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Women's Voluntary Organizations are Different: Their Response to Shifts in Canadian Policy¹

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WOMEN'S VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS ARE DIFFERENT: THEIR RESPONSE TO SHIFTS IN CANADIAN PUBLIC POLICY

Although women make up more than half of Canada's volunteers, and a large number of voluntary organizations are exclusively female, there has been little research focussing on women's voluntary organizations. The purpose of this study is to correct this neglect by surveying 351 women's voluntary organizations (as defined in the Methods section), and comparing them to 294 voluntary organizations that do not fall into the category of women's organizations. Specifically, we investigate the responses of these voluntary organizations to the changes wrought by the neo-conservative political philosophy that has replaced the social democratic liberalism of the post-war era (see McBride and Shields, 1997).

Since the mid-1980s a neo-conservative political philosophy espousing "small government" has been emerging. In accordance with this, the state has been withdrawing from direct service provision. In their belief that social services should be provided by private for-profit or nonprofit organizations, and not by public agencies, federal and provincial authorities have been engaged in downloading responsibilities onto third parties without providing them sufficient resources (Pal, 1997). There was a clear expectation that these organizations must supplement their funding from private sources and user fees. This was happening at a time when the country was enduring a sustained period of high unemployment, growing social polarization and economic structural adjustment associated with globalization and technological change (Johnson, McBride and Smith, 1994), which exacerbated the need for social assistance (Drache and Ranachan, 1995). Expected to pick up the slack even as their budgets were being cut, voluntary organizations in Canada were in turmoil (Scott, 1992).

While all organizations exist in the same political and economic environment, and questions about the impact of the new social and fiscal reality are pertinent to all organizations, there are several reasons why women's organizations may choose different strategies in response to the new situation.

The Uncharted Cohort: Women's Voluntary Organizations

Women's voluntary organizations have long played an important role in women's lives as a window on broader public issues, as a source of skills development and as a vehicle for contributing to society. Until the influx of women into the work force in the latter half of the twentieth century, a woman's domain was almost exclusively in the domestic realm. Voluntary association was one of the few socially sanctioned extra-domestic activities available to women. Thus for many, volunteerism played a liberating role in their lives, giving them their only experience in the public realm (McCarthy, 1990). However, as long as decision making and funding remained in the hands of men, these voluntary activities continued to keep "women in their place." Participation was encouraged, but control was withheld (Kaminer, 1984:11). Frustrated, women began forming their own associations and by the mid-1800s, they were administering organizations in the fields of philanthropy, the arts and sciences, and social reform. This trend has continued into the present century. Despite the growing participation of women in the decision making bodies of large national voluntary organizations, 16% of which have women executive directors (O'Neill, 1994), women still favour joining women's organizations. McPherson and Smith-Lovin (1982, 1986) found that fully half the organizations they studied, were exclusively female as opposed to only 20% that were exclusively male. In a more recent study, Popielarz (1999) found that women are less likely than men to belong to integrated organizations. Sixty seven percent of women volunteers are members of women's organizations. In a sample of 233 voluntary groups, 68% were gender segregated, with women's

organizations outnumbering men's by two to one (Popielarz, 1999). The National Action Committee on the Status of Women reports that it has more than 600 member organizations under its umbrella. This number represents a mere fraction of women's organizations in Canada (NAC, 1996).

The preference by women for participating in women's groups, can be explained in part by the literature investigating voluntary affiliation. The question of why people volunteer has long intrigued researchers. Although "helping others" is the most frequently cited reason given for voluntary affiliation (Duchesne, 1989; Carter, 1975), more probing investigations suggest that altruism represents only a minor factor (Smith, 1982; Gluck, 1975; Lang, 1986). Social catharsis (Langton, 1982), and collective identification for a "good cause" (Kramer, 1981; Duchesne, 1989) are other reasons that have been advanced. Olson (1965) suggests that affiliation can best be explained by the pursuit of tangible rewards offered by the organization to potential members. Knoke (1986) recommends broadening the definition to include both affective incentives (eg. friendship; Flynn and Webb, 1975; Gluck, 1975) and instrumental benefits (eg. acquiring skills; Clark and Wilson, 1961; Flynn and Webb, 1975; Masi, 1981).

This broader "selective incentives" paradigm may be particularly germane in explaining women's affiliation in all female organizations. Although Masi (1981:59) found that women "define voluntarism in terms of selflessness", research suggests that many women in fact use the experience gained from voluntary activity as a stepping stone for acquiring jobs (Masi, 1981; Kaminer, 1984; Flynn and Webb 1975). In addition, involvement in exclusively female organizations provides women with experience in leadership and management (Popielarz, 1999). Such opportunities are seldom available to them in mixed settings, as evidenced by the absence of women in top administrative positions, even in organizations in which they are a majority (Masi, 1981; Kaminer, 1984; Shaiko, 1996; Zane, 1999). A recent study of a cross-section of nonprofit human service organizations confirmed the continued existence of the glass ceiling phenomenon (Gibelman, 2000). Not only do women have the opportunity to fill leadership positions, but they are also not constrained to adopt male, hierarchical, task-oriented leadership styles, as women in mixed settings feel so often forced to do (Eagly, 1987; Kanter, 1977). Thus, they can practice a leadership style more in tune with their natural tendencies to inclusiveness and process orientation.

Recent historical studies point to the importance of women's voluntary organizations not only for women, but also for society as a whole. Whatever societal power women had in the last century, they achieved through participation in these organizations. Women's voluntary organizations gave voice to women's concerns and needs at a time when they were still disenfranchised (O'Neill, 1994). Even after they gained the vote, these groups continued to agitate for societal and legislative changes in women's status. Their impact was not only on the status of women. Women's benevolent societies formed a powerful lobby for social welfare legislation and strongly influenced the creation of the social welfare state (O'Neill, 1994). Women's organizations were both efficient and effective in carrying out their mission (A. Scott, 1990). They laid the foundations of the modern voluntary sector (Lewis, 1994; Odendahl, 1994).

This notwithstanding, women's organizations often find themselves in a more precarious situation vis-a-vis government funding and donations. For these and other reasons, it is hypothesized that women's voluntary organizations will react differently to the environmental changes that are occurring.

- a) Women have special needs which often rank low in the "establishment's" evaluation of what is important (Useem, 1987). An example of this is the difficulty that women's organizations still face in getting appropriate funding for research regarding their specific health concerns (Waserman, 1998).

- b) Women's organizations are more dependent on government funding because they have fewer alternative funding sources available to them (Bradshaw et.al., 1996). Their organizations are perceived to have less prestige (Bradshaw et. al., 1996) and corporations, generally led by men, are not generous in funding women's causes (Useem, 1987). This makes WVOs more vulnerable in times of governmental cutbacks;
- c) Women place higher priority on social issues (Maclean's, September 30, 1996) and a large proportion of their organizations continue to give voice and aid to the marginalised and excluded members of our society: Aboriginal women, women of colour, immigrants and refugees, single mothers and in general, the poor (NAC, 1996).
- d) There is increasing evidence to suggest that women organize differently with different board structures and different *modi operandi*, (Bradshaw et.al., 1996; Foster and Orser, 1994; Odendahl, 1994; Perlmutter, 1994; Schein, 1975). Despite the strong forces of institutionalization to create traditional hierarchical structures (Odendahl and Youmens, 1994), many women's organizations are eschewing this hierarchical model for one that is more inclusive, consensual and empowering (Lot, 1994), thus predisposing them to act similarly in inter-organizational settings.
- e) Women's voluntary organizations are often involved in helping their constituents connect with several different community agencies, thus already engaging in cooperative, inter-organizational frameworks.
- f) Finally, there are the differences in early socialization patterns for males and females: Males are taught to be competitive, hierarchical and independent (Harragan, 1977; Henning and Jardim, 1976; Lever, 1978), whereas females are encouraged to be nurturing and relationship oriented (Cooper, 1992; Grant, 1988; Rosener, 1990; Tannen, 1990). This would carry over to their organizational leadership styles. Research evidence suggests that women are more likely to be democratic, process-oriented, transformational leaders who value interaction and collaboration (Rosener, 1990, 1995; Helgesen, 1990).

The Third Sector In Canada

There are an estimated 200,000 nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations in Canada today that offer a wide array of services to all segments of the population, ranging from food banks, women's shelters, children's aid societies, and immigrant service organizations to environmental protection agencies, opera companies and sporting societies, just to mention a few (Browne, 1996). Approximately 78,000 of them are registered charities (Hall and Banting, 2000). Women's voluntary organizations make up a considerable sub-sample of this sector. Exact numbers are not available but the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) lists more than 600 member organizations under its umbrella which according to NAC represents a mere fraction of women's organizations in Canada (NAC, 1996).

The value of this "third sector" to the Canadian economy and society is becoming ever more evident. Many of the services rendered by third sector organizations cannot be adequately provided directly through the open marketplace or by the state. An estimated 13% of the country's GDP passes through charitable organizations (Stewart, 1996:9) and about 9% of the national labour force is employed in the voluntary/nonprofit sector. Moreover, the sector is growing very quickly. For example, cross-national data indicate that between 1980 and 1990 13% of job growth was accounted for by this sector (Hall and Banting, 2000). The value of donated labour output in the voluntary sector is estimated at 578,000 full

time, full year jobs. This constitutes over one billion hours of labour (Duchesne, 1989). The dollar value of this donated labour time has been conservatively calculated at \$13 billion in 1994 (Day and Devlin, 1996).

Although the earliest recorded voluntary organization dates back to 1685 (Scott, 1992), the sector became an economic force only in the last 35 years, as it grew in tandem with the emerging welfare state forged in Canada following World War II. The voluntary sector reached its peak of growth during the 1970s to the mid 1980s (Tucker, House, Singh and Meinhard, 1984; 1990). In this time, voluntary organizations became part of an elaborate social welfare system, that involved a matrix of programs and services delivered by both the public sector and nonprofit organizations. Thus voluntary organizations became allies of the state, extending specialized services that the government was uninterested in or unable to provide. This collaborative infrastructure provided a munificent and stable environment, encouraging the rapid growth of the sector. By the turn of the century, the pluralistic social welfare liberalism of the post-war era had been replaced by a neo-conservative philosophy which espouses “small government” and competitive market forces, even in the third sector.

Method

Purpose of the Study

Despite their numbers and their unique characteristics, very little research has focused on the concerns and issues of women’s voluntary organizations. This study attempts to rectify years of inattention by comparing women’s voluntary organizations to non-women’s voluntary organizations. The specific question that this paper will answer is whether there are differences between the leaders of women’s voluntary organizations and the leaders of non-women’s voluntary organizations in the way they perceive, interpret, and respond to changes in the environment.

Design

A telephone survey was conducted with the presidents or executive directors of nonprofit organizations located in every province of Canada.

Sample

This study was conducted on a sample of 645 organizations from across all provinces in Canada.

The sample was drawn from three separate population pools:

- Women’s organizations that were affiliated with the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC). NAC is an umbrella organization representing the concerns of women and women’s organizations. NAC espouses a feminist ideology and is deeply concerned with issues of equality and social justice. (In the tables this group is referred to as NAC.)
- Women’s organizations that were not affiliated with NAC. The reason for differentiating between groups of women's organizations is that although NAC is the largest coalition of voluntary organizations in Canada, it does not represent all women's organizations. In fact, some women's organizations are vocal opponents of NAC's advocacy of abortion rights, its anti-war/anti-nuclear stance and its criticism

- of neo-conservative economic policies. (In the tables, this group is referred to as Non-NAC.)
- Organizations that did not fall into the defined category of a women's organization. (In the tables, this group is referred to as Other.)

Sampling targets were 300 women's voluntary organizations, equally divided between NAC organizations and NON-NAC organizations, and 300 non-women's voluntary organizations. To qualify for inclusion in the sample, organizations had to fulfil the definitional requirements of a voluntary organization (Johnson 1981:14): a) that the organization does not owe its existence to statutory authority, but consists of a group of people who have come together voluntarily; b) the organization is self governing and decides its own constitution and policy; and c) the organization is non-profit making.

To be classified as a woman's voluntary organization, the Executive Director of the organization had to be a woman and two thirds of the board members had to be women as well. In surveys of board memberships, men outnumbered women on boards by approximately 55% to 45% (Pynes, 2000; Moyers and Enright, 1997), thus boards with a two thirds majority of women are definitely indicative of a female dominated organization. To further validate our definition of a women's organization, we compared the percentage of female paid staff serving women's organizations with female paid staff in non-women's organizations. 96% of all staff were female in women's organizations as opposed to only 73% in other organizations. A Mann-Whitney U test confirmed the significance of this difference (Mann Whitney U =18242.00, $p < .001$). The 73% female staffing in other organizations in our sample is slightly higher than the 60-70% average reported in other studies (Pynes, 2000; Moyers and Enright, 1997).

The sampling framework was based on a proportional representation of nonprofit organizations from the larger provinces, Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia, and a minimum of at least 25 organizations from the smaller provinces in the Maritimes and the Prairies. Table 1 illustrates the final sampling breakdown according to province and organization type.

In order to control for organizational size and organizational mandate, both of which might have an effect on perceptions of and responses to environmental changes, we tried to ensure that there would be a proper distribution of small, medium and large organizations in each subsample, as well as a proper distribution of social/community service, health and education/advocacy organizations in each subsample.

Size can be measured in several different ways. Kimberly (1976) identified four conceptually independent aspects of organizational size: a) physical capacity, b) personnel available, c) inputs / outputs and d) discretionary resources available. The choice of measurement depends on the objectives of the research. Since this study focuses on organization-environment transactions, resource availability, as measured by annual revenue, was chosen as the criterion for size. The sample was stratified on the basis of what we learned about size distribution in the pilot study (Meinhard and Foster, 1998), by selecting 30% small (less than \$100,000) 50% medium (\$100,000 - \$800,000) and 20% large (more than \$800,000) organizations from each of the population pools. The final distribution is displayed in Table 2. The actual sample didn't quite reach these ideal proportions, however there is good enough distribution of all the sizes in all three subsamples to be able to run statistical controls.

From our pilot study, we found that most women's voluntary organizations fall into one of three basic categories: social services (e.g. Elizabeth Fry Society), health services (e.g. Women's Health Clinic), and a cluster that we label education/advocacy/lobbying (e.g. National Anti-Poverty Organization). Although these often overlap, each organization has a primary mandate in one of these areas. Since the majority of

women's organizations fall into the social services category, 60% of our sample was selected from social service organizations, 20% from health service organizations, and 20% from education/advocacy/lobbying organizations. Table 3 presents the distributions for each of the subsamples. With the exception of NAC organizations, the quotas were reached.

Table 1. Sampling distribution: Organization Type by Province

Province	Organization Type			Total	
	NAC	Non-NAC	Other	N	%
Alberta	8%	7%	7%	45	7%
British Columbia	16%	13%	11%	82	13%
Manitoba	4%	5%	5%	33	5%
New Brunswick	6%	8%	8%	47	7%
New Foundland	4%	4%	4%	25	4%
Nova Scotia	7%	6%	8%	45	7%
Ontario	29%	30%	27%	182	28%
Prince Edward Is	4%	5%	3%	26	4%
Quebec	16%	15%	21%	116	18%
Saskatchewan	7%	7%	7%	44	7%
Total % N	100% 167	100% 184	100% 294	645	100%

Table 2. Sampling Distribution: Organization Type by Size

Size	Organization Type			Total	
	NAC	Non-NAC	Other	N	%
Small (under \$100K)	27%	33%	21%	168	26%
Medium (\$100K - \$799K)	62%	55%	50%	351	54%
Large (more than \$800K)	11%	12%	29%	126	20%
Total %	100%	100%	100%	645	100%
N	167	184	294		

Table 3. Sampling Distribution: Organization Type by Mandate

Mandate	Organization Type			Total	
	NAC	Non-NAC	Other	N	%
Social and Community services	41%	58%	58%	346	54%
Health Services	19%	17%	19%	117	18%
Education/advocacy/l obbying	41%	25%	23%	182	28%
Total %	100%	100%	100%	645	100%
N	167	184	294		

Sampling procedure

Since there is no comprehensive list of nonprofit organizations in Canada, several sources were used as a basis for contact lists:

- NAC membership list for the NAC organizations
- Revenue Canada list of Charitable organizations
- Community Blue books
- Internet listings

Using a table of random numbers, lists of organizations were generated for each province and distributed

to our team of interviewers. Each interviewer called the organizations on their lists. They explained the purpose of the study and asked whether the organization would be interested in participating. If there was interest, the interviewer proceeded to ask a few screening questions to verify whether the organization qualified, according to our definitions and quota requirements of provincial location, organization size and organization mandate. If the organization qualified, the interviewers would set up an interview time and call back at the appointed day and hour to conduct the 45 minute interview.

Sampling proceeded until quotas were reached, or at least approached. With the three different quota requirements, it was hard to match all targets. It took 8 months to complete all interviews. Tables 1 through 3 present our final sample. Though ours is not a true random sample, we feel that we achieved a representative sample, by including such a variety of organizational types.

Questionnaire

A 120 item questionnaire, consisting mostly of 5 item Likert scales, was constructed on the basis of in-depth interviews with 35 Executive Directors of nonprofit organizations (Meinhard and Foster, 1998). These interviews produced rich and varied responses which were used for delineating the key issues facing voluntary organizations and which provided the basis for developing answer categories for the various sections of the questionnaire. The questionnaire contains eight sections:

1. Background information including size of organization, mandate, sources of funding, clientele served and organizational structure.
2. Perceptions of the environment: 7 items describing different aspects of the environment scored on a five-point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”.
3. Changes in cooperative and competitive aspects of the environment: 13 items describing various aspects of competition and collaboration, scored on a nominal scale as increased, decreased or remained the same.
4. Impact of environmental changes on the organization: 9 items describing impacts that environmental changes had on the organization, scored on a five-point scale ranging from “feel not at all” to “feel very strongly”.
5. Organizational changes made in response to the impacts reported: 14 items describing various changes, scored on a five-point scale ranging from “not at all” to “substantially”.
6. Inter-organizational activities (count of all interorganizational activities) and the reasons for engaging in them: 8 items describing various reasons for engaging in inter-organizational behaviour scored on a five-point scale ranging from ‘not very important’ to “very important”.
7. Opinions regarding collaboration and competition: 11 items about different aspects of collaboration and competition scored on a five-point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”.
8. Future outlook: 14 items describing various future scenarios scored on a five-point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”.

In addition, in each section there were opportunities for open-ended responses and elaboration.

Data Collection

A telephone survey was considered to be the best method to collect the data and secure the quotas for the

varied sample. In our pilot study (Meinhard and Foster, 1998), we found that organizational leaders were eager to participate in the research, with three quarters of the women contacted agreeing to be interviewed. This was a much higher response rate than can be achieved by mailed questionnaires.

Nine interviewers were used during the course of the study. Each interviewer underwent a two hour training session. The interviewer would contact prospective interviewees, determine whether the organizations matched the study criteria, and set up an interview time. At the designated time they would contact the respondent and conduct the interview. The response rate using this method was 67%.

Data Analysis

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

Results

Although the sample was divided into three categories, we will report only comparisons between the two major groups: women's voluntary organizations (WVOs) and other (non-women's) voluntary organizations (OVOs). There were often differences between the NAC women's organizations and the non-NAC women's organizations, but in the vast majority of cases, the differences were only in degree, with the non-NAC organizations scoring between the NAC organizations and the OVOs. We present findings both for individual scale items, and for more global indices that were constructed on the basis of variable extractions by factor analysis. All of our analyses comparing women's to non-women's organizations were controlled for size, mandate, and province.

Perceptions of the environment

The first thing that we wanted to ascertain in this study was how voluntary organizations perceived the changes that were taking place in their environment. Women's organizations were significantly more critical of the environmental changes than other organizations on four of the seven statements listed in Table 4. An additive index was constructed from the 7 items, reversing the score where necessary. The range of possible scores was 7 to 35. The higher the score, the more negative the perception. The index midpoint was 21. The overall mean score on the index, 27.2, was well over the scale midpoint, indicating a general dissatisfaction with the changes that were taking place. Women's organizations scored significantly higher on this general index. The differences remained significant when controlling for province, organization size and organization mandate.

Future Outlook

We were not only interested in respondents current perceptions of the environment; we also wanted to know how they viewed the future. Fourteen statements were read to them about the future of the voluntary sector in Canada. Table 5 lists the statements, the mean scores for each statement for the total sample, WVOs and OVOs and the results of the one-way analysis of variance. The items were factor analyzed to give a more comprehensive picture. Five factors were extracted using principle component

analysis with varimax rotation.

Table 4. Perceptions of the Environment: Mean scores for the total population and the two sub-samples

Statements about the environment						
	Total Df	WVO P	Other	F		
a) It is a positive move that the responsibility for the provision of social services is being shifted to the local community level.	2.76	2.55	3	17.3	1624	0
b) The provincial government is not obtaining community support as a necessary condition before implementing a major policy change.	3.89	3.98	3.77	4.8	1620	0
c) In the province, the differences between those who have benefitted from the current economy and those who have not is becoming more marked.	4.46	4.55	4.35	7.7	1629	0
d) The provincial government continues to be committed as it always has been to its role as the major funder of social services.	2.34	2.28	2.42	2	1630	0.16
e) Canada can no longer afford to pay for all the services that have traditionally been part of its “social safety net”.	2.07	1.96	2.21	6.52	1631	0
f) People in the province see voluntary organizations as an essential component of the social safety net.	4.04	4.03	4.05	0.1	1633	0.81
g) Corporations in the province are not making donating to the voluntary sector enough of a priority.	3.97	4.01	3.93	1.01	1620	0.32
INDEX (With items B, C, and F reversed)	27.2	27.8	26.5	18.1	1585	0

The first factor contained four statements expressing the belief that in the future: there will be fewer small organizations (‘h’), the situation for marginalized groups will become worse (i), more organizations will be merging (j), and governments will try to exert more control over the actions and priorities of the voluntary sector (f). Because of the pessimistic nature of these statements, we labeled this factor the pessimism factor. The mean score on this factor (refer to Table 5) was above the scale midpoint of 12, indicating general agreement with this pessimistic outlook.

The second factor that emerged contained three statements expressing the belief that: organizations will take on a more active role on behalf of the sector (g), clients will be more involved in the decision making aspect of the voluntary organizations (m), and voluntary organizations will devote more time towards building a civil society (d). We labeled this factor community activism. The mean score on this factor was above the scale midpoint of 9, indicating general agreement that in the future there will be more community activism.

Table 5. Statements about the Future: Mean scores for the total population and the two sub-samples

Statements About The Future	Total P	WVO	Other	F	Df	
Factor 1. Pessimistic outlook	14.2	14.9	14.0	33.2	1,615	.000
In the future, the government will try to exert more control over the action and priorities of the voluntary sector. (f)*	3.64	3.82	3.43	16.6	1,632	.000
In the future, fewer smaller organizations will exist.(h)	3.26	3.46	3.04	17.0	1,632	.000
In the future, the situation for the marginalized groups in society will only get worse.(i)	3.85	4.05	3.63	25.1	1,636	.000
In the future, more organizations will be merging. (j)	3.44	3.50	3.36	2.82	1,627	.094
Factor 2. Community activism	10.9	11.0	10.9	.875	1,594	.350
In the future, voluntary organizations devote more time and effort toward building a civil society.(d)	3.65	3.65	3.65	.001	1,614	.973
In the future, more voluntary organizations will be taking an active role in political action on behalf of the sector.(g)	3.76	3.85	3.65	6.72	1,631	.010
In the future, clients will be more involved in the decision-making process of voluntary organizations.(m)	3.55	3.52	3.59	.735	1,624	.392
Factor 3. Optimistic outlook	5.89	5.82	5.97	1.17	1,620	.280
As the economy gets better, governments will revert back to their previous levels of support for the voluntary sector.(e)	2.31	2.28	2.33	.359	1,626	.549
In the future, there will be a greater appreciation of the contribution of the voluntary sector in the community.(l)	3.58	3.53	3.64	1.81	1,635	.179
Factor 4. Partnership	7.12	7.04	7.22	2.27	1,626	.132
In the future, more voluntary organizations will be formally working together to strengthen each others’ activities.(b)	3.88	3.40	3.86	.414	1,636	.520
In the future, the corporate sector will become more involved in partnerships with voluntary organizations.(k)	3.24	3.14	3.36	6.85	1,630	.009
Factor 5. Entrepreneurship	9.98	9.90	10.1	.631	1,626	.427
Although traditionally organizations in the voluntary sector have been advocates for the common good, in the future they will have to narrow their focus to concentrate on serving their own members and constituents.(a)	2.81	2.81	2.82	.006	1,632	.939
In the future, voluntary organizations will put more focus on management control, marketing and entrepreneurship(c)	3.68	3.57	3.82	8.86	1,637	.003
In the future, voluntary organizations will have to be involved in commercial ventures that generate profits.(n)	3.48	3.52	3.48	1.05	1,635	.306

* Letters in brackets indicate the original order of the items on the questionnaire.

The third factor that emerged contained two items, the belief that: as the economy gets better, governments will revert back to their previous levels of support (e), and in the future there will be greater appreciation of the voluntary sector (l). We labeled this factor the optimism factor. The mean score on this factor was below the midpoint of 6, indicating general lack of optimism.

The fourth factor expresses the belief that: in the future there will be more organizations working together in the voluntary sector (b) and there will be more partnerships between corporate and nonprofit organizations (k). We called this the partnership factor. The mean score on this factor was above the midpoint of 6, indicating general agreement that there will be more partnerships.

The fifth factor, which we called the entrepreneurial factor has three items which relate to the belief that in the future: more voluntary organizations will be involved in commercial ventures (n), there will be a greater focus on management control, marketing and entrepreneurship (c), and there will be a narrowing of focus towards serving their own constituents (a). The mean score on this factor was above the scale midpoint, indicating general agreement about the move toward entrepreneurial behaviour.

One way analyses of variance were run on each of these indices. Only the pessimism index differentiated between WVOs and OVOs. The executive directors of women's organizations were significantly more pessimistic (see Table 5). When controlled for mandate, size, and province, the difference was sustained.

Impact on the organization of the changes in the environment

From the pilot study (Meinhard and Foster, 1998) it was clear that one of the results of the changes in the environment was increased competition for ever scarcer resources. Eleven areas of competition were identified:

competition for donations from individuals, for donations from corporations, for government grants, for foundation grants, competition from voluntary organizations for contracts, from for-profit organizations for contracts, competition for skilled staff, for skilled board members, for skilled volunteers, for media attention, and for local community support. Respondents were asked, for example, "Compared to two years ago, has the amount of competition you feel with other voluntary organizations for donations increased, decreased or remained the same?" Increased competition was felt in all but four areas: competition with for-profits for service contracts, competition for skilled staff, for skilled board members and for media attention. In only two of these areas was there a significant difference between WVOs and OVOs: WVOs felt more competition recruiting skilled board members and they felt less media competition.

On average, organizations reported an increase in competition in at least 5 of the 11 areas cited. Only 8% of organizations reported no increases at all. So it is fair to say that changes in the environment led to increased competition for the organizations in our sample. An overwhelming majority of organizations (83%) did not report a single area in which competition decreased. On average, organizations reported three areas in which there was "no change" in competition.

Non-women's organizations reported more areas in which they felt an increase in competition than did women's organizations ($F=4.12$; $df=1,643$; $p=.043$). There were no differences with respect to decreased competition or "no change" in competition between. When controlling for province and mandate, the difference between WVOs and OVOs was sustained. However, when controlling for size the difference between WVOs and OVOs was not sustained. Large organizations experienced more competition than small ones.

Other kinds of impacts that the organization may have felt are listed in Table 6. Respondents were asked to indicate how strongly their organizations felt these impacts. From Table 6 we ascertain that the most strongly felt impact of the devolution and funding cuts was an increased demand for services from client groups. This was followed by increased demands for accountability, a recognized need to make better use of staff skills, and an increased sense of vulnerability. Women's organizations were significantly more likely to report an increased demand for services, and an increased sense of vulnerability.

Table 6. Impact of Environmental Changes: Mean scores for the total population and the two sub-samples

As a result of the current environment, does your organization feel.....?	Total WVO	P	Other	F	Df	
a) an increased demand for services from client groups	4.04	4.16	3.89	9.03	1636	0
b) a greater need to address inefficiencies in the organization	3.4	3.34	3.48	1.71	1632	0.19
c) forced to collaborate or amalgamate with other organizations in order to access funds	2.86	3.05	2.65	11.4	1637	0
d) increased demands for accountability and measurable outcomes from funders	3.94	4.01	3.86	1.95	1634	0.16
e) an increased sense of vulnerability	3.55	3.77	3.3	19.8	1641	0
f) the need to cover service areas previously taken care of by other agencies	2.98	3.16	2.75	11.5	1625	0
g) the need to make better use of staff skills	3.77	3.76	3.78	0	1615	0.84
h) that funders do not think the needs of your clients are a priority	2.99	3.17	2.79	10.4	1625	0
i) the need to participate in for profit activities to support nonprofit work	3.14	3.17	3.1	0.36	1627	0.55

Three items were not strongly felt at all: forced collaboration or amalgamation, the need to cover service areas of other organizations, and the feeling that ones clients aren't deemed a priority by funders. Although across the entire sample these items were not salient, all three of them were more strongly felt by women's organizations. In fact, women's organizations scored above the scale midpoint on all of them, whereas non-women's organizations scored below the midpoint.

When controlled for province, size and mandate, all but one of the differences were upheld. The item on forced amalgamation (c) was not sustained when controlled for province.

Organizational changes made in response to the changing environment

Respondents were asked to indicate, on a scale of 1 - 5 from "not at all" to "substantially" whether they had undertaken any strategic or organizational changes in the past two years in response to the environmental changes. Table 7 lists the different organizational actions and mean scores for the two

sub-samples. Significant differences between WVOs and OVOs were found on all but 4 of the 14 individual items.

Table 7. Organizational changes made in response to the impacts: Mean scores for the total population and the two sub-samples

In the past two years have you been or are you currently.....?	Total WVO P	Other	F	Df		
a) reducing the number of full-time staff.	1.97	2.08	1.85	3.96	1611	0
b) reducing or narrowing the services you offer.	1.84	2.01	1.65	14.4	1641	0
c) increasing the time spent on political action.	2.81	3	2.59	13.6	1638	0
d) keeping a low political profile because you fear reprisals from funders.	1.81	1.86	1.76	1.24	1626	0.27
e) increasing your focus on marketing activities and public relations.	3.74	3.66	3.83	3.13	1641	0.1
f) working more closely with corporations and other private sector organizations	2.76	2.57	2.98	15.7	1639	0
g) actively seeking board members who have specific business skills	3.23	3.08	3.41	8.08	1628	0
h) reassessing criteria for staff hires.	2.67	2.6	2.75	1.76	1604	0.19
i) diversifying your funding sources.	3.56	3.43	3.71	7.25	1635	0
j) putting more emphasis on volunteer recruitment.	3.09	3.05	3.13	0.52	1638	0.47
k) working more closely with other organizations.	3.65	3.8	3.47	12.5	1640	0
l) putting greater emphasis on performance evaluations	2.97	2.92	3.02	0.9	1626	0.34
m) increasing the number of full-time staff	1.84	1.56	2.17	3.91	1610	0
n) engaging in for profit commercial ventures	2.03	1.9	2.17	6.6	1631	0
Factor 1. Strategic staffing issues	12.5	12.4	12.5	0	1594	0.87
Factor 2. Downsizing	7.98	8.53	7.32	27.4	1602	0
Factor 3. Business orientation	9.7	9.28	10.2	14.9	1625	0
Factor 4. Revenue strategies	5.59	5.34	5.88	10.8	1626	0

Factor analysis, using principle component analysis and varimax rotation converged in eight iterations to reveal four factors. The first factor relates to what we called strategic staffing issues: reassessing hiring criteria (h), putting greater emphasis on performance evaluations (j), putting more emphasis on volunteer recruitment (l) and working more closely with other organizations (k). The mean score on the index was slightly higher than the scale midpoint indicating that these were strategies engaged in by organizations at least to some extent.

The second factor, which we called downsizing, includes three variables: reducing full time staff (a), reducing services (b) and not increasing full time staff (m)¹. The mean score on the index was lower than the scale midpoint, indicating that downsizing wasn't an option engaged by most organizations.

The third factor relates to business orientation and is comprised of the variables: increasing focus on marketing(e), working more closely with private sector organizations (f) and seeking board members with business skills (g). The mean score on this index was slightly above the scale midpoint, indicating that organizations are to some extent engaging in more business-like behaviour.

The last factor, which we called the revenue strategies includes two variables: engaging in commercial ventures (n) and diversifying funding sources (i). The mean score on this index is below the scale midpoint, mostly because organizations are not engaging in commercial ventures, although they are diversifying funding sources.

Women's organizations were significantly more likely to downsize and significantly less likely to have a business orientation or engage in new revenue strategies.

The effects of organization type were controlled by province, size and mandate for the three significant indices. The differences between WVOs and OVOs were sustained for all three indices over all the controlling variables.

Interorganizational relations

Respondents were asked a series of questions about interorganizational relationships ranging from occasional discussions to regular meetings, to membership in an umbrella organization to participation in a network to short term coalitions to long term joint ventures to mergers. A count was taken of all the different kind of inter-organizational activities engaged in by each organization. Women's organizations reported a significantly higher number of interorganizational relationships than other organizations ($F=6.85$; $df=1.639$; $p=.009$). However the null hypothesis assuming homogeneity of variance was rejected using the Levene statistic. Subsequent Chi Square and Mann Whitney U analyses confirmed the significant difference in inter-organizational relationships between WVOs and OVOs. ($\chi^2 = 12.62$, $df=6$, $p=.049$; Mann Whitney $U=44917.50$, $p=.007$). The relationship is sustained when controlling for size, mandate and province.

We were interested in learning what motivates organizations to seek collaborations and partnerships. Out of a list of eight items presented to the respondents, the 3 key motivating factors were: gaining attention for causes through strength in numbers, achieving greater community involvement and providing more integrated services. The two items ranked lowest as motives for collaboration were: becoming more independent from the government and satisfying government requirements for funding. There was agreement in the ranking of the first three statements, between WVOs and OVOs. Non-women's organizations ranked reducing operating costs fourth, whereas women's organizations ranked keeping all organizations solvent as fourth. Table 8 presents the list of factors and their rankings.

¹ Item was reversed

Table 8. Reasons for Collaboration: Ranking of variables

How important a motivator is_____	Rank Order		
	Total WVO	Other	
a) achieving greater community involvement.	2	2	2
b) reducing current operating costs.	5	6	4
c) providing more integrated services.	3	3	3
d) satisfying government requirements for funding.	7	7	6
e) keeping all the organizations providing similar services alive and solvent.	4	4	5
f) drawing more attention to an issue or problem through strength in numbers	1	1	1
g) sharing the risk when starting a new program or project.	6	5	7
h) becoming more independent from the government.	8	8	8

What did the respondents actually think about different aspects of collaboration? In order to find out, we asked respondents to rate, a five point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, series of 11 statements about various aspects of collaboration. The list of the statements, with the mean scores of the two subgroups, is presented in Table 9. On 4 of the 11 statements WVOs scored significantly higher. On two of the statements, which related to some beneficial effects of competition, they scored significantly lower. Factor analysis was used to find underlying commonalities among the various items. Principal component analysis using varimax rotation converged after six iterations. Four factors were identified.

The first factor, comprised of 2 items, was labeled predisposing conditions for collaboration. The two items are: collaborative arrangements are less appealing to organizations when times are good (h) and collaborative enterprises are less important for organizations that are financially independent (i). The mean score on this index was slightly above the scale midpoint of six, indicating general agreement. There was no significant difference between WVOs and OVOs on this factor.

The second factor was comprised of three items. The perception that: it is easier to collaborate with a women's run organization (a), organizations with a collective structure are easier to partner with (f) and large organizations use partnerships to build empires (g). We called this factor women's bias because all of these statements relate to women's perceptions of the world. As is to be expected, there was a significant difference between WVOs and OVOs on this factor. Women's organizations scored above the scale midpoint on this factor, indicating general agreement with the statements and the other organizations scored below the scale midpoint of 9 indicating that they were in general disagreement with these statements. WVOs tended to be in agreement on the first two items of this factor. The OVOs were in disagreement with all three of the items. The difference was sustained when controlling for province, size and mandate.

The third factor which we labeled collaborative complementarity, is comprised of three items important for

successful collaboration: shared purpose (b), common values(d) and complimentary skills (c). The mean score on this index was well above the scale midpoint of 9 indicating that organizations agree that the three items in this index indicating complementarity, are very important for successful collaboration. Notwithstanding the high overall mean, women's organizations scored even higher. But this difference was not sustained when controlling for size.

Table 9. Interorganizational Relations: Mean scores for the total population and the two sub-samples

Statements About How Organizations Relate to Each Other	Total WVO	P	Other	F	Df	
a) It is easier to collaborate with an organization mostly run by women, because hierarchy and control are less important to women than to men.	2.69	3.02	2.27	53.1	1624	0
b) The most important ingredient in a successful collaboration is shared purpose.	4.54	4.61	4.45	6.75	1642	0
c) Large organizations can collaborate well with small organizations because they have complementary skills.	3.23	3.28	3.18	1.2	1633	0.27
d) As long as collaborating organizations share common values, it is easy to compromise on the means to reaching the desired ends.	3.63	3.66	3.58	0.76	1623	0.38
e) Small organizations do not like collaborating with large organizations because they fear amalgamation.	2.82	2.76	2.9	1.81	1619	0.18
f) Organizations who have a collective structure are better partners than those with a hierarchical structure.	3.05	3.2	2.88	9.87	1612	0
g) Partnerships are a way for large organizations to build empires.	2.69	2.82	2.55	6.95	1627	0
h) Collaborative arrangements are less appealing to organizations when times are good.	3.28	3.32	3.23	0.95	1634	0.33
i) Collaborative enterprises are less important for organizations that are financially independent.	3.36	3.39	3.33	0.33	1627	0.57
j) To survive in this climate, organizations must look for a competitive edge.	3.6	3.52	3.7	3.16	1636	0.1
k) Having to compete for scarce resources can have a positive influence on an organization.	3.02	2.7	3.39	75	1636	0
Factor 1: Predisposing Conditions for Collaboration	6.64	6.72	6.55	0.96	1624	0.33
Factor 2: Women's Bias	8.47	9.06	7.75	34.1	1583	0
Factor 3: Collaborative Complementarity	11.4	11.5	11.2	3.7	1630	0.1
Factor 4: Competition	6.63	6.23	7.11	30.6	1622	0

The fourth factor relates to competition. The items express the belief that: competition can have a positive

impact(k) and organizations should seek a competitive edge (j). Although both WVOs and OVOs were in agreement with the statements, as indicated by means scores above the scale midpoint of 6, women's organizations scored significantly lower on this factor. They were in clear disagreement with the first of the two items - the idea that competition can have a positive impact. It should be pointed out that OVOs, on the other hand, agreed with the statement. The difference between WVOs and OVOs was sustained when controlling for province, size and mandate.

Discussion and Conclusions

From the results it is clear that all organizations in our sample were unhappy with the changes that were taking place in the environment. Although there was fluctuation among the different provinces, voluntary organizations in all provinces were critical of the devolution of social services and were pessimistic about the future of the sector. Women's organizations were more critical of both the devolution of services and the way in which it was implemented. They were also more sensitive to the growing gap between the haves and have-nots in society, and were more adamant than others in their beliefs that Canada can afford to continue paying for the social safety net. Women's organizations were also significantly more pessimistic than other organizations.

It is not surprising that women's organizations are more critical of the current fiscal and political environmental. Throughout history, women's organizations have been the venues through which women have agitated for changes affecting their lives and for the improvement of society as a whole. Women were motivated to join voluntary organizations not simply to function as a marginal force in society desirous of advancing the cause of their constituents, but also to be an integral contributor to community values and the common good. Women's benevolent societies formed a powerful lobby for social welfare legislation and strongly influenced the creation of the social welfare state (O'Neill, 1994). Any policies which would jeopardize these hard-fought achievements would be viewed negatively. In addition, women's organizations find themselves in a more precarious funding situation because they are more dependent on the government for their financial well-being (Bradshaw, et. al., 1996). Therefore any changes in government policies that would affect funding would be seen as threatening to their organizations. Little wonder that women's organizations were more likely to report that they felt vulnerable and fearful for their survival because of possible forced amalgamations with other organizations.

One of the results of the environmental changes that voluntary organizations were so unhappy about was an increase in competition, an increased demand for services from client groups, an increased demand for accountability by funders, an increased sense of vulnerability, and an increased need to make better use of staff skills and to improve organizational inefficiencies. Women's organizations were significantly more likely to experience an increased demand for services. They were also more likely to complain that funders did not view their clients' needs as a priority. This supports previous findings by Bradshaw and her colleagues (1996) and Useem (1987) that women's causes do not have high prestige when corporate funders are making decisions about supporting charitable endeavors.

The voluntary organizations in our sample used various strategies to cope with the changes that were occurring in the environment. These included: engaging in strategic staffing by reassessing hiring criteria, improving performance evaluations, and emphasizing volunteer recruitment; adopting new revenue strategies that include commercialization and diversifying funding sources; and engaging in more business oriented behaviours such as marketing, developing closer ties with private sector organizations, and seeking board members with business skills. This finding is supported by similar results that we obtained from a different sample of voluntary organizations (Foster and Meinhard, 1996). Unlike the for-profit sector, which freely resorted to organizational down-sizing in response to an adversely changing environment, very few non-profit organizations engaged in this as a strategic response. Even though this was not a preferred strategy, women's organizations, however, were more likely to downsize than other organizations. Consistent with findings from other researchers (Bradshaw, 1996; Useem, 1987), our own funding data indicate that women's organizations have fewer alternate sources of funding (as reported in Foster and Meinhard, 2000). They are thus more dependent on government funding for their survival. Therefore, in the absence of alternative sources to substitute for lost government funds, it is not surprising that women's organizations would be forced to engage in down-sizing.

Whereas non-women's organizations were more focused on business approaches and revenue development, women's organizations were more intent on fostering collaboration with other organizations. In keeping with their greater focus on collaboration, women's organizations participated in a significantly higher number of inter-organizational relationships (ranging from informal discussions to joint ventures) than did non-women's organizations. This having been said, collaboration was a strategic choice of non-women's organizations as well, even if not to the same extent. It seems as if, along with the adoption of business strategies, voluntary organizations in Canada are also exploring the advantages of collaboration and partnerships.

In this age of instant communication, enhanced information exchange and increased job mobility, the old organizational model of erecting impermeable barriers to protect the organization from the vicissitudes of environmental change is no longer viable. An increasing number of organizational researchers are advocating the importance of opening up organizations to new ideas by creating permeable boundaries to allow an increased flow of inter-organizational communications. (Wheatley, 1992; Kantor, 1994). As a matter of fact, collaboration may even provide the organization with a competitive edge. "The ability to create and sustain fruitful collaborations gives companies a significant competitive leg up" (Kantor, 1994: 96).

This trend towards collaboration, coupled with the new federal government initiatives for strengthening the third sector by creating a web of interlocking networks (Seidle, 1995), is perhaps indicative of a movement towards the communitarian model, as Scott (1992) postulated. And it seems, from the findings of our survey, that women's organizations are in the forefront. Rosener (1995), whose research indicates women practice a more collaborative approach to leadership, claims that America's competitive secret lies in hiring more women to lead organizations in fostering collaborative relationships.

In conclusion, the findings from this survey paint a portrait of a sector that is unhappy with current policies, pessimistic about the future, and contending with increased competition for ever scarcer resources and increased demands by clients and funders alike. It finds itself turning to more business-like strategies while at the same time recognizing the importance of collaboration. The data substantiate the powerful impact of the corporate imperative that dominates current political and economic philosophy, but they also lend support to the contention that a communitarian model may be emerging in which women's voluntary organizations are taking the lead role. This is very much in accordance with their past history and their

natural inclinations as women. These findings point out that women's organizations have different concerns and behave in different ways. They also support the evidence in the literature that suggests that women's organizations would seek solutions that were in greater accordance with a collaborative model than with a competitive one. Therefore it is not valid to make generalizations from the voluntary sector as a whole to women's voluntary organizations; they must be studied in their own right.

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