Do Subnational Governments Fund Organizations in Neoliberal Times? The Role of Critical Events in Provincial Funding of Women's Organizations

Emma Kay[1] and Howard Ramos[1]

Abstract

Countries around the world have adopted neoliberal or austerity policies. Among states that fund organizations, this may have a detrimental effect on civil society. Looking at the Canadian context, this article examines whether subnational governments, provinces, step in during times of national budget cuts and changing political environments to fund organizations. We do this by analyzing the effect of critical events, regime changes, and the founding of key organizations on state funding in the province of Nova Scotia between 1960 and 2014. We do this to examine how the interaction of national and subnational political context shapes subnational funding of organizations. We find that critical events appear to be linked to increases in provincial funding, however, do not appear to be linked to cuts in funding. Regime changes and founding of key organizations have less clear-cut relationships with provincial funding.

[1]Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

Corresponding Author:
Howard Ramos, Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Dalhousie University,
6135 University Avenue, Room 1117, McCain Building, Box 15000, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3H 4R2,
Canada.
Email: howard.ramos@dal.ca

Over the past three decades, governments around the world increasingly have adopted austerity policies and have cut funds to a wide range of government services and national institutions. This was exacerbated by the financial crisis of 2008 and has led some to recognize that "governments all over the world are under stress" (Henriksen, Smith, & Zimmer, 2009). While this situation has been examined in terms of driving the diffusion of protest to local contexts around the world (Castells, 2015; Wood, 2012) far less attention has been paid to the role of subnational polities or governments in such neoliberal times. They may insulate or compound broader trends.

In most countries, civil society is supported, partially or in full, with funding from national and subnational states (Htun & Weldon, 2012). This comes in the form of subsidizing service providers, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and even advocacy groups. In times of austerity, such support is put in jeopardy. Although much attention to these issues has focused on national funding opportunities, far less has looked at the role subnational governments, such as provinces or substates of a nation. Given the role of state funding in promoting civil society, we believe it is worth exploring the impact of changing political context on funding at the subnational level to better understand when and why it increases or decreases and to see if national austerity policies diffuse to subnational contexts.

To understand these issues, we focus on Canadian women's organizations and state funding in the province of Nova Scotia. Canada is an important case to examine because it is one of the leading economies around the world and is known as a middle power; and, although it is closely tied to the United States, it differs from its larger and more influential neighbor in advancing women's rights and arguably has had a more successful women's movement and more stable women's organizations (Bashevkin, 1989). Like the United States, Canada is a federated country and this means that its provinces have much autonomy across almost all aspects of people's lives. Like other federated states, differences between provinces, or subnational governments, and the federal, or national, government have successfully been leveraged. Examples of such can readily be seen by both the Canadian women's movement and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer movement in terms of recognition of rights or court divisions (Bashevkin, 2009; Smith, 2005). Among provinces, like most federations, there is much diversity in terms of size of population, dominant language spoken, and national influence. Most research on the country focuses on larger population centers in British Columbia, Ontario, or Quebec, which are home to Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal, often overlooking smaller population provinces such as those in Atlantic Canada, which is a region that accounts for 4 of the country's 10 provinces. Among those in the region, Nova Scotia is the oldest province, predating the creation of Canada, and is considered the regional hub. Because of this, its largest city Halifax, was a key site for activism in the 1960s and was a regional hub for the human rights and women's movement. For these reasons, we use the province as a case for analysis looking at the 1960-2014 period.

We analyze provincial funding by taking an "eventful" history approach introduced by Sewell (1996, 2005) and first applied to social movements by Wood, Staggenborg, Stalker, and Kutz-Flamenbaum (2017). In doing so, we examine the critical events,

regime changes, and key organizations founded that shape the funding of women's organizations during this period. In other words, we "study up" looking at how changing national and local political context affects provincial funding. We believe this approach will offer new insights on state funding in times of austerity and the potential role subnational states play in supporting civil society and, in turn, social movements.

Our examination begins with a short literature review on Canadian women's organizations and the women's movement as well as the role state funding plays in supporting both. Next, we present the methods used for analysis, followed by a brief history and justification of the critical events examined in our eventful historical analysis of the context that affected women's politics in Canada and Nova Scotia. We then present our analysis and offer conclusions on what the case tells us and how it can be extended to other movements and national and subnational contexts.

Funding and the Women's Movement

If one examines women's movements and organizations around the world, from Denmark to Germany to the United States, one sees that state funding plays an important role in their ability to offer services and maintain organizations (Henriksen et al., 2009). This, in turn, fosters organizations that advocate for the needs of women. Since the mid-1960s, Canadian women's organizations have been no different receiving substantial funding and support from the country's federal government. The Secretary of State for example, was conceived of as an intermediary between government and civil society. It invested substantial funds into the development of citizenship as well as advocacy and service organizations (Pal, 1993). Between 1987 and 1988, the Secretary of State invested over $50 million in grants for programs for advocacy and social services (Pal, 1993). For many organizations, government grants were their primary source of funding (Clément, 2009; Phillips, Laforest, & Graham, 2010) and in many cases, state funding determined whether an organization survived. Given the funding cutbacks, welfare reform, and austerity measures which characterize the past two decades in Canada (Phillips et al., 2010), this is troubling.

Some scholars, however, worry that state funding leads to the co-optation of organizations and social movement by the institutions that fund them (Clément, 2009; Corrigall-Brown, 2016; Corrigall-Brown, & Ho, 2013; Piven & Cloward, 1977). There is concern that government funding leads groups to align to the institutions that fund them relegating them as politically mute. In the United States, for instance, funding has been shown to manipulate an organization's agenda, strategy, targets, and priorities (Corrigall-Brown, 2016; Corrigall-Brown & Ho, 2013; Dowie, 1996). The influence of government funding can transform the orientation of organizations from radical to complacent (Roelofs, 2003) and an additional concern is that it fosters resource dependency. This can make organizations less likely to engage in overtly political activity and more likely to bureaucratize their structure (Corrigall-Brown, 2016; Corrigall-Brown & Ho, 2013) and, in the absence of adequate provincial support, federal cutbacks can devastate nonprofit organizations (Clancy, 2015). Yet the

co-optation of organization or movement politics, though frequently observed in the United States, is less of a concern in other countries and has not been observed in the Canadian context (Ramos & Rodgers, 2015).

Although some fear co-optation of organizations, a bigger concern is the rise of austerity policies leading to funding cuts which make organizations more precarious and advocacy more difficult (Cain & Todd, 2008; Ramos & Rodgers, 2015). This is important because socially marginalized populations rely on advocacy work to facilitate their participation in policy discussion (Bonisteel & Green, 2005). Canada's *Charitable Purpose, Advocacy and the Income Tax Act* (Parliament of Canada, 2006), for example, prohibited registered not-for-profit organizations from allocating more than 10% of their resources to political advocacy (Ilcan & Basok, 2004). Changes in the 2006 Canadian federal budget, moreover, were damaging for the women's movement (Rodgers & Knight, 2011) because it eliminated funding that was available for women's research, advocacy, and lobbying organizations (Strumm, 2015). Such budget reductions thus jeopardize organizations' survival (Scott, 2003) but also reduce opportunities for public participation in policy making (Bonisteel & Green, 2005). Cutbacks can also prevent organizations from engaging in advocacy work for fear of losing even more financial support (Ilcan & Basok, 2004; Scott, 2003). Funding constraints likewise make an organization's target population more vulnerable (Beres, Crow, & Gotell, 2009; Morrow, Hankivsky, & Varcoe, 2004).

Cutbacks to government funding affect not only women's organizations but they also hit organizations across the social justice sector. In 2006, for instance, the Canadian federal government cut its spending by approximately $1 billion, taking money from what it deemed "wasteful and ineffective programs" (Department of Finance Canada, 2006) such as the Court Challenges Program, which supported a large number of social justice groups (Voices-voix, 2016). It is a program that has been successfully used by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer organizations (Smith, 2005) as well as other ethnic and racial minority groups to launch court challenges to better protect human and other rights in the country.

In addition to cutbacks, another obstacle organizations face is "defunding" (Cain & Todd, 2008). This occurs when programs are not cut per se, but when they are simply not renewed. A related problem occurs when budgets for supporting organizations are not cut or defunded but are not increased over time to match inflation (Cain & Todd, 2008). This means organizations can do less over time because the support they receive disappears or shrinks. This is done by austerity regimes to avoid public outcry or opposition that accompanies clear budget reductions.

When organizational support is jeopardized by national austerity cutbacks, organizations face pressure to look for funds from other sources, such as subnational governments. Research on Quebec, in Canada, shows that the province continued to fund women's organizations in the face of national austerity policies (Masson, 2015). Organizations in that province did not experience the same level of precariousness as those in other regions because of Quebec's long tradition of funding community groups and organizations (Elson, 2015; Masson, 2004, 2006). This is in part linked to its nationalist movement and its focus on building an autonomous state (Bégin, 1992;

Béland & Lecours, 2014). National and subnational relations in the region clearly affect the dynamics of how the province funds organizations. It remains unclear, however, whether funding in other Canadian provinces minimized shortfalls for organizations created by federal government cuts and how changing national and provincial politics affect the funding offered by regions not wrestling with nationalism and nation-building. For this reason, in the rest of the article, we extend Masson's (1999, 2004, 2006, 2015) analysis by looking at the impact of critical events, regime changes, and the founding of key organizations on the funding of women's organizations in Nova Scotia, Canada.

Methods

Nova Scotia is an interesting case. As noted above, it is one of four Atlantic Canadian provinces, is a regional hub and was a key cite for the human rights and women's movement in the country. The province is also interesting because it has been heavily reliant on federal transfer payments from the national government (Clancy, 2015), which are funds reallocated from other regions to the province. For this reason, Nova Scotia potentially has more incentive to fall in line with national trends compared with Quebec which seeks independence. That is, despite being a smaller province and more marginal case, it is likely more reflective of other subnational polities across Canada and in other countries. For this reason, we look at funding at the provincial level in Nova Scotia from 1960-2014. We do this to examine how shifting national and provincial political contexts affect government funding of women's organizations. We confine ourselves to the women's organizations to offer in-depth historical and case analysis and recognize that further research is needed on other movements at the subnational level. We do, however, hope to offer insights that can be applied to other organizations and contexts.

Our examination of Nova Scotia provincial funding of women's organizations is done through a comparative historical analysis of funding trends between 1960 and 2014. All provincial funding information is released annually by Nova Scotia Public Accounts. These documents cite financial statements, agencies, and funds spent. The contents of Volume 3, which contains additional reports on grants and contributions made by specific departments, were analyzed. Documents dated prior to 1996 were accessed in the Legislative Library, while those dated from 1996 to 2014 were collected from the province's Finance and Treasury Board (2016) website. The grants and contributions from before 1996 were documented using a digital camera. Digital tables in Excel were created using FileMaker Pro, which was used to process both the online records and those captured by camera. Pdf records of the accounts are hosted at: https://www.statefunding.ca/

The grants and contributions made to women's organization were coded for the year, the amount, and recipient of funds. Women's organizations refer to those that represent or advocate on behalf of women's rights, violence against women, abortion rights, child-rearing needs, indigenous women's rights, women's political interests, legal issues related to women, children and youth, philanthropic groups run by women

in the community, housing for women, and women's economic interests. Classification as a women's organization entails the explicit mention of, or targeting of, women. In order to compare funding across time periods, we used the Bank of Canada (2016) Inflation Calculator to adjust for inflation through the conversion of all dollar amounts to 2014 dollars. In order to compare what types of women's organizations get funding, we classify them according to the International Classification of Non-profit Organizations, first published by the United Nations (Statistics Canada, 2015).[1]

We analyze changes in funding by taking an "eventful" sociological approach, which looks at historical context through a lens of ebbs and flows, recognizing that some events have a bigger impact on societies and their political economy than others (Sewell, 1996, 2005; Wood et al., 2017). Some events are transformational, changing institutions and their practices as well as disrupting taken for granted assumptions and power relations (Wood et al., 2017). It is a view of history and mobilization that focuses on "critical events." According to Staggenborg (1993, p. 320), "social movements are event-driven insofar as critical events alter expectations and perceptions of threats, focusing or distracting the attention of movement constituents and other important actors on or away from movement issues." As a result, an "eventful" analysis is underpinned by the study of "critical events," which we conceptualize as disruptive. They reorder institutions, social relations, and power, which, in turn, offers opportunity for change (Ramos, 2008). More specifically, in the case of state funding, we see them as opportunities to transform policies that may lead to either increasing subnational funding or decreasing it. We thus expect that the broader political economic context of subnational government funding is subject to the influence of critical events.

In the next section, we examine key critical events for the Canadian and Nova Scotian women's movements and look at how they correspond to changes in provincial funding of women's organizations. Events were identified through those recognized in established texts on the Canadian women's movement (Bashevkin, 2009; Smith, 2014; Staggenborg & Ramos, 2016) as well as key works on the movement in Nova Scotia (Black, 2006). We also shared an earlier draft of our analysis with 7 social movement scholars across Canada, most of whom specializing in the women's movement, as a cross check to our decisions on selecting events and interpreting them.

In addition to looking at such critical events, we also look at two additional factors: regime changes and the founding of key organizations. Again, we examine each at the national and provincial levels. We look at regime changes because literature on the women's movement, in Canada and around the world, shows that regimes play a pivotal role in shifting political openness or closedness toward women's organizations (Htun & Weldon, 2012). They are also seen as important by the robust political opportunity literature and are clearly tied to whether austerity politics are pursued. We analyze the founding of key organization because these can drive institutional change (Ramos, 2008) and independent organizations are seen as focal to the success of the women's movement internationally. Like with critical events, key organizations were identified by texts on the Canadian women's movement and review from a pool of expert scholars.

Critical Events, Regime Changes, and the Founding of Key Organizations in the Women's Movement in Canada and Nova Scotia

Like all movements, the Canadian women's movement has been shaped by critical events, regime changes, and key organizations. As noted above, we employ an eventful sociological approach and use Staggenborg's (1993) understanding of critical events to understand how Nova Scotia, as a subnational government, funds women's organizations over time. We expect that such critical events, regime changes, and the founding of key organizations, all shape provincial funding of organizations and offer no specific hypothesis and rather explore the relationships to better understand what shapes subnational funding of organizations.

At the national level, we identify five critical events for Canadian women: the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) in 1966; the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW) report in 1970; the partriation of the Canadian Constitution in 1982; the replacement of CAP and Established Programs Financing (EPF) with the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) in 1995; and the Conservative government's 2006 federal budget. We anticipate these events correspond with fluctuations of funding for women's NGOs.

The first event occurred during the mid-1960s, a decade that saw the reemergence of the women's movement and a decade characterized by frequent protest and political outcry (Staggenborg & Ramos 2016). In 1966, along with the CAP, a federal–provincial cost-sharing program was introduced (Brodie & Bakker, 2007) and it had a significant impact on women's organizing. CAP extended federal cost sharing of programs and organizations to welfare services, shelters, home care, and housing. This directly increased the amount of funds women's organizations could access.

This was followed in 1967 with the federal government's launch of the RCSW which was responsible for investigating and reporting on the issues and obstacles faced by Canadian women (Rodgers & Knight, 2011). The commissions issued its report in 1970 (Bégin, 1992; Cohen, 1992) which is another critical event. It recognized the need to include women in policy discussions and provided an institutionalized venue for feminist claims-making (Bégin, 1992; Dobrowolsky, 2003). It also led to the founding of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) in 1971 and the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women in 1973 which were key umbrella organizations for the English Canadian women's movement (Brown, 2005; Clément, 2009; Rodgers & Knight, 2011). The report is also linked with the establishment of advisory councils in most, if not all, provinces (Clément, 2009). NAC was particularly significant to the women's movement because it was formed to ensure that the recommendations of the RCSW report would be followed. During the decade, the federal government also established a Minister of Status of Women and launched the Secretary of State's Women's Program which were significant opportunities stemming from the RCSW.

Following this period of success and growth of the women's movement, Canada entered into an economic recession mid-decade (Brodie & Bakker, 2007). This foreshadowed the funding cutbacks in the decades to come. The 1980s were characterized

by neoliberal practices and austerity budgets at the national level (Dobrowolsky & Jenson, 2004). This led to subsequent funding cuts that had a profound impact on women's advocacy organizations and NGOs more generally (Rodgers & Knight, 2011). During this decade, there was a decline in long-term core funding for NGOs, an emphasis placed on quantifiable results in funding applications, and an end to funding restrictions for for-profit organizations (Brodie & Bakker, 2007; Dobrowolsky & Jenson, 2004). Some argue these changes, along with others, undermined the federal government's commitment to women's rights made a decade earlier (Bégin, 1992).

Despite austerity measures and neoliberal policies, there was much optimism in the lead up to patriation of the Constitution in 1982 which is the third critical event at the federal level (Dobrowolsky, 1998). It ultimately enshrined the protection of women's rights in Section 15 of the Constitution, which is known as the equality section (Kome, 1983; M. MacDonald, 1995). The formalization of equality rights made it possible for women's advocacy groups to use the Constitution to pursue legal recourse for remedying inequities in years to come.

The advances made by the women's movement were jeopardized in the mid-1980s by the election of a Conservative government (Rodgers & Knight, 2011) and mobilization of right-of-center women's groups (Bashevkin, 1989; Brodie, 2010). Some scholars suggest that the founding of REAL (Realistic, Active and for Life) Women, a conservative and profamily organization, in 1983 posed a serious threat to the funding and advocacy efforts of NAC and other well-established women's organizations (Bashevkin, 1989). REAL also threatened their achievements (Steuter, 1992) by arguing that the existing women's movement and associated organizations did not represent the interests of most Canadian women (Brodie, 2010). During the late 1980s, with a sympathetic Conservative government in power, REAL became successful in shaping federal policy (Bashevkin, 1989; Dobrowolsky & Jenson, 2004) and challenged the eligibility rules for grants coming from the Status of Women and other federal agencies. The increasing influence of conservative women's groups challenged the legitimacy of the voice of feminists and the "left-of-center" women's movement as well as compounded neoliberal policies and austerity.

In the 1990s, NGOs still faced cutbacks by the federal government in spite of a change in government through the election of a Liberal majority in 1993 (Brodie & Bakker, 2007; Rodgers & Knight, 2011). In 1995, the new government replaced EPF, which was a block grant calculated on a per capita basis, and CAP with the CHST (Brodie & Bakker, 2007; Clancy, 2015). The elimination of CAP is the fourth federal-level critical event and it marked the end of federal government cost sharing for welfare-related social service organizations (Bonisteel & Green, 2005). This was detrimental for women's organizations because it reduced funding for women's shelters, housing and home care groups (Brodie & Bakker, 2007), which many of women's groups relied on to continue their operations. Similar trends continued into the 2000s and the first half of the 2010s.

Although the Conservatives promised to increase supports for women's issues on the campaign trail, their election in the mid-2000s did not bode well for the women's movement. The newly elected Conservatives favored cost-benefit and efficiency

rationales for funding programs. Some, such as Brown (2005), argue that they elevated economic interests over the democratic values and institutions which benefitted women's advocacy groups. This can be seen in the 2006 federal budget which is the fifth and last federal critical event. It cut $5 million in funding for Status of Women Canada (Voices-voix, 2012) and resulted in the closure of 12 out of 16 of its offices. These budget cuts marked the end of funding eligibility for advocacy and research for organizations and the elimination of "advancing women's equality" from the organization's mandates. This had a dramatic impact on women's groups across the country leaving many feeling disempowered and, as Rodgers and Knight (2011) note, like the collective wind had been knocked out of the movement.

In order to understand whether Nova Scotia stepped in to fill the funding gaps created at the federal level, we also examine three critical events at the provincial level during the same time frame. The first event considered is the province's Task Force on the Status of Women's *Herself/Elle-même* report in Nova Scotia Task Force on the Status of Women (1976; Black, 2006; Guildford, 2010; Mitchell, 2015). The second, is the Women's International Peace Conference in 1985 (MacDonald & Sarson, 2008). The third examined is the merging of the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women (NSACSW) with the Women's Directorate in 1996 (Guildford, 2010). Again, we anticipate these events will correspond with fluctuations in provincial funding.

As we discussed, the women's movement reemerged in the 1960s at the federal level. The movement also resurfaced in Nova Scotia during this period. In the first year of the decade, the province saw the first formal meeting of the Voice of Women (VOW; L. MacDonald & Sarson, 2008; Mitchell, 2015), whose founding was a critical event for women's organizing in the province. The organization was established by Murial Duckworth and Betty Peterson to give women a platform to advocate for peace during times of conflict (L. MacDonald & Sarson, 2008). Duckworth is an important figure in the social justice movement and the organization played an increasingly important role in decades to come.

Following the release of the federal RCSW report in 1970, the province of Nova Scotia increased its focus on women's issues. This is especially the case mid-decade when the province established a Task Force on the Status of Women in 1975 (Black, 2006). It emerged as a result of advocacy against the province's inaction on the RCSW, The Task Force examined issues affecting women and released the *Herself/Elle-même* report in 1976 (Black, 2006; Guildford, 2010) which is the second critical event at the provincial level. It included recommendations on how to improve the lives of women in the province (Clark, 1976). It was a critical moment for women because it not only formalized the recognition of women's issues but also lead to the establishment of NSACSW in 1977 (Guildford, 2010). The NSACSW was tasked with ensuring that the recommendations of the RCSW and *Herself/Elle-même* report were implemented.

The 1980s marked a period of growing austerity at the national level and the rise of deficit financing at the provincial level which changed the political and economic landscape of Nova Scotia. Provincially, the decade is referred to as the "Conservative era" because Conservative Premier John Buchanan held office for four consecutive

elections. During this time, the province experienced a serious decline in financial standing (Clancy, 2015; Osberg & Sharpe, 2008). The Buchanan government used a governing formula that largely relied on economic development supports issued by the federal government and deficit financing (Clancy, 2015). As a result, the province was particularly vulnerable during this period because of federal government cutbacks. The province lacked the ability to sustain itself in the absence of federal assistance and by the end of the Conservative era, Nova Scotia became a debt leader among Atlantic Provinces.

In Nova Scotia, the 1980s was characterized by a period of protest and mobilization. VOW's activism increased during this decade as it collaborated with local peace organizations (L. MacDonald & Sarson, 2008). Most significant during this time was VOW's work with Marion Kerans in 1985 to organize a weeklong Women's International Peace Conference at Mount Saint Vincent University. It involved 26 women's groups from across the country (L. MacDonald & Sarson, 2008).

This conference was important for the women's movement because it demonstrated the potential for women's groups to work collaboratively. In addition to VOW's activism during this time, the Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia was founded in 1982 (Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia, 2013). The establishment of this provincial branch connected Nova Scotia to national discussions on women's inequality in present services and programs.

In 1993, the Buchanan era came to an end with the election of a Liberal government (Clancy, 2015). Premier John Savage was left to manage the crises left to him by his predecessor, which included a deficit of over $600 million. His solution was to increase taxes and implement a series of systemic cuts to expenditures (Clancy, 2015). As with changes at the federal level, groups receiving provincial state funding were increasingly asked to produce results that could be quantified and illustrate impact (Guildford, 2010). This led to the merging of the NSACSW and the Women's Directorate, which is the third critical event at this level. Women's groups strongly opposed the merger because they felt that women's issues would lose their public profile (Guildford, 2010). This is because the NSACSW, like NAC, had a mandate to implement recommendations and monitor them and the Women's Directorate was an extension of government and there were fears of co-optation. Women's groups also feared that the merger would seriously limit funding opportunities in the face of cutbacks at the federal level also occurring during this period.

Overall, from the 1960s to the 2010s federal government spending turned from poverty reduction and gender equity toward tax reduction and neoliberalism. Brodie and Bakker (2007, p. 21) call this process the "fiscalization of social policy" arguing that support for organizations and social services is done only when it can be through family spending priorities and the tax system. In Nova Scotia, during the same period, we see a move toward promoting women's issues in the 1970s, the rise of debt during the 1980s and the rise of auditing and accountability in the 1990s. In the next section, we examine how these trends relate to changes in the funding of women's organizations in Nova Scotia.
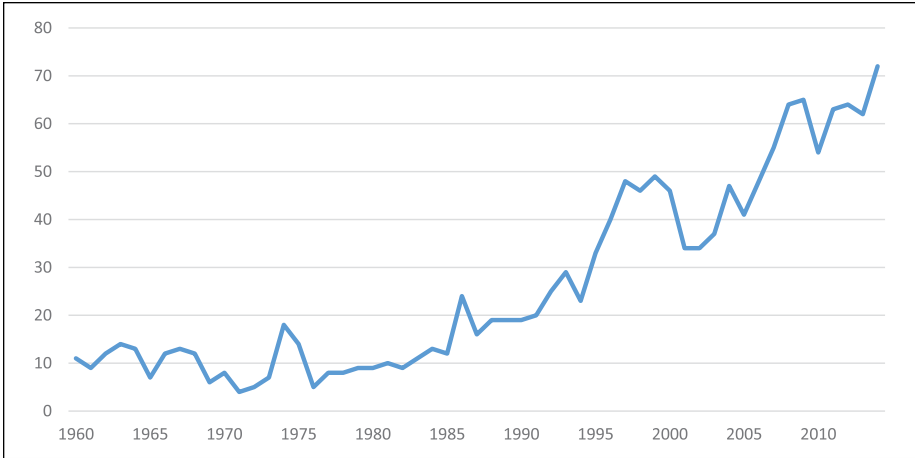
Figure 1. Number of grants received by women's organizations in Nova Scotia.

Funding of Women's Organization in Nova Scotia 1960-2014

With critical events affecting the women's movement and organizations at the federal and provincial level defined, as well as political regime shifts and the founding of organizations, we next look at trends in funding of women's organizations. We begin by first examining the total number of grants received by women's organizations between 1960 and 2014 in Figure 1. The figure shows that the number of grants increased steadily over time. This can be attributed to women's increased involvement in advocacy efforts (Rodgers & Knight, 2011), which begins in Nova Scotia in 1960 with the founding of VOW. Grant levels dropped mid-decade but rose briefly around 1967 which may be attributed to the founding of the RCSW at the Federal level. In the early 1970s, there is a decrease in the number of grants despite the release of the RCSW report. The increase mid-decade coincides with women mobilizing against the province for its failure to implement any of the report's recommendations. These mobilizations lead to the province's *Herself/Elle-même* report in 1975 which offered similar recommendations for improving women's social and economic living conditions. The increase, however, was not sustained; the number of grants decreased and levelled out. The next increase occurs around 1982, despite the growing austerity policies of the 1980s. Recall that this was the year the Constitution was patriated, a critical event affecting all social justice organizations. The Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia was also founded during this year. Both of these events played a positive role in the women's movement; they drew attention to, and increased awareness of, a wide range women's issues. Except for a minor decline, the number of grants issued increased steadily into the 1990s. Around 1995, there was a sharp increase in the proportion of provincial grants. The increase coincides with the federal government's replacement of EPF and CAP with CHST and the end of federal–provincial cost sharing (Brodie & Bakker, 2007; Clancy, 2015)
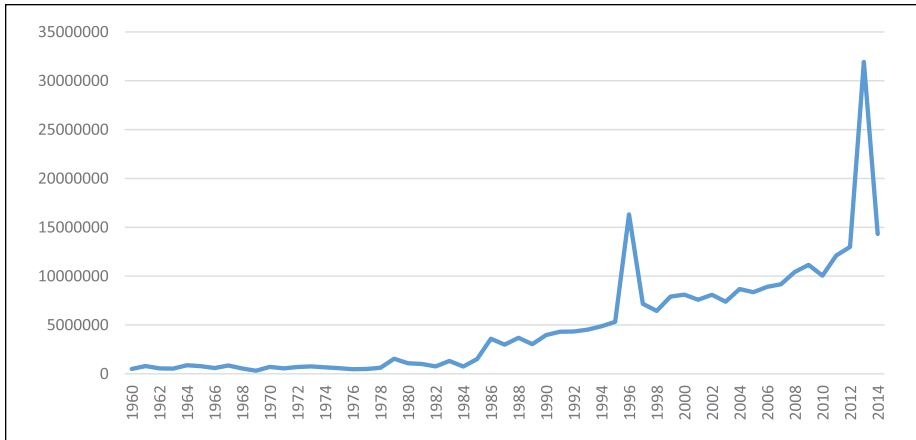
Figure 2. Amount received by women's organizations (2014 dollars).

which disproportionately affected women (Guildford, 2010). It also follows the end of the Buchanan Conservatives and the election of the Liberals headed by John Savage. Although the Liberals came into power with over a $600 million deficit, Savage's commitment to the public sector was reflected by a rise in grants (Clancy, 2015). Interestingly, like in Quebec, it appears that provincial funding reduced the impact of federal budget cuts on women's organizations. In the late 2000s, there is a drop in the number of grants which coincides with the financial crisis of 2008.

To explore trends further, we examine Figure 2 which reports the average amount of funding per grant for women's organizations between 1960 and 2014. All values have been converted to 2014 dollars. Although Figure 1 showed noticeable fluctuations in provincial grants, Figure 2 shows that funding amount remained relatively consistent until the mid-1980s, when there was an increase. Although this occurs during the election of a Conservative federal government sympathetic to rightist women's groups, it also follows the patriation of the Constitution and the Women's International Peace Conference in Nova Scotia. Interestingly, the rise in the number of grants during the mid-1990s was also accompanied by an increase of funding, approximately $10 million. This occurred as the federal government reconfigured its funding policies by introducing severe cuts and austerity measures. It also occurs despite the province entering a deep deficit during those years.

The trends observed in Figures 1 and 2 become more apparent in Table 1. In the 1960s, women's organizations received 109 grants from the provincial government. This coincides with the founding of VOW in 1960 and their activism throughout the decade. Interestingly, the table shows that even though the 1970s was a significant decade for women the average number of grants issued declined by 25% from a decade earlier. This occurred in spite of the release of the RCSW report, the founding of the federal agency of the Status of Women and of NAC, which was a large umbrella organization for the women's movement. Again, this is reflective of the

Table 1. Funding by Decade for Women's Organizations in Nova Scotia.

	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-1999	2000-2009	2010-2014
Number of grants	109	86	142	332	471	315
Number of organizations	23	36	24	61	72	63
Average number of grants per organization	4.74	2.39	5.92	5.44	6.54	5
Average amount of grants (thousands)	58.3	82.7	139.94	196.2	186.5	257.63
Average amount per organization (thousands)	276.27	197.48	822.2	1067.82	1220.03	1292.26
Federal critical events	1966 CAP	1970 RCSW report	1982 Patriation of the Constitution	1995 CHST	2006 Federal budget	
Changes in federal government	Con.	Lib. | Con.	Lib. | Con.	Con. | Lib.	Lib. | Con.	Con.
National women's organizations		1971 NAC, 1973-5 CACSW	1983 REAL women			
Provincial critical events		1976 Herself/Elle-même	1985 Women's International Peace Conference	1996 NSACSW and women's directorate merge		
Changes in provincial government	Con.	Lib. | Con.	Con.	Con. | Lib. | Con.	Con. | NDP	NDP | Lib.
Provincial women's organizations	1960 Voice of Women	1976 NSACSW	1982 Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia			
Dominant group funded	Religion (27.52%) and Law, Advocacy, and Politics (27.52%)	Social services (31.4%)	Social services (63.38%)	Social services (62.65%)	Social services (61.36%)	Social services (55.87%)
Dominant subgroup funded	Rehabilitation of offenders (50%)	Child Welfare, Child Services, and Day Care (74.07%)	Child Welfare, Child Services, and Day Care (34.45%)	Family Services (59.62%)	Family Services (54.67%)	Family Services (44.32%)

province's failure to implement the changes contained in the RCSW report. Though fewer grants were issued per organization, the average amount of each grant increased by approximately $24,400. This may be attributed to the Nova Scotia Task Force on the Status of Women (1976) *Herself/Elle-même* report after which we observe an increase in grants issued and grant amounts in Figures 1 and 2. The 1980s boasted a 165.1% increase in the number of grants issued, 247.7% increase in the average number of grants per organization, and a 416.4% increase in the average dollar amount given per grant and a 169.2% increase per organization. The number of organizations funded, however, dropped from 36 in the 1970s to 24 in the 1980s. The more general trend of increase, however, corresponds with patriation of the Constitution and the founding of the Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia. The 1990s also saw an increase across the board with an additional 37 organizations receiving funding. The increased support for women's organizations can be attributed to the Savage Liberal's promise to not reduce funding for women's organizations. Even though there is a marginal decline in the average number of grants per organization, there is also an increase in the average dollar amounts per grant and per organization. As we previously noted, this occurs when the federal government reconfigured its funding policies. Similar to Masson's (2006, 2015) observations in Quebec, the table suggests that while the federal government decreased its funding support for women's organizations, the province did not. Funding trends in the 2000s support this conclusion with another increase in grants issued, organizations funded, the average number of grants and dollar amount given to organizations. This happens despite the release of the Conservatives' 2006 budget which cut funding to key government organizations.

To explore these trends further, Table 1 reports the dominant type of organization funded. This information is relevant because it indicates the provincial government's funding priorities were linked to the provision of social services. It also allows for an examination of whether the dominant type helps account for funding changes. There are two dominant categories of organizations funded in the 1960s. The first is Religious groups, and the second is Law, Advocacy, and Politics. Interestingly, this coincides with focus on the inequities endured by incarcerated women by the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies which emerged as a national umbrella organization during this decade (Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia, 2013). From the 1970s onward, Social Service organizations are the dominant group funded. The dominant subgroups funded are Family Services and Child Welfare, Child Services, and Daycare. In part, this can be attributed to the political agenda of the 1990s. Liberal John Savage was committed to the public sector and to organizations within it whose services assist the public. As Premier his government prioritized service organizations even during decades when the province's economic well-being was suffering. In the 2000s, a change in federal government priorities corresponded with the Conservatives making women's advocacy and research organizations ineligible for federal funding (Strumm, 2015). This contributed to the move toward program funding linked to service delivery.

Conclusion

The world has increasingly seen the rise of austerity politics and this has led to funding cuts to social services and organizations that support social justice in many countries. Most analysis focuses on nation-states often missing the role that subnational governments and contexts play in either facilitating its spread or offering insulation against it. To this end, we examined provincial funding of women's organizations in Nova Scotia, Canada.

We examined the case because it is often overlooked in the study of Canada and is representative of almost half of the provinces in the country. We also examined it because like many subnational polities, it aligns to the national government and provides an interesting counter case to Quebec, whose subnational funding has been examined by Masson (1999, 2004, 2006, 2015). We set out to determine whether the Nova Scotia government, like Quebec's, supplemented funding of women's advocacy organizations in times where the federal government adopted neoliberal policies and austerity budgets.

To examine these issues, we looked at provincial funding from 1960 to 2014, taking an "eventful" sociological approach focusing on federal and provincial critical events, regime changes, and the founding of key organizations on provincial-level state funding. Although the approach has been used by some to examine the effect on social movements (e.g., Sewell, 1996; Wood et al., 2017), it has not been examined in relation to governments and the funding they offer as opportunities to organize. We believe our analysis helps unearth the complex relationship among national, subnational, organizational and movement politics.

Our analysis showed that during the period of 1960-2014, funding generally increased in Nova Scotia both in terms of the number of grants issued and the amount offered. The early 1970s were an exception to this trend and this is likely linked to the province's delay in implementing the recommendations of the RCSW (Black, 2006; Guildford, 2010). The increase in grants issued largely correspond to national and subnational critical events. We do not see such events linked to a decrease in funding.

The increase in grants issued and increase in the dollar amount per grant in Nova Scotia occurred at the same time the federal government began to adopt neoliberal policies and practices of austerity. This indicates that when federal support for women's advocacy organizations was reduced, the province stepped in. These results are similar to those of Masson (1999, 2004, 2006) who showed that the Quebec government continued funding women's organizations when the federal government stopped.

We expect this is likely the case in other subnational contexts as well. In the United States for instance, subnational governments regularly enact legislation, funding, or policy that is out of sync with national politics. One can easily cite differences that have preserved environmental protection, promoted rights for undocumented migrants and their children, or access to safe abortion for women all as examples. In other countries, subnational regimes and polities likely also offer opportunities for organizations and the movements they support.

Following Masson's argument, we believe that provincial funding for women's organizations was sustained because service provision is critical for women's organizing. When we examined the type of organizations getting funded, we found that social service organizations consistently received the bulk of funding. This corresponds with a general emphasis on issues of violence against women and reproductive rights in the women's movement. These trends mirror existing literature which indicate that state support for women's social service organizations often conceals the state's neglect of advocacy and research (Strumm, 2015). It is also in line with analysis across countries that shows that service providers fair better than other types of organizations in terms of state funding (Htun & Weldon, 2012). Such organizations, moreover, may be less susceptible to cutbacks associated with austerity at the national level if subnational governments are responsible for the delivery of specific services.

Overall, our analysis demonstrates that critical events not only affect the mobilization of organizations and social movements but they also affect governments and their funding of civil society. We also find that critical events are generally linked to increases in funding. Subnational governments can and do step in during neoliberal times. They likely offer refuge in times of national austerity, especially for organizations offering basic services.

Acknowledgments

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

Funding

Note

1. The International Classification of Non-profit Organizations has 12 major activity groups: Culture and Recreation; Education and Research; Health; Social Services; Environment; Development and Housing; Law, Advocacy, and Politics; Philanthropic Intermediaries and Voluntarism Promotion; International; Religion; Business and Professional Associations, Unions; and Not Elsewhere Classified.

References

Bank of Canada. (2016). *Inflation Calculator*. Retrieved from http://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/

Bashevkin, S. (1989). Free trade and Canadian feminism: The case of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. *Canadian Public Policy*, *15*, 363-375.

Bashevkin, S. (2009). *Women, power, politics: The hidden story of Canada's unfinished democracy*. Don Mills, Ontario, Canada: Oxford University Press.

Bégin, M. (1992). The Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada: Twenty years on. In C. Backhouse & D. H. Flaherty (Eds.), *Challenging times: The women's movement in Canada and the United States* (pp. 21-38). Montreal, Quebec, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Béland, D., & Lecours, A. (2014). Accommodation and the politics of fiscal equalization in multinational states: The case of Canada. *Nations and Nationalism*, *20*, 337-354. doi:10.1111/nana.12049

Beres, M. A., Crow, B., & Gotell, L. (2009). The perils of institutionalization in neoliberal times: Results of a national survey of Canadian sexual assault and rape crisis centres. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, *34*, 135-163.

Black, N. (2006). Feminism in Nova Scotia: Women's groups, 1990-2004. *Atlantis*, *31*, 66-78.

Bonisteel, M., & Green, L. (2005, October). *Implications of the shrinking space for feminist anti-violence advocacy*. Paper presented at the Canadian Social Welfare Policy Conference, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. Retrieved from http://www.rapereliefshelter.bc.ca/sites/default/files/imce/ShrinkingFeministSpace_AntiViolenceAdvocacy_OCT2005.pdf

Boyd, N., & Sandell, J. (2013). Unpaid and critically engaged: Feminist interns in the nonprofit industrial complex. *Feminist Teacher*, *22*, 251-265. doi:10.5406/femteacher.22.3.0251

Brodie, J. (2010). *The 3Ds of the Canadian women's movement: Delegitimization, dismantling and disappearance*. Retrieved from http://www.idees-ideas.ca/blog/3ds-canadian-womens-movement-delegitimization-dismantling-and-disappearance

Brodie, J., & Bakker, I. (2007). *Canada's social policy regime and women: An assessment of the last decade*. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada: Status of Women Canada. Retrieved from http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2007/swc-cfc/SW21-156-2007E.pdf

Brown, W. (2005). Neoliberalism and the end of liberal democracy. In *Edgework: Critical essays on knowledge and politics* (pp. 37-59). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Cain, R., & Todd, S. (2008). Managing funding constraints in frontline HIV/AIDS social services in Canada. *Journal of HIV/AIDS & Social Services*, *7*, 265-287. doi:10.1080/15381500802307518

Castells, M. (2015). *Networks of outrage and hope: Social movements in the Internet age*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley.

Clancy, P. (2015). Nova Scotia: Fiscal crisis and party system transition. In B. M. Evans & C. W. Smith (Eds.), *Transforming provincial politics: The political economy of Canada's province and territories in the neoliberal era* (pp. 77-109). Toronto, Ontario, Canada: University of Toronto Press.

Clark, S. M. (1976). Herself/Elle-même report of the Nova Scotia Task Force on the Status of Women. *Atlantis*, *2*, 121-124.

Clément, D. (2009). *Canada's Rights Revolution: Social movement and social change, 1937-82*. Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada: University of British Columbia Press.

Cohen, M. G. (1992). The Canadian Women's Movement and its efforts to influence the Canadian economy. In C. Backhouse & D. H. Flaherty (Eds.), *Challenging times: The women's movement in Canada and the United States* (pp. 215-224). Montreal, Quebec, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Corrigall-Brown, C. (2016). Funding for social movements. *Sociology Compass*, *10*, 330-339.

Corrigall-Brown, C., & Ho, M. (2013). *How funding matters: An examination of the environmental movement in Canada*. Washington, DC: American Sociological Association.

Department of Finance Canada. (2006). *Archived: Canada's new government cuts wasteful programs, refocuses spending on priorities, achieves major debt reduction as promised*. Retrieved from http://www.fin.gc.ca/n06/06-047-eng.asp

Dobrowolsky, A. (1998). Of "special interest": Interest, identity and feminist constitutional activism in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, *31*, 707-742. doi:10.1017/S0008423900009616

Dobrowolsky, A. (2003). Shifting states: Women's constitutional organizing across time and space. In L. A. Banaszak, K. Beckwith, & D. Rucht (Eds.), *Women's movements facing the reconfigured state* (pp. 114-140). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Dobrowolsky, A., & Jenson, J. (2004). Shifting representations of citizenship: Canadian politics of "women" and "children." *Social Politics*, *11*, 154-180. doi:10.1093/sp/jxh031

Dowie, M. (1996). *Losing ground: American environmentalism at the close of the twentieth century*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia. (2013). *Elizabeth Fry Society Mainland Nova Scotia*. Retrieved from http://nslegislature.ca/pdfs/committees/cs/subm/cs_20130409.pdf

Elson, P. R. (2015). A comparative analysis of nonprofit policy network governance in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Nonprofit and Social Economy Research*, *6*(2), 42-64. doi:10.22230/cjnser.2015v6n2a201

Finance and Treasury Board. (2016). *Public Accounts*. Retrieved from http://www.novascotia.ca/finance/en/home/publications/publicaccounts.aspx

Guildford, J. (2010). Persistence on the periphery: Advisory Councils on the Status of Women in Atlantic Canada to 2000. In J. Guildford & S. Morton (Eds.), *Making up the state: Women in 20th century Atlantic Canada* (pp. 229-246). Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada: Acadiensis Press.

Henriksen, L. S., Smith, S. R., & Zimmer, A. (2009, November). *At the eve of convergence? Social service provision in Denmark, Germany and the United States*. Paper presented at the 38th Annual ARNOVA (Association for Research on Nonprofit and Voluntary Action) Conference. Cleveland, OH, USA. Retrieved from http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.424.667&rep=rep1&type=pdf

Htun, M., & Weldon, S. L. (2012). The civic origins of progressive policy change: Combating violence against women in global perspective, 1975–2005. *American Political Science Review*, *106*, 548-569. doi:10.1017/S0003055412000226

Ilcan, S., & Basok, T. (2004). Community government: Voluntary agencies, social justice, and the responsibilization of citizens. *Citizenship Studies*, *8*, 129-144. doi:10.1080/1362102042000214714

Kome, P. (1983). *The taking of twenty-eight: Women challenge the constitution*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Women's Press.

MacDonald, L., & Sarson, J. (2008). *Nova Scotia Voice of Women: A walk down memory lane*. Retrieved from http://www.nsvow.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/A-Walk-Down-Memory-Lane.pdf

MacDonald, M. (1995). Economic restructuring and gender in Canada: Feminist policy initiatives. *World Development*, *23*, 2005-2017. doi:10.1016/0305-750X(95)00080-V

Masson, D. (1999). Constituting "post-welfare state" arrangements: The Role of women's movement service groups in Québec. *Resources for Feminist Research*, *27*(3/4), 49-69.

Masson, D. (2004). Economic globalization, regionalization and women's movement organizing in Québec. *Canadian Woman Studies*, *23*, 171-174.

Masson, D. (2006). Engaging with the politics of downward rescaling: Representing women in regional development policymaking in Québec (Canada). *GeoJournal*, *65*, 301-313. doi:10.1007/s10708-006-9040-1

Masson, D. (2015). Institutionalization, state funding, and advocacy in the Quebec women's movement. In H. Ramos & K. Rodgers (Eds.), *Protest and politics: The promise of social movement societies*. Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada: University of British Columbia Press.

Mitchell, P. (2015). *About Canada: Women's rights*. Black Point, Nova Scotia, Canada: Fernwood.

Morrow, M., Hankivsky, O., & Varcoe, C. (2004). Women and violence: The effects of dismantling the welfare state. *Critical Social Policy*, *24*, 358-384. doi:10.1177/0261018304044364

Nova Scotia Task Force on the Status of Women. (1976). *Herself/Elle-Même: Report of the Nova Scotia Task Force on the Status of Women*. Retrieved from https://archive.org/details/ERIC_ED136120

Osberg, L., & Sharpe, A. (2008). *Economic security in Nova Scotia*. Retrieved from http://www.gpiatlantic.org/pdf/livstand/econsec.pdf

Pal, L. (1993). *Interests of state: The politics of language, multiculturalism, and feminism in Canada*. Montreal, Quebec, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Parliament of Canada. (2006). *Charitable purpose, advocacy and the Income Tax Act*. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada: Author.

Phillips, S. D., Laforest, R., & Graham, A. (2010). From shopping to social innovation: Getting public financing right in Canada. *Policy and Society*, *29*, 189-199. doi:10.1016/j.polsoc.2010.06.001

Piven, F. F., & Cloward, R. A. (1977). *Poor people's movements: Why they succeed, how they fail*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Ramos, H. (2008). Opportunity for whom? Political opportunity and critical events in Canadian aboriginal mobilization, 1951-2000. *Social Forces*, *87*, 795-823. doi:10.1353/sof.0.0145

Ramos, H., & Rodgers, K. (Eds.). (2015). *Protest and politics: The promise of social movement societies*. Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada: University of British Columbia Press.

Rodgers, K., & Knight, M. (2011). You just felt the collective wind being knocked out of us: The deinstitutionalization of feminism and the survival of women's organizing in Canada. *Women's Studies International Forum*, *34*, 570-581. doi:10.1016/j.wsif.2011.08.004

Roelofs, J. (2003). Social change organizations. In *Foundations and public policy: The mask of pluralism* (pp. 121-156). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Scott, K. (2003). *Funding matters: The impact of Canada's new funding regime on nonprofit and voluntary organizations*. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada: Canadian Council on Social Development.

Sewell, W. H., Jr. (1996). Three temporalities: Toward an eventful sociology. In T. McDonald (Ed.), *The historic turn in the human sciences* (pp. 245-280). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Sewell, W. H., Jr. (2005). *Logics of history: Social theory and social transformation*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Smith, M. (2005). Social movements and judicial empowerment: Courts, public policy, and lesbian and gay organizing in Canada. *Politics & Society*, *33*, 327-353. doi:10.1177/0032329205275193

Smith, M. (2014). *Group politics and social movements in Canada* (2nd ed.) Toronto, Ontario, Canada: University of Toronto Press.

Staggenborg, S. (1993). Critical events and the mobilization of the pro-choice movement. *Research in Political Sociology*, *6*, 319-345.

Staggenborg, S., & Ramos, H. (2016). *Social movements* (3rd ed.). Don Mills, Ontario, Canada: Oxford University Press.

Statistics Canada. (2015). *The International Classification of Non-Profit Organizations*. Retrieved from http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/13-015-x/2009000/sect13-eng.htm

Steuter, E. (1992). Women against feminism: An examination of feminist social movements and anti-feminist countermovements. *Canadian Review of Sociology*, *29*, 288-306. doi:10.1111/j.1755-618X.1992.tb02440.x

Strumm, B. (2015). Women in Harperland: A critical look at gender inequality in Canada since 2006. *Canadian Review of Social Policy*, *71*, 98-110.

Voices-voix. (2016). *Court Challenges Program*. Retrieved from http://voices-voix.ca/en/facts/profile/court-challenges-program

Wood, L. J. (2012). *Direct action, deliberation, and diffusion: Collective action after the WTO protests in Seattle*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Wood, L. J., Staggenborg, S., Stalker, G. J., & Kutz-Flamenbaum, R. (2017). Eventful events: Local outcomes of G20 summit protests in Pittsburgh and Toronto. *Social Movement Studies*, *16*, 595-609. doi:10.1080/14742837.2017.1319266

Author Biographies

Emma Kay is a doctoral student in Sociology at Dalhouise University. She researches issues of women's organizations and state funding.

Howard Ramos is Professor of Sociology at Dalhousie Univeristy. He researches issues of social justice and published on social movements.