came back on board. And they were good years, from 2002 on. The Chairperson could then just attend meetings and represent the Council in meetings and conferences, and be the Spokesperson in the media, and give the interviews, and write the column, and stuff like that. So, uh, she could be more out there with women and women’s groups (Rosella, personal communication, November 14, 2011).

Rosella’s frustrations, then, were with the appointment process, and with the previous structure of the Advisory Council as a largely unpaid (she mentioned that Council Members were given a small honorarium) appointment. Once the structure was changed so that there was a full-time Executive Director, however, she notes that the NBACSW
once again became an effective organization. Rosella also highlights that the staff were responsible for making the NBACSW as effective as it was. Beatrice, too, attests that the staff made the NBACSW effective:

**Beatrice:** Ah, one of the greatest things that the Advisory Council did, and I attribute it to the marvellous, marvellous staff, um, was the status report each year, and when you’re reading the status report it *really* opens your eyes to the—[...] there are areas that are so clearly unfair and, ah, [the Status Report] puts it right out there. The government wasn’t always happy with our status report, ah, because it showed them up in certain areas. But that was our mandate, and that’s what we did (Beatrice, personal communication, August 24, 2011).

Thus, there were certainly aspects of the NBACSW that made it more effective as an advocate for women than Advisory Councils in other areas.

Some scholars do, indeed, argue that there are contexts in which advisory councils and other women’s institutional machineries have been effective change agents; for example, in the absence of women’s voices within government, or in the absence of another strong community-based feminist organization (Findlay, 1988; Rankin, 2004, p. 81; Rankin & Vickers, 2001). As Sangster (2011) notes about the RCSW, although it was “predominantly liberal feminist in orientation, with equality imagined as better opportunity within the existing social system...it marked a ‘watershed’ for the women’s movement, providing a unique opportunity for women’s public ‘civic resistance’ to the status quo” (p. 138). This opportunity for civic resistance may be the particular case for Atlantic Canadian women’s advisory councils, which are argued to have been effective advocates for policy change, researchers and public educators, and networkers of
grassroots feminist groups (Guildford, 2010, p.245-6; Janovicek, 2007, p.97).\(^73\) Compared with other Canadian regions, Atlantic Canadian women have been under-represented in formal electoral politics (Carbert & Black, 2003; Guildford, 2010).\(^74\) Because of this under-representation, the Atlantic women’s advisory councils may have been effective because they augment women’s representation in government. Further, most have remained arm’s-length to government (and thus able to critique it), and have forged strong connections to local women’s movements (Guildford, 2010; Rankin, 2004).

**Debating the Effectiveness of the NBACSW**

*Protesting the Elimination of the NBACSW*

The eliminations of some women’s advisory councils—for instance, the CACSW, AACWI, and OACWI—initially generated little protest from women’s movements, likely because many women’s groups considered them to be ineffective, structurally flawed, and mismanaged (Bashevkin, 2009; Faulder, 1996; Guildford, 2010; Rankin, 2004, p.79). That the elimination of the NBACSW diverged from the national trend by prompting a relatively large opposition in 2011 warrants further exploration. Supporters from NB and across Canada held rallies, wrote letters, and utilized internet-based social networking sites to voice their dissent (such as Facebook, Twitter, and a blog\(^75\)). In part, this response

\(^73\) Indeed, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women in Newfoundland and Labrador (PACSW), still active today, operates with (relative) cooperation between the Council, government, and community-based feminist organizations (Guildford, 2010, p. 234; Rankin, 2004, p. 83). The Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women (NSACSW), however, has not had strong connections with local feminist organizations and at times has been considered to be a less effective advocate for women in the province (Guildford, 2005).

\(^74\) While the presence of women in electoral political power does not automatically ensure a feminist presence, “women in policy-relevant elected and appointed office” often maintain ties to the women’s organizations that supported their entrance into politics (Carbert & Black, 2003, p. 73). These include feminist organizations, and thus, having more women in electoral political power can provide a channel for feminist voices to be heard in policymaking (Carbert & Black, 2003).

\(^75\) See for additional information: http://advisoryactionconseil.wordpress.com
is based on the NBACSW’s reputation as an effective organization for NB women (Guildford, 2010; Janovicek, 2007). For instance, the NB Federation of Labour (NBFL) wrote:

[The NBACSW] has a long history of raising political and public awareness on the status of women in New Brunswick. [...] [It] is a central voice for the women’s movement in the province. Currently, it provides timely statistical updates so we can measure how far we have come and enables organizations such as the Federation of Labour to focus our work for the years to come. [...] Its work is pertinent and important (2011, paras. 2-3).

Joyce Arthur, Executive Director of the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada (ARCC), echoes the NBFL’s statement regarding the NBACSW’s effectiveness:

The real reasons that the ACSW is being threatened with abolition is because it lobbies effectively for pay equity, releases accurate reports on how much free labour NB women provide in child and elder care, and strongly advocates for progressive change in the province. But [...] by abolishing the ACSW, the government is actually ensuring that no-one will have the ability to publicize women's inequality or fight against it (2011, para. 3).

Daniel Légère, President of CUPE NB, writes that:

[The NBACSW] plays an essential role, and it has been a source of information and analysis on the status of women in the province for the past 35 years (in CUPE NB, n.d., para. 3).
Paulette Senior, CEO of YWCA Canada, and Jewell Mitchell, Executive Director of the YWCA Moncton, also attest to the NBACSW’s effectiveness and necessity. Senior is quoted as saying:

“This is a loss, not a saving [...] Moving [the NBACSW] into government [...] leaves a gap in women’s advocacy in the province” (YWCA Canada, 2011, para. 2).

Mitchell is also quoted, noting that:

“The cut will create a deep void in women’s policy-making, research and networking in this province [...] [W]omen [will] lose a crucial voice on issues that impact their lives daily” (YWCA Canada, 2011, para. 4).

Several additional letters from organizations, such as CUPE National, Société Femme Équité Atlantique, the Federation of NB Faculty Associations, the New Brunswick Association of Social Workers, La Société de l’Acadie du N.-B., and the Canadian Labour Congress, repeat the statement of the NBACSW’s effectiveness as a research and advocacy group for NB women.

In addition to statements made by these key organizations, individual women in the province organized in order to protest the elimination, including interviewees in this study. Monique, for instance, helped to organize protests against the elimination of the NBACSW in one of NB’s larger urban centres. She argues that the NB government did not eliminate the NBACSW for financial reasons, but rather, «mais plutôt pour se protéger. En effet, le Conseil consultatif a acquis une grande crédibilité et était très fort lorsqu’ils ont coupés le financement. De plus, je crois qu’ils voulaient couper cette voix, qui les surveillait d’un peu trop près » (Monique, personal communication, August 29,
Based on her experience coalescing with the NBACSW through her work with an active Francophone women’s group in New Brunswick, Monique disagrees with the New Brunswick government that the NBACSW duplicated the services of the WIB. She says:

Monique: Je crois, personnellement, que la Direction des questions féminines (Women’s Issues Branch) n’est pas assez forte, n’a pas assez de crédibilité et devrait s’intéresser à d’autres problématiques que la violence. La Direction des questions féminines n’a pas assez de pouvoir de la part du gouvernement pour exercer vraiment une différence dans la vie des femmes au N.-B. Bien sûr toute la question qui touche la violence me semble aussi très importante, puisque cette question n’est pas encore réglée même en 2011! (Monique, personal communication, August 29, 2011).

Elsewhere in the province, Tania, a member of the NB RebELLEs grassroots group in York County, was one of the contributors to an online photo protest organized through the blog created to “Save Our Advisory Council,” as well as over social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Tania describes the protest this way:

Tania: […] Somebody […] suggested that someone take a picture of themselves with

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76 Translation: “[...] but more to protect themselves. The [Advisory Council] had acquired a really good credibility and was very strong, when its funding was cut. In addition, I think they wanted to kill that voice, which watched their every move a little too closely for their liking.”

77 Name of group withheld to protect confidentiality.

78 Translation: “Personally, I think that Women’s Issues Branch (La Direction des questions féminines) isn’t strong enough, doesn’t have enough credibility, and should be concerned with issues other than violence. Women’s Issues doesn’t have enough power in the government to really make a difference in women’s lives in New Brunswick. Of course, anything that touches or tries to deal with violence is still very important, since this is an (unresolved), ongoing issue even in 2011!”
this tape over their mouth with ‘Alward’ written on it [see figure 4.1]. So I asked [name omitted] to take a picture of me, and I had emailed [name omitted] to do the same thing. I forwarded [several contacts] this idea, and I said, let’s do it.

Karolyn: Yeah?

Tania: I put it out to all the women who were going to come to the NB RebELLEs Meeting [...] And they all thought that this was great. [...] Women in Moncton [were] lined up [and] ready to do this, but they needed someone to spearhead. So I said I would do that, on behalf of RebELLEs. [...] The Alward government already knew who we were. So, we had all these connections because of RebELLEs, and it wasn’t just some random chick doing this, it was all of these people. [...] I solicited everyone I knew, I got a lot of people that way. [...] So all these people started sending in these pictures [...] A lot of people were really excited about it, and I was sending them to the MP every single day, and putting them on the RebELLEs website, but [an Advisory Council staff member] was also putting this [on the blog] in conjunction with all of the media attention, direct letters, any bit of information, anyone who was talking about this at all [...]. It gave the blog a lot of attention, and a lot of media, and a lot of people were responding to it. That was getting things off the hook. As soon as people started to see the pictures on the blog, more people started doing it (Tania, personal communication, June 13, 2011).

About the protest, Evelyn says:
Evelyn: The duct tape was supposed to signify that women's voices are being silenced in New Brunswick and that we have lost our public forum for raising concerns and objections to government policies and women do need that space. Because we mostly don't get it elsewhere. And so I am pretty on board with the duct tape, because I really do feel like women in New Brunswick have been silenced publicly (Evelyn, personal communication, July 6, 2011).

In this portion of the interview, Evelyn notes that women in NB have “lost our public forum for raising concerns and objections to government policies,” and that “we mostly don’t get it elsewhere.” Evelyn alludes to the dearth of women’s advocacy groups in the province, and the importance of the NBACSW as the only arm’s-length organization dedicated solely to improving the status of women in the province.

Interviewees in this study unanimously agreed that the NBACSW’s function as an arm’s-length voice for women was both crucial for women in the province, and what made it a target for elimination. Many of the organizations that drafted letters in support of the NBACSW after it was eliminated echoed this sentiment. ARCC (2011), for instance, writes that “[the NBACSW’s] most important defining feature is that it is an arms-length agency with the freedom to criticize the government. Obviously, a government department cannot act as an independent voice for the New Brunswick women” (para. 2). La Société des enseignantes et des enseignants retraités francophones du Nouveau-Brunswick (2011) write that « Nous savons tous que même si les personnes restent à l’emploi du gouvernement, elles n’auront plus la liberté nécessaire pour promouvoir les besoins et les droits des femmes acadiennes, francophones et
Elizabeth Blaney of the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence writes:

[The NBACSW] is an arms-length agency, independent from the government, respected by everyone in New Brunswick. It brings women’s concerns and issues in the public space, shares it with the government and advises the minister. Its abolition would represent the end of this independent voice (Blaney, n.d., para. 4).

As the last quotation suggests, the elimination of the NBACSW truly does “represent the end of this independent voice.” It also represents the loss of a large networking organization, as the NBACSW made many connections with diverse women’s groups across the province, expanding their reach to rural women, Francophone women, women of colour, First Nations women, and young women.

There is a distinct difference between the loss of women’s machineries elsewhere, and the loss of the NBACSW. In urban centres and at a federal level, conceivably hundreds of other feminist organizations exist (Faulder, 1996). While not directly affiliated with the NBACSW, Monique, Tania, and Evelyn, along with fellow interviewees, Grace and Tracy, all protested its elimination because they believed it would negatively impact their feminist activism, and because they feared it would further affect women’s capacity for political representation in a province with “conservative politics [that] usually aren’t super pro-women” (Grace, personal communication, September 23, 2011). Indeed, Grace argued that the NBACSW was the “best resource

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79 Translation: We all know that even if people are employed by the government, they no longer have the freedom to promote the needs and rights of Acadian, Francophone and Anglophone women in New Brunswick.
that this province had in terms of [a] resource to people in general and resource to government” (Grace, personal communication, September 23, 2011).

In rural settings, fewer social service organizations exist, and networks and partnerships are formed to improve service delivery (Stowe & Barr, 2005, p. 13). Certainly, in such settings, the loss of one affects every other organization in the network; in this instance, the loss of the NBACSW, a large organization, negatively affects smaller, grassroots organizations that relied upon it for funding, translation, and networking (Peggy, personal communication, September 18, 2011; Tania, personal communication, June 13, 2011). Rosella recalls that, during her time as Executive Director of the NBACSW (2002-2011), she would assist other women’s groups with a variety of tasks:

**Rosella:** Throughout the years, I would help with things like, groups that were organizing a provincial conference on women’s issues, or, uh, groups that were trying to set up a new service, or become incorporated—always women’s groups—or that were trying to convince government, or someone, to do something on such issues as abortion, or battered women, or pay equity, or, you know, all women’s issues (Rosella, personal communication, November 14, 2011).

Further, some scholars argue that the dichotomy between institutional and grassroots organizations should be problematized in all contexts, as studies have shown that both are crucial to improving women’s lives (Dobrowolsky, 2008, p. 162; Newman & White, 2006, p.134-6).
Critiques of the NBACSW

In spite of the significant respect that many interviewees and others in the province had for the NBACSW, critiques have been made about its effectiveness that warrant interrogation and raise significant questions about whether or not it provided an “essential service.” Interviewee Peggy, for instance, says:

Peggy: … I think-ah- I don’t-ah- it’s kind of a difficult issue for me, honestly, because I don’t want to be the one who is like bad-mouthing the advisory council, but I had a lot of conversations about it with my mom afterward because I was immediately like outraged, um, that their funding was cut and then we were talking about like what-what the AC [Advisory Council] actually does and what we’re going to be missing, and like it sucks that they’re gone because like I said they do lend legitimacy to burgeoning feminist activist groups, but… Like, I appreciated that it existed and I think that-that I would rather that it did than it didn’t, but in the end, you’ll never dismantle the master’s house with the master’s tools. (Laughs). Like, the AC is never going to be on board with the revolution, so like it’s really—it’s kind of, it was weird for me because I was having this conversation with my mom and that was the position she was taking and I was like “why aren’t you angry?” and she was like “well. Here’s why” and I was like normally I’m kind of on the other side of it with my mom so that was interesting for me, because my mom is one of the people that the AC is geared at, right? She’s like a middle-aged, middle-class lady. Um. With time to lunch.

Karolyn: Has a noon hour lunch break.
Peggy: Yeah, and like, and like, somewhat feminist concerns but like liberal feminists. But you know I feel bad that like obviously people lost their jobs (Peggy, personal communication, September 7, 2011).

Beatrice, too, notes that the noon hour time slot for the Lunch and Learns was sometimes exclusionary, and that the NBACSW was less effective in rural areas than in cities:

Beatrice: Ah, trying to get to different parts of the province and to smaller areas, also, and um with topics that really were important for women to hear about, and ah-ah some of them were really well attended when they were topics that were really highly controversial or of importance. And some were not as well attended in some of the smaller areas where we weren’t known as much and maybe some people didn’t have as much chance to go for a lunch hour (Beatrice, personal communication, August 24, 2011).

In another interview, Caroline discusses the NBACSW’s limited capacity for achieving women’s “equality:”

Caroline: … [The Tobique Women’s Group] were fortunate that when we were lobbying there was good people there and, ah, um, and support and they didn’t mind speaking up and whatever, but that doesn’t seem to be the case with these organizations now, but I can’t really say that, ah, because I-I’m not involved anymore so I don’t know the personalities and I don’t know what they’ve done in the past few years […]. But it’s better than nothing! You know? They shouldn’t have just gone and eliminated it. Especially without consulting women, and I hope it unites women and they get together and, ah, if they’re not pleased with the AC setup then pressure the government that really does represent women, and all
women, including aboriginal women, black women, women—any woman, instead of, a::h, the AC’s been mostly white women (Caroline, personal communication, October 24, 2011).

Peggy, Beatrice, and Caroline all raise important points regarding the structure and aims of the NBACSW which demonstrate their concern.

These quoted pieces from their interviews include what McKendy (2006) calls “narrative debris: fragments, false starts, pauses, gaps, inconsistencies, disfluencies, self-interruptions, repetition, non-lexicalized sounds, and various kinds of verbal stumbling” (p. 473-74). While “debris” always occurs in unrehearsed speech, some of these moments indicate conflicting ideas and discourses (McKendy, 2006, p. 474). Peggy’s claim that she doesn’t want to “bad-mouth” the NBACSW, as well as her hesitation, false starts, and laughter, introduces her mixed feelings about the NBACSW. Beatrice uses euphemisms such as “not as well attended” when explaining that, for some women, Lunch and Learns are inaccessible. Caroline, in virtually the same breath, critiques and praises the NBACSW. Each interviewee expresses that she would rather have an NBACSW than not, but also raises fundamental concerns about its ability to act as a vehicle for change in the province. Peggy situates it as an organization designed around the needs and interests of liberal, middle-class women, and Caroline further specifies that the membership of the Council has been primarily white women and has not truly represented all women in the province.

In our interview, Anne also mentioned that the NBACSW had not done enough in recent years to engage women who were not already familiar with it:
Anne: I think that one way—one reason the AC was eliminated was because, in spite of its best interest, it was not doing enough public education about the role of the AC and about the work that they’re doing and why it was still necessary, and they should have been going out to high schools. It’s easy to see in retrospect, you get involved with the issues and you put—that’s where you put your resources, but they, I think they wouldn’t have been dissolved, at least not without more fuss and bother. Ah, had the last two generations of women been properly educated as to the progress that had been made and how this was going to affect them as they grew up, and ah, that would—it’s not that they didn’t do a lot of outreach, but they did it for women who were more—who were already interested. [...] I think that was the major failing and why there, I mean there was an outcry, but it wasn’t nearly as big as it—I mean, when we established the AC in 1977, ah, it, I mean, there was a lot—there were a lot of women who were marching and, ah, meeting the Premier and doing—you know, [...] not only was it clear that women cared, but it was Anglophone and Francophone women and it was First Nations women (Anne, personal communication, September 21, 2011).

Because it is an organization that was created to advocate for equality for women in NB, and to represent them politically, these concerns point to the NBACSW’s ineffectiveness in many respects. Recalling the racist and bigoted moves made by women’s suffragists, and the exclusionary practices of many women’s organizations in the 1970s-1990s, it is important to consider what is compromised by staying within liberal democratic frameworks, which uphold social stratifications and support the state. The concerns raised by interviewees in this study speak to some fundamental challenges and shortcomings of
the NBACSW. At the same time, though, each woman speaks to their insistence that it is a necessary organization for NB women, and that its elimination signals that there may be trouble ahead.

Elimination of the NBACSW as a Negative Step for Women

The elimination of the NBACSW has also occurred almost two decades after the eliminations of women’s advisory councils began elsewhere in the mid-1990s. From this vantage point, the links between the elimination of women’s advisory councils and other machineries and the convergence of neoliberalism and anti-feminist backlash have already been made by feminist scholars and activists such as those cited in this study. The social, political, and economic implications of an attack on advocacy and equity-seeking organizations have been discussed. In light of these analyses, Caroline’s assertion that the NBACSW was “better than nothing” speaks not only to the loss of one women’s organization, but also to the attempted erasure of gender and women-focused agencies, organizations, and policies, and to the implications of erasure for women in an increasingly anti-feminist sociopolitical context.

While the critiques of women’s institutional machineries’ effectiveness outlined above are warranted given the historical exclusion of non-white, immigrant, disabled, queer, lesbian, trans, and economically marginalized women, government does not appear to draw from them when rationalizing its decisions to eliminate funding to women’s organizations. It is for this reason that my main concern rests with the rationalizations for its elimination, and their potential troubling impacts upon women in NB. These rationalizations have delegitimized, and even demonized, feminist women’s movements and organizations elsewhere in Canada. Indeed, as argued in this study,
women’s organizations have been discursively framed as antithetical to the interests of the “Ordinary Canadian.” In NB, they have been framed as antithetical to the interests of the “Ordinary New Brunswicker.”

In our interview, Evelyn cringes when she shares her thoughts on the current political climate for women in Canada:

**Evelyn**: I think bell hooks is right when she says we’re dealing with a white supremacist, capitalist patriarchy. I would add a heteronormative and ciscentric one to that, too. But that's a lot of big words to say that the Right is making headway.

**Karolyn**: How so? What sorts of things tell you this is the case?

**Evelyn**: The elimination of the Advisory Council, for one. And I'm not saying the Right hasn't always been in the lead and running the show. I think you'd have to be a bit of a dolt to think the country is run by feminists. But there are little signs of change toward a more radically right regime. Lots of ‘R’s there (Evelyn, personal communication, July 6, 2011).

Rosella, too, discusses the situation of women living in NB, and the opportunities that are available, there:

**Rosella**: Things are getting better for women for NB as much as they are for women anywhere else in Canada—we have more choices, more education, and we see discrimination, but, um, that’s just if you’re born lucky, with chances. If you’re, uh, living in poverty and don’t have many chances, you will also find fewer options as a woman. So I think we’ve made it possible for a good number of women who have more doors open to them, but they will meet up with discrimination, uh, in the
workplace, when they go looking for childcare, they will know that they are not in a country ruled by women. Women’s issues, women’s priorities, don’t weigh the same as the priorities of men (Rosella, personal communication, November 14, 2011).

It is clear to interviewees like Evelyn and Rosella that NB and Canada continue to be discriminatory environments for women. Evelyn’s fear that the “Right is making headway” is not unfounded. As discussed in this study, anti-feminist backlash and neoliberalism have led to the eliminations of dozens of major women’s organizations, and likely hundreds of smaller-scale, local organizations and groups. When she says that “you'd have to be a bit of a dolt to think the country is run by feminists,” she proclaims the state to be emphatically not feminist, despite women’s developments. Rosella, too, believes that Canada is not “a country ruled by women.”

In addition to Evelyn’s and Rosella’s analyses, other interviewees shared with me their views regarding the NB government’s elimination of the NBACSW, and what they believe it means for women in the province. Anne, for instance, gave the following analysis:

Anne: So what do I think of the dissolution of the AC?

Karolyn: Yes

Anne: Not much.

Karolyn: (laughs)

Anne: I was quite shocked, actually, because it was not an—not an expensive operation,\(^80\) and they were still doing really good work and bas[ically]— and they

\(^80\) Indeed, as the NB Federation of Labour cites, “the Women’s Issues Branch’s 2011-2012 budget amounts to $3.415 million and the 2010-2011 Advisory Council on the Status of Women’s budget was $418,000.
were pursuing a really important issue and they’ve been pursuing for a long time and that is pay equity, and we still do not have that in the public service or in the private sector, in any meaningful way [...] the AC was inconvenient [to government] (Anne, personal communication, September 21, 2011).

Beth, too, considers the cause for the elimination more than financial:

**Beth:** Um, of course they said it’s fiscal responsibility and the Women’s Issues Branch can do the work, so it’s cost effective. But it absolutely had nothing to do with financial considerations. Any woman that I’ve talked to on the subject [agrees that] it’s because we were an independent voice who could call them out… we were a thorn in their side, and I’m sure that, it also just kind of gritted on them that they were funding advocacy work. I don’t think a lot of governments want to do that, because the state doesn’t want to fund its own revolution against itself. … But I think, for the most part, that it was very clearly ideologically motivated. … It’s, um, … they didn’t want us having the means to do the research we were doing, to prove that some of their policies were bad policies, because, I mean, it’s going to cost them money to implement pay equity in the private sector, when that comes around. I mean, it’s financial in that sense, but here’s the thing. Um, if we don’t have an Advisory Council who’s working for that equality, they say things like, ‘we can’t afford to do this for women.’ But, inequality doesn’t go away just

When added together, this represents 0.05% of the provincial government’s overall budgetary expenditures which amount to $8,090,901,000 for the 2011-2012 fiscal year” (NB Federation of Labour, 2011, footnote 1).
because you can’t afford to address it – the women will continue to absorb it (Beth, personal communication, June 16, 2011).

Beatrice responds in a similar fashion:

**Beatrice:** Um. I-I don’t think- I think they just wanted to get rid of the thorn in their side. That’s it. That was their way of- of doing it. You just pull the funding and, ah, the staff so there’s no staff, so we have little, we have 13 members spread right around the province who have no one—ah, helping them be coordinated, no one doing the background work, so it kind of just all falls apart. Far as I’m concerned, I’m still a member of the AC. I just, we just don’t get any funding (Beatrice, personal communication, August 24, 2011).

Anne, Beth, and Beatrice, all formerly associated with the NBACSW in some fashion, consider the elimination to be ideologically motivated, and call it an attempt to remove a “thorn” in the side of government; an “inconvenient” irritant that had the capacity to publicize critiques of its policies and practices. Interviewees seem exasperated, exhausted, and display signs of defeat when they discuss the elimination of the NBACSW, and the future of women’s advocacy groups in the province. This is, in part, because many express fundamental issues with the way that the government has employed neoliberal and anti-feminist discourses that have positioned the NBACSW in opposition to the “common good.”

**Critiquing the “New Direction” toward the “Common Good”**

In Chapter 2, I argued that the “new direction” articulated by the 2011-2012 NB Budget Speech is one towards (further) neoliberalization of life in NB. Practically, what this means for people living in NB is an increasing fiscalization of social and political
life, where the government increasingly subjects areas such as health, education, housing, and the environment to cost-benefit analyses and budgets (McFarland, 2009). Indeed, the 2014-2015 Provincial Budget Speech confirms that NB’s “new direction” has been toward “increased export sales of New Brunswick goods and services” in the global economic market (Higgs, 2014, p. 20).81 Because neoliberal discourse has become so pervasive globally and has been adopted into the constitutions, laws, and everyday vernacular of hundreds of nation-states, the potential to develop alternative discourses, visions, and ideologies is becoming increasingly difficult (Tremblay, 2009). Moreover, when the NBACSW is positioned as an impediment to the common “good” in the province, and when the rationales for this positioning are globally accepted and disseminated, resistance is both crucial and seemingly unattainable.

But, indeed, there have been many alternative viewpoints regarding the “new direction” proposed for the province by the New Brunswick government, particularly regarding the elimination of the NBACSW. Several interviewees in this study situated this response within larger systemic oppressions, such as capitalism, patriarchy, and racism:

**Tania**: [A]t the end of the day, we have designed our society around the acquiring

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81 The NB government has claimed it will generate revenue through global development projects in natural resources, such as mining (Higgs, 2014, p. 8). In 2010, the NB government permitted Southwestern Energy Company (SWN Resources) to explore for shale gas in many parts of the province. The proposed extraction technique was fracking: horizontal drilling and blasting of chemicals and large amounts of water to fracture shale rocks, thus releasing gas (Fracking Research and New Brunswick, Canada, 2013). The long-term effects of fracking are potentially catastrophic (Fracking Research, 2013). In spite of this, the NB government continues to facilitate the exploration due to the alleged associated economic benefits (Fracking Research, 2013). Other proposed projects are: the development of the Sisson Brook mine, the Energy East Pipeline and other natural gas development (Higgs, 2014, p.8). Environmental advocates have noted the substantial potential harmful consequences associated with such projects, and question whether investment in these areas is truly “good” for New Brunswickers in the long-term (Conservation Council NB, n.d.).
of cash. … I think that organizing life with that as the priority and values puts women at a disadvantage already because we can’t be working all the time and I think that, you know, it stratifies the money makers (Tania, personal communication, June 13, 2011).

Tracy similarly considers capitalism as an underlying problem:

**Tracy**: I think we also need to look at the larger picture, too. The reality of living in capitalism, and what that means. Even if we have a progressive government, you know, that may want to implement social reforms that are beneficial for women, everyone is still affected by the capitalist reality (Tracy, personal communication, July 12, 2011).

Evelyn, too, names capitalism as it intersects with patriarchy as a major barrier for women in New Brunswick:

**Evelyn**: Sometimes I am shocked that people think what they're doing is a good idea. It is so clear to me that capitalism is not working. And yet it keeps bending just before it breaks.

**Karolyn**: So you think these cuts, etc. are being driven by capitalism?

**Evelyn**: I think capitalism and patriarchy are in cahoots. You can't have one without the other (Evelyn, personal communication, July 6, 2011).

Caroline adds that racism has been a major issue for First Nations people of all genders in their interactions with government:

**Caroline**: … [A] lot of these things, ah, that happened to [First Nations] people, if you
peel away everything at the bottom is racism, whether it’s government or public organizations or whatever. You know, there’s always that element and people are under the impression now that it doesn’t happen, but it does (Interview 10, 24-10-2011).

These interviewees each contest the idea that the public “good” for people living in NB is deficit reduction, fiscal restraint, and a thriving global economy. Though the Speech claims that the goal of the budget is to put “New Brunswick first, for a change,” interviewees’ responses show that capitalism is tied to many other systems which prevent people living in NB from being “put first.” This is particularly true for women, when we consider the ways that a women’s advocacy group is positioned in direct opposition to fiscal restraint and a thriving global economy in the Budget Speech.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have explored literature relating to the effectiveness of women’s advisory councils, as well as interviewees’ analyses of the elimination of the NBACSW. I explored literature that demonstrates that the Atlantic women’s advisory councils may have been more effective than those in other provinces because they have actually succeeded in augmenting women’s representation in government (Carbert & Black, 2003; Guildford, 2010). Considering this insight, I demonstrated the many ways that the NBACSW has proven beneficial for women in NB, and I explored interviewees’—members of local women’s movements’—perceptions of its role for women.

I also explored critiques of the NBACSW. In Canada, the three (or potentially four) waves of the feminist movement have led to a current focus on the intersectionality of oppressions, and have resulted in significant critiques of women’s institutional
machineries. These machineries are often considered to be a vestige of liberal feminism, insofar as they were established during a period where the public face of the feminist women’s movement prioritized the needs of white, straight, Anglophone women (Andrew & Rodgers, 1997). The women I interviewed were cognizant of these critiques, and offered many insights into the shortcomings of the NBACSW that were rooted in these discussions. While the interviewees did not always support the work of the NBACSW and did not always understand it as having a significant impact, each woman described its elimination as a negative step for women in the province. Its loss was not necessarily mourned, then, because of its work or perceived effectiveness, but because of what the interviewees interpreted that this elimination meant symbolically for the future of women’s advocacy in the province. In the conclusion to this study, I explore the question of women’s future advocacy in the province in further detail.
CONCLUSION: THE FUTURE OF WOMEN’S POLITICAL REPRESENTATION IN NEW BRUNSWICK

In this study I have critically examined the elimination of the NBACSW. I have positioned its elimination as aligning with national neoliberal and anti-feminist trends that have had detrimental effects on women’s organizations and the legitimacy and efficacy of feminist women’s movements. Elsewhere in Canada, women’s capacities for political representation and advocacy have suffered due to the eliminations of women’s organizations. Whereas women’s organizations were once consulted as political interest groups in state decision-making, they are now considered at best to be duplications of government gender-mainstreaming services (i.e. Gender-based analysis) and, thus, as non-essential, and, at worst, as unrepresentative “special interest groups” attempting to thieve public funds during a time of fiscal austerity. I have shown that the NB government used similar rationalizations in its decision to eliminate the funding to the NBACSW, and that it has positioned it as an impediment to the “new direction” it plans to lead the province toward. I have argued that this “new direction” does not appear to be promising for NB women. I have also discussed the strength and resilience of women living in NB who, for centuries, have been demanding to be treated fairly in their homes and in the public sphere. Some NB women, including the eleven women I interviewed for this study, recognize the elimination of the NBACSW as being more than the closure of one organization; they position it as part of a wider anti-feminist backlash, and although some have raised serious concerns regarding its effectiveness, they mourn its loss as a symbolic loss for women’s advocacy and political representation in NB.
Women did not mourn in silence; instead, they organized protests of the NBACSW’s closure, as discussed in the previous chapter. Despite these oppositions, the funding to the NBACSW has not, to date, been reinstated. What has recently occurred, however, is the announcement of the creation of an NB women’s forum in May 2013. This conclusion explores the meaning behind the creation of this forum, and marks it as a victory, of sorts, for NB women. However, like Lyons (2013), I approach the creation of this forum with cautious optimism, for reasons I will explain below.

In the weeks following the elimination of the NBACSW, the public protests ceased. The letters stopped coming in, and the online protests quelled. NB women, however, particularly those active in women’s movements, remained incensed by the NB government’s decision. An Ad Hoc Committee for a Council on the Status of Women formed to advocate for the reinstatement of an independent women’s voice in NB comprised of vocal women’s advocates and representatives from several feminist organizations, particularly Francophone-led organizations. There remained “opposition to the idea that women and girls in New Brunswick could either have direct service from government or an independent agency driving systemic change, but not both” (Lyons, 2013, para.6). In October 2011, Minister Blaney announced that the WIB would be hosting a Women’s Summit on November 4 and 5, 2011, that would “bring together women from across New Brunswick to identify measures that would give them a voice in the province” (Southwick, 2011, para. 2). Women’s advocates, such as Dieppe City Councillor, Jody Dallaire (2011), also a co-Spokesperson for the Ad Hoc Committee, were critical of the formation of the Summit:
First, why is this called the first women's summit? There have been other women's summits in New Brunswick, organized by the women's community. Even if government did not attend, or does not remember them, they happened. This faux pas - calling it the first women's summit - is an illustration of part of women's - and the government's – problem (para. 4).

Dallaire also critiqued the fact that the Summit was organized quickly and without input from “citizens and women’s groups” (2011, para. 6).

The main demand made by the Ad Hoc Committee and other women’s groups in the province at the Summit was for the creation of “an independent voice that is recognized by the government” that is “representative of New Brunswick women (Anglophones, francophone’s [sic], Aboriginal women and minorities) and should be accessible to all” (Lyons, 2011C, para. 4). The Ad Hoc Committee argued that any new women’s representational mechanism “must be as independent as its predecessor, and sufficiently equipped vis-à-vis mandate and budget to be able to publicly represent women’s voices on issues identified as priority” (Lyons, 2011C, para. 7). The Summit, however, was critiqued by the Ad Hoc Committee for not allowing enough time for a meaningful and comprehensive discussion involving women and women’s organizations on what is needed for NB women (Toogood, 2011). After the Summit, the Ad Hoc Committee met several times to develop a new structure for an independent women’s mechanism. As Lyons recalls, “the working group presented the minister with a report detailing three possible mechanisms that could be implemented by the province to ensure an independent, publicly funded voice for women and girls” (Lyons, 2013, para. 7).
In December 2012, the NB government announced that it was forming a new working group, Voices of Women, to make recommendations on a new “mechanism” to represent women in NB (Pritchett, 2012, para. 2). In May 2013, the Women’s Issues Branch (which had been re-named the Women’s Equality Branch, or WEB), and the Minister Responsible for Women’s Equality, Marie-Claude Blais, announced that it was following the Voices of Women working group’s recommendations to establish an “independent forum to advance equality and improve the lives of women and girls” (NB Women’s Equality Branch, 2013). In a press release, Blais said, “I am looking forward to working with the [WEB] and the forum in their different but complementary roles toward a future where we are all equal” (Blais, in NB Women’s Equality Branch, 2013, para. 3).

In the same press release, the NB government described the role the forum will have:

The forum will provide advice to the provincial government on matters of interest to women while bringing issues to public attention. Membership will consist of representatives of women’s groups and/or organizations mandated to work on matters of interest to women. It is anticipated that the forum will be operational by this fall [2013] following the joint development of a relationship protocol that will ensure the independence of the forum is realized while ensuring a collaborative working relationship with the provincial government (NB Women’s Equality Branch, 2013, para. 4).

The forum “will focus on research, analysis, advocacy, advising government and public issues” (Lyons, 2013, para. 9). While it is important to note that provincial discourse does not contain the word “advocacy,” the forum is slated to “provide advice to the provincial
government on matters of interest to women while bringing issues to public attention” (Women’s Equality, 2013, para. 2).

In many ways, the creation of the forum represents a victory for NB women. Indeed, while their demands for the reinstatement of the NBACSW were not met, a new, independent mechanism for women’s political representation, equity-seeking, and advocacy was created. This new mechanism will be comprised of women’s groups from around the province; the government will no longer have control over the appointment process (Lyons, 2013). Thus, some of the ineffectiveness caused by the appointment of unsuitable Council members discussed by Rosella (in Chapter 3) and other feminists in this study may be avoided. At the very least, all members of the forum will be invested in women’s struggles. Lyons (2013) also mentions there is the potential for individual women who are not affiliated with a group to take part in the forum. Because there will also be “a staff complement (to be determined by the budget)” to the forum, the concerns Rosella raised in the last chapter regarding the structure of the NBACSW when there was no paid staff member may be addressed. In addition, the two co-chairs “will speak on behalf of the group, but not for individual members” (Lyons, 2013, para. 10), thus leaving room for individual groups to represent diverse viewpoints.

Furthermore, that the women’s forum is to be government funded and mandated to do advocacy and research defies the national trends that, as I have argued in this study, the elimination of the NBACSW aligns with. Also promising is that Minister Blais has acknowledged that “women’s groups have lost trust” in government due to the elimination of the NBACSW, and claims to have “made it [her] personal mission, and the mission of our government, to rebuild that relationship” (Blais, in Lyons, 2013, para. 12).
Considering that NB government discourse (e.g. the Budget Speech) had discursively positioned the NBACSW as an impediment to the government’s “new direction,” Blais’ statement that the “mission of our government” is to regain women’s trust is a welcome change.

However, while there is much to celebrate—and women’s groups such as the active Francophone feminist organization, Regroupement féministe du Nouveau-Brunswick, are celebrating—women remain vigilant (Lyons, 2013). Indeed, there are some aspects of the new forum that have caused women’s groups to proceed with caution. As Lyons (2013) notes, the budget for the forum is projected to be half of the NBACSW’s $418,000 annual budget. Considering that this budget was only 0.0052% of NB’s 2011-2012 total provincial budgetary expenditures (NB Federation of Labour, 2011, footnote 1), the creation of a new forum at half that cost does not represent an increased financial investment in women’s priorities. As Lyons (2013) notes, this amounts to “52 cents for every woman and girl in the province” (para. 14). It remains to be seen whether the NB government will consult with a group it deems worthy of such little funding.

Other concerns regarding this new forum include how “membership based on the representation of groups will operate” (Lyons, 2013, para. 14), and which groups will be included in the membership. A question arises regarding the utility of a forum in which women’s groups can communicate with government, when, as mentioned in this study, across Canada, government funded feminism is losing its credibility. Indeed, although Canadian feminists have organized both “inside” and “outside” of the state and legal

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82 The Regroupement féministe du Nouveau-Brunswick’s website states that it was involved in the Ad Hoc Committee (Regroupement féministe du Nouveau-Brunswick, n.d.).
system (Newman & White, 2006, p.133), women’s political organizing in recent years has largely been done from “outside” of official state institutions as the relationship between feminist women’s movements and the state becomes increasingly more contentious with the rise of anti-feminism and neoliberalism (Dobrowolsky, 2000, p.201; Rankin, 2004). Women’s movements have diversified, and these changes have brought about diversity of strategies and tactics for improving women’s lives (Dobrowolsky, 2000, p.195). Grassroots organizing and community-based initiatives have cropped up all over the country and the globe (Dobrowolsky, 2000, p.201; Nadeau, 2009 A, p.44-5). Perhaps because of similar concerns regarding the reception of women’s voices in the NB government, Lyons (2013) asks, “will [the forum] be able to be more than the sum of its parts?” (para. 14).

While grassroots and community-based initiatives currently operate within NB, however, the gap left by the NBACSW is recognizable to those organizations. Tania, for instance, remarks upon the loss of the NBACSW’s services:

Tania: […] There is absolutely no provincial support whatsoever, especially with the elimination of the Advisory Council. That completely cuts out all of [the NB RebELLEs’] networking opportunities. And how are we supposed to develop a newsletter and speak through word of mouth in a way that an organization was doing for 30 years? There’s no possible way that a transient community is going to be able to maintain, or discover that, without any support whatsoever. […] There are women in Moncton who are ready to be RebELLEs, [but] we had no way of communicating with them because we don’t speak French. That is something the Advisory Council could have done on our behalf, and we didn’t
even use them for that. I didn’t even know that that was an option: translation, communication, networking—all of those things are totally volunteer, and how do you convince people in the north shore, in Bathurst that you’re legit and you have the same issues as them when you can’t communicate with them whatsoever on a language basis (Tania, personal communication, June 13, 2011)?

Tania’s comments highlight the role the NBACSW played in networking between women’s and other social justice groups in the province, as well as the role it had in connecting groups of different backgrounds and languages. Depending on its membership, the new independent women’s forum may be able to fill this gap.

Although women’s organizing has largely been from “outside” of the state, feminists in Canada are still engaging with the state through public policy analyses (Cohen & Pulkingham, 2009). Women’s groups—state or not—are bound together in policy and community networks (Newman & White, 2006, p.134). Moreover, studies have shown that both women’s institutional organizations and grassroots/community-based organizations are crucial to improving women’s lives (Newman & White, 2006, p.136; Rankin & Vickers, 2001). What, then, ought to be the relationship between feminist women’s movements in NB and an increasingly neoliberalizing state? More specifically, as the WEB accepts applications to the Voices of New Brunswick Women Consensus-Building Forum (its most recent name, as of December 2013), what is to be its role?

The answers to these questions remain to be seen, and will likely become more clear as the forum becomes active. I end this study with the wisdom of this study’s interviewees, as they elucidate their hopes for the future of women’s activism in NB and
speak to some of the challenges and barriers they have faced not only from “outside,” but even from within, women’s organizations. May these words of experience be considered as “meaningful and authoritative evidence” (Sangster, 2011, p. 137) to be considered by those planning this new forum, so that they might make the work of NB women’s activism more effective.

Firstly, the transitory nature of young people (and increasingly, older people) in the province is a barrier to making meaningful activist connections, and increases the pressure put on more permanently rooted activists. For instance, Tracy, a mainstay feminist and environmental activist in York County, says:

Tracy: Sometimes I’m (chuckles) I get worried by the sort of the wave of people that come and go […] It’s a challenging environment to work in, where I’ve seen a lot of, uh, activists get discouraged, by whether they’re doing something from the municipal to the provincial, um, level, uh – when you don’t see change or, that it’s a discouraging place to work sometimes.

Karolyn: You’re having the same, you know, the same fights all the time?

Tracy: Yeah. And I think sometimes, too, uh, groups can become sort of insular, too, where they don’t uh – where, I think it’s when you start to see the same faces at events, or meetings, that you also get a sense that you’re not actually building a movement or (chuckles) affecting change, really (Tracy, personal communication, July 12, 2011).
Beatrice raises a point around the barriers between feminist women’s movements in urban and rural communities:

Beatrice: I think the centres—the larger centres have more, are more vocal and have more opportunities to, um, push for equality than the smaller centres just by, ah, sheer number and support. […] Um. I kind of don’t have that big, ah, [pause], I don’t have a group that I can go to—that I can muster, so, in my area, I’m kind of out of the mainstream (Beatrice, personal communication, August 24, 2011).

Furthermore, Beatrice discusses the challenges of intergenerational organizing while living in a more rural area when she says that “being a retired person there aren’t that many people that I can go to and say ‘let’s get our little signs out’” (Beatrice, personal communication, August 24, 2011). Similarly, Anne says:

Anne: I think it’s really up to younger women who are more involved in activities. Like, I live outside of the city so it’s harder. It’s not impossible. If I wanted to dedicate myself to that, I could do it, but I don’t.

Karolyn: Well, I mean, you’ve done so much already!

Anne: It’s somebody else’s turn (Anne, personal communication, September 21, 2011).

Beth adds another perspective to the challenges of intergenerational organizing:

Beth: In New Brunswick, there are so many of the same people that come up as the names in social justice. And there are a lot of, you know, women who have been doing this for a while, and it can be intimidating to younger women (Beth, personal communication, June 16, 2011).

Monique highlights some barriers for Francophone women and for women’s organizing:
Monique: Les femmes francophones vivent continuellement deux discriminations; être femme et être francophone. Les femmes francophones au N.-B. ont d’ailleurs été plus longtemps persécuté que les femmes anglophones, en raison de l’importance de la religion catholique dans la vie acadienne et francophone. Les femmes francophones ont accès à beaucoup moins de services dans leurs langues et cela pour plusieurs différentes sphères (santé, etc.). Les femmes francophones sont également souvent isolées, puisque les régions rurales (surtout dans le nord de la province) sont majoritairement des régions francophones. De plus, le Plan de développement global qui est créé au sein de la Société de l’Acadie du Nouveau-Brunswick prend en compte des réalités des femmes et des féministes, toutefois cela ne va pas en profondeur. Les leaders de l’Acadie ne prennent pas toujours les enjeux féministes comme des priorités et cela est vraiment dommage, puisque c’est le Plan de développement global qui guide le financement donné par Patrimoine Canadien. De plus, les droits des francophones sont continuellement mis en danger par les décisions du gouvernement (régie bilingue, fermeture d’écoles dans les régions rurales). Le fait que notre premier ministre ne connaît pas bien les réalités des francophones n’aide pas non plus à cette cause.

83 Translation: French-speaking women constantly live two discriminations; being a woman, and being francophone. NB’s francophone women have been persecuted from an earlier time than Anglophone women, because of the importance of the Catholic religion in the Acadian and francophone life, and culture. Francophone women have access to a lot less services in their mother-tongue, and this in many spheres (health, etc.) Francophone women are also often isolated, since the majority of the rural areas (especially in the north of the province,) are francophone. In addition, while the Plan for global development created by the Acadia Society of New Brunswick takes into consideration women and feminists’ realities, they don’t go in much depth. The leaders of Acadia don’t always make, or see, feminist issues as priorities, and this is really a shame, because it’s the Plan for global development that guides the
Caroline adds that racism is often another barrier to women’s organizing in NB, as many organizations are run by white women:

Caroline: Government agencies, commissions, none of them have Indian people on there. None. If you went to the province back then or right now, you would find that there are no people appointed to those kinds of things, and it’s something, ah, after I graduated I worked for the band office and one of the things that the chief back then, which was thirty or forty years ago, is ‘why aren’t there Indians, ah, in these places?’ and […] if it’s an appointment [membership process] at the Advisory Council, why has there never been an Indian person at the head of the Advisory Council? (Caroline, personal communication, October 24, 2011).

Of course, these barriers are not mutually exclusive, and they compound to create significant divisions amongst women’s groups in the province. Strategies need to be developed or improved for overcoming some of these barriers.

Moreover, I caution the organizers of the forum to replicate the hierarchies that were established in liberal feminism. Nostalgia for what has been lost often elides its undesirable aspects; aspects that feminists have opposed outright (Brodie, 1995, p.22; Brown, 2005, p.54). As Dobrowolsky argues, “[f]eminists need to continue to develop proactive platforms that show that alternative, inclusive […] discourses and practices are desirable and feasible” (2000, p. 200). The development of a women’s forum could use of the funding provided by the Canadian Heritage Society. Furthermore, francophones’ rights are constantly put in danger by the government’s decisions (bilingual governing, the closing of French schools in rural areas.) The fact that our Prime Minister doesn’t know francophone realities very well doesn’t help our cause either.
provide us with the opportunity to develop and strengthen alternatives so that we might one day live them.
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Hello,

My name is Karolyn Martin. I’m a feminist who hails from Fredericton, NB, and am currently living in Peterborough, ON. I’ve been following the news here in New Brunswick closely and am concerned by the cuts to funding that several women’s organizations and organizations disproportionately used by women have received over the past few years.

I’m currently doing my Master’s degree at Trent University, and as a part of this research, I am interviewing people who are passionate about feminist or women’s issues in New Brunswick. This project is open to people of any gender/age/political affiliation/etc. My main focus will be on the recent abolition of the NB Advisory Council on the Status of Women. I’m interested in hearing what people’s perspectives are on this, and what they think it means for women in New Brunswick. If you are passionate about these issues, please contact me!

I am looking for volunteers who would like to talk with me about this. I can arrange to travel to the city/town/village where you live. Unfortunately, I cannot do in-person interviews in French due to language constraints, but I can arrange to have questions sent to you in French and would appreciate answers in French! Any translations of your words that I include in my writing would be subject to your approval.

Be assured that I won’t include any identifying characteristics of anyone in my project without their okay! I can be reached by a private message here on Facebook, by e-mail at [Karolyn.martin@gmail.com], or by phone at (705) 768-4932.

In solidarity, Karolyn Martin
Bonjour,

Je m’appelle Karolyn Martin, et je suis une féministe originaire de Fredericton, N-B, qui demeure présentement à Peterborough en Ontario. J’ai suivi de près les manchettes ici au Nouveau-Brunswick, et je suis concernée par les coupures de financement que plusieurs organisations pour les femmes, (très vastement utilisées, d’ailleurs), ont subies au cours des quelques dernières années.

Au moment, je complète ma Maîtrise à l’université de Trent, et l’une des composantes de ce projet de recherche consiste à interviewer des gens qui sont passionnés par le féminisme, ou par les causes des femmes au Nouveau-Brunswick. Ce projet est ouvert aux gens de tous sexes/âge/ affiliations politiques/etc. Mon objectif principal sera sur la récente dissolution du Conseil consultatif sur la condition de la femme au Nouveau-Brunswick. Je suis intéressée à entendre les différentes opinions qu’ont les gens à ce sujet, et ce que vous pensez que cela représente pour les femmes au Nouveau-Brunswick. Si vous êtes passionnés par ces sujets, n’hésitez-pas à me contacter!

Je suis à la recherché de bénévoles qui aimeraiient discuter de ces circonstances avec moi. Cependant, des contraintes linguistiques m’empêchent de faire des entrevues en personne en Français; mais si désiré, je peux vous faire parvenir mes questions en Français, et j’apprécierais que vous me répondez dans votre langue maternelle, ou dans la langue dans laquelle vous préférez vous exprimer! Toute traduction de vos propos inclus dans mes écrits sera sujette à votre approbation avant d’apparaître.

Soyez assurés que je n’inclurai aucunes caractéristiques pouvant révéler l’identité des participants de mon projet sans leur accord! Je peux être rejointe par message privé
par l’entremise de Facebook, par courriel à l’adresse suivante :

Karolyn.martin@gmail.com ; ou par téléphone au (705) 768-4932.

En toute solidarité, Karolyn Martin
APPENDIX B: “STEPS” FOR CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a multi-level analytical process that shifts between textual, processing, and social levels of analysis (Fairclough, 1995; Janks, 1997). The following is a basic description of some of the “steps” of CDA, and is modeled after the strategies of Fairclough (1995, 2003), Janks (1997), Parker (1992), and Potter and Wetherell (1987). The steps outlined here are suggestions, and are not necessarily followed sequentially or in their entirety (Parker, 1992, p. 5). Rather, these steps are meant to act as analytical guides and strategies.

Theoretical Background

My analytical framework is based upon the following theoretical understandings from several critical discourse analysts. Fairclough (1995) envisions CDA as occurring 1) at the level of the object being analyzed, or text, \(^84\) 2) at the level of the processes by which the object is produced and received (e.g. writing/ speaking/ designing and reading/ listening/ viewing, and 3) the socio-historical conditions that govern these processes (in Janks, 1997, p. 329-30). Parker (1992, p. 6-19) introduces ten criteria for distinguishing discourses: 1) a discourse is realised in texts; 2) a discourse is about objects; 3) a discourse contains subjects; 4) a discourse is a coherent system of meanings; 5) a discourse refers to other discourses; 6) a discourse reflects on its own way of speaking; 7) a discourse is historically located; 8) discourses support institutions; 9) discourses reproduce power relations, and; 10) discourses have ideological effects.

Below, I have positioned Parker’s criteria within Fairclough’s three analytical levels as a way to construct “steps” for CDA for my purposes in this study. While I do

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\(^84\) See Methods section of the Introduction to this study for a more complete description of a text.
not necessarily follow these steps in order, I have reflected upon each of them during my analysis of the elimination of the NBACSW.

**Fairclough’s Level 1: Textual analysis**

*Parker’s Criteria One.* A discourse is realised in texts: We encounter discourses through texts, and thus, texts are what make discourses “real,” or materialized (Parker, 1992, p. 6).

   Step 1: View the world not as a priori imbued with meaning, but rather, as socially constructed; texts have multiple authors because not only does someone create them, but someone also interprets them (Parker, 1992, p. 7).

   Step 2: Explore the “connotations, allusions, and implications which the texts evoke” (Parker, 1992, p. 7).

*Parker’s Criteria Two.* A discourse is about objects: Discourses construct objects by thickening descriptions of them, particularly if the object has no material reality (Parker, 1992, p. 8). (E.g. while it certainly has material consequences, a “deficit” cannot be held, touched, etc.).

   Step 3: Ask what objects are referred to, and describe them (Parker, 1992, p. 9).

   Step 4: Envision the objects (even material objects) as meaningful because of discourse (Parker, 1992, p. 9).

*Parker’s Criteria Three.* A discourse contains subjects: we are “hailed” by a text to interact with a discourse “as a certain type of person” or subject, and there are “ideal” subject positions within discourses (Parker, 1992, p. 9).

   Step 5: Ask “what types of person are talked about in this discourse” (Parker, 1992, p. 10).

   Step 6: Determine what actions subjects are authorized to do (Parker, 1992, p. 10).
**Fairclough’s Level 2: Processing Analysis**

**Parker’s Criteria Four.** A discourse is a coherent system of meanings: Discourses establish certain rules, procedures, and intelligibilities for what can and cannot be spoken about (Smith, 2006, p. 77). It is within these terms that we process (e.g. read, hear, watch, feel) discourses (Parker, 1992, p. 12).

Step 7: Map out the world that this discourse represents by looking for linguistic cues (e.g. metaphors and analogies) which construct certain messages (Parker, 1992, p. 12-13).

Step 8: Discover how a discourse might deal with objections to its worldview (Parker, 1992, p.12).

**Parker’s Criteria Five.** A discourse refers to other discourses: Contradictions in a discourse create opportunities to discover what other discourses a discourse relies upon (Parker, 1992, p.13). All discourses are hybrids (Fairclough, 2003, p.218).

Step 9: Contrast “ways of speaking (discourses)” and examine the different objects they constitute (Parker, 1992, p.14).


**Parker’s Criteria Six.** A discourse reflects on its own way of speaking: At some point all discourses reflect and comment upon their chosen terms, and analysts must find clues of when this is occurring (Parker, 1992, p.14).

Step 11: Refer to other texts which address different audiences to look for evidence of reflections (Parker, 1992, p. 15).
Step 12: Reflect on the descriptive terms used to describe a discourse, “which involves moral/political choices on the part of the analyst” (Parker, 1992, p.15).

Fairclough’s Level 3: Social Analysis

*Parker’s Criteria Seven.* A discourse is historically located: Because they are subject to time, discourses are not static (Smith, 2006, p. 67). They develop new connections to other discourses over time and through the process of reflection (Parker, 1992, p.15-16).

Step 13: Discover how and where discourses emerged (Parker, 1992, p. 16).

Step 14: Describe the changes in the narrative of a discourse (Parker, 1992, p. 16).

*Parker’s Criteria Eight.* Discourses support institutions: Discourses are often associated with institutions, and are how institutions derive their power (Parker, 1992, p.17).

Step 15: Identify “institutions which are reinforced” by the use of a specific discourse (Parker, 1992, p. 19).

Step 16: Identify “institutions that are attacked or subverted” by the use of a specific discourse (Parker, 1992, p. 19).

*Parker’s Criteria Nine:* Discourses reproduce power relations: Because of their historical significance, the use of particular discourses can afford particular people power (Parker, 1992, p. 19).

Step 17: Ask who gains, and who loses, when a discourse is used (Parker, 1992, p. 19).

Step 18: Ask who “would want to promote and who would want to dissolve the discourse” (Parker, 1992, p.19).

*Parker’s Criteria Ten.* Discourses have ideological effects: Certain discourses become privileged over others ideologically through the power relations in which one group’s
“truth” gets positioned as absolute through claims to, for instance, scientificity (Parker, 1992, p.19).

Step 19: Show “how a discourse connects with other discourses which sanction oppression” (Parker, 1992, p. 20).

Step 20: Show how a discourse “allows dominant groups to tell their narratives about the past in order to justify the present, and prevent those who use subjugated discourses from making history” (Parker, 1992, p. 20).