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A Mixed Record: Gender and Saskatchewan Social Democracy

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By examining the case of Saskatchewan, this article contributes to the debate over whether social democratic governments increase women's representation in legislatures and enact policies that are favourable to women. Despite initial openness to women's concerns in early agrarian protest organizations, Saskatchewan social democracy has never moved past liberal feminist ideology. All three Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and New Democratic Party (NDP) governments in Saskatchewan, however, had better records on women's issues than the Liberal and Progressive Conservative governments that preceded them, who eschewed any form of feminist thinking and did little to address women's issues. Women's participation within the provincial economy, the militancy of women within social democratic organizations and non-partisan women's organizations, the perseverance of patriarchal political culture, and the persistence of male-dominated political institutions are critical factors in explaining the evolution of the relationship between gender and social democracy in Saskatchewan.

En examinant le cas de la Saskatchewan, cet article aborde le débat suivant : les gouvernements sociaux-démocrates contribuent-ils à augmenter la représentation des femmes dans les assemblées législatives et à édicter des politiques qui sont avantageuses pour les femmes? En dépit de l'ouverture initiale aux problèmes des femmes au sein des premiers mouvements de protestation agricole, la social-démocratie de la Saskatchewan n'est jamais allée au-delà de l'idéologie féministe libérale. Toutefois, les gouvernements de la Fédération du Commonwealth coopératif (CCF) et du Nouveau Parti démocratique (NDP) de la Saskatchewan avaient de meilleurs résultats sur les questions féminines que les gouvernements libéral et progressiste conservateur qui les ont précédés, qui fuyaient toutes les formes de pensée féministe et qui ont fait peu pour aborder les questions féminines. On soutient que la participation des femmes à l'économie provinciale, le militantisme des femmes au sein d'organisations socio-démocrates et d'organisations féminines neutres, la persévérance de la culture politique patriarcale et la persistance d'institutions politiques à dominance masculine sont des facteurs critiques lorsqu'il s'agit d'expliquer l'évolution de la relation entre les sexes et la social-démocratie en Saskatchewan.

During the 1980s, European scholars argued that, compared to those led by non-social democratic parties, governments controlled by social democratic parties improved women's representation in legislatures and produced policy outcomes that were friendly to women (Lovenduski 1986; Katzenstein and Mueller 1987). Similarly, in Canada, research has emphasized the positive effects that New Democratic Party (NDP) governments have had on increasing women's representation in provincial legislatures and adopting women-friendly policies (Arscott and Trimble 1997, 7-14; Matland and Studlar 1998). More recently, researchers have been critical of the reforms introduced by Third Way social democratic parties in both Canada and Europe, and have argued that they have not significantly improved the position of women compared to the policies of previous neo-conservative governments (McRobbie 2000; Bashevkin 2002; Ward 2002; Teghtsoonian 2003; Grace 2005). Only Cheryl Collier, in her examination of child care and anti-violence-against-women policies in Ontario and British Columbia, has contended that NDP provincial governments have enacted more progressive policies towards women than non-NDP government during the 1990s (Collier 2006).

This article seeks to contribute to the debate over whether social democratic governments enact policies that are favourable to women and increase women's representation in legislatures by examining the case of Saskatchewan, which is the province with the longest history of social democratic government in Canada. The scholarly work done on women and the Saskatchewan Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and Saskatchewan NDP has either focussed on the paucity of CCF-NDP women candidates in Saskatchewan provincial elections and the subordination of women within CCF-NDP party structures, or has painted a sympathetic portrait of the policy victories achieved by female CCF-NDP members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) (Taylor 1985, 1986, 1987; Sangster 1989, Carbert 1997; Fenwick 2002). The overarching weakness of existing literature on women and the Saskatchewan CCF-NDP is that there has been no systematic attempt to evaluate the place of gender and women's activism within the entire Saskatchewan social democratic tradition of the twentieth century. Further, there has been little attempt to evaluate the Romanow government's policies towards women in the context of Third Way social democratic governance.

This article seeks to correct these deficiencies by dividing the history of women and Saskatchewan social democracy into four distinct periods: agrarian protest movements from 1900 to 1933, the CCF from 1933 to 1964, the NDP from 1964 to 1982, and the NDP from 1982 to 2000. I argue that explanations regarding the

relationship between gender and social democracy within Saskatchewan throughout these four historical periods, should concentrate on the interlocking factors of women's participation within the provincial economy, the ideas and militancy of women within social democratic organizations and non-partisan women's organizations, the persistence of male-dominated political institutions, and the perseverance of a patriarchal political culture that sees women as subjects occupying traditional roles of mother and wife and that discourages women's participation in the political sphere. The patriarchal nature of the political culture of Saskatchewan can be evaluated by examining the ideas of dominant political parties or political groups concerning women, the number of women elected, the strength of women's groups, and the timid or radical nature of the ideas of women's groups.

Further, I contend that, while CCF-NDP governments in Saskatchewan have been more progressive on women's issues than non-NDP governments within the province, they have been firmly wedded to liberal feminism in their ideas and action. The term liberal feminism can be applied to a large swath of feminist thinkers from Mary Wollstonecraft and John Stuart Mill to Betty Friedan and Naomi Wolf.¹ Despite the intellectual diversity within liberal feminism, a number of key characteristics of liberal feminist ideology can be discerned. Liberal feminism asserts that women are "as good as men," are entitled to the same rights as men, and should be given the opportunity to explore their full potential in equal competition with men (Bryson 2003, 139). In particular, liberal feminism stresses legal equality as opposed to substantive equality. Legal equality requires the state to treat all citizens the same whereas substantive equality denotes that citizens may be treated differently when appropriate to ensure that all enjoy equal results from their citizenship (Vickers 1997, 85-87). Therefore, liberal feminism is interested in expanding women's legal rights and providing women with educational opportunities to allow them to participate fully in the labour market. Liberal feminism's main idea is to treat women the same as men so that both sexes are playing on a level field (Tong 1998, 10-35). Liberal feminism generally shies away from more socialist or radical feminist proposals that recognize that men and women must be treated differently at times to ensure equality; these proposals include mandatory affirmative action programs with firm quotas, the guarantee of a certain number of seats for women in the legislature, wide-reaching pay-equity laws, liberalized access to abortion, and free daycare to allow women to have families while fully participating in the workforce.

Women and Saskatchewan Agrarian Protest Movements (1900-1933)

The Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association (SGGA) was the province's largest agrarian organization at the turn of the twentieth century, and it promoted such social democratic policies as nationalization, graduated taxation, and a rudimentary welfare state (Knuttila 1994). The SGGA's newspaper started a women's section in 1910, and the SGGA passed a resolution calling for the enfranchisement of women in 1912. In 1913, a female section of the SGGA was formed under the name of Saskatchewan Women's Grain Growers' Association (SWGGA). The SWGGA adopted a platform that called for prohibition, suffrage, improvement of rural education, and the establishment of social centres for farm women and youth (SWGGA 1914). While the creation of the SWGGA represented a consciousness of women's issues within the SGGA, women never formed more than 10% of the delegates to SGGA conventions, rarely held leadership positions, and were expected to clean and cook for the men's meetings.

In the early 1920s, the SGGA was supplanted by the United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan Section) or the UFC(SS). Like the SGGA, the UFC(SS) constitution created a women's section called the United Farm Women of Saskatchewan (UFWS) and specified that every local of the UFC(SS) had to have at least five women and that women were to have seats on the executive and board of directors of the central organization. The UFWS adopted the social democratic positions of the UFC (SS), such as advocating co-operatives and the nationalization of natural resources and public utilities. In contrast to the exclusive economic focus of the men in the UFC(SS), however, the UFWS called for health and education policies, such as free inoculation against contagious diseases, regular visits to schools by nurses, better training for school teachers, and the establishment of scholarships for farm youth to go to university. The UFWS also argued for improved property rights for married women and encouraged farm women to "regard the profession of mother and homemaker as the greatest in the world" (Jahn 1994, 198). Upon producing a study illustrating the overwork of farm women, the UFWS pointed out that, while new farm machinery was regularly bought to make men's jobs easier, the purchase of labour-saving devices for women in the household was not a priority.

In summary, we can see the confluence of social democracy and feminism within these women's agrarian organizations as they promoted co-operatives, the welfare state, and nationalization alongside their advocacy of women's rights. These early women's organizations espoused what could be termed "maternal feminism," which promoted women's traditional roles as mothers and homemakers and held that women's special experience in these roles necessitated that

they participate in politics to counterbalance male perspectives and bring about meaningful reforms to society (Andrew 2004, 96-102). These maternal feminists wanted to fulfill their roles as mothers and homemakers on the family farm in an equitable partnership with their husbands. Such an equitable partnership would start off with equal property and inheritance rights for women and with female suffrage. Suffrage would give women influence in the affairs of their community, and property and inheritance rights would provide women with some control over the farm that they had worked so hard to build and make successful.

Traditional accounts of Saskatchewan history often ignore the fact that the success of settlers' homesteads was heavily dependent upon the labour of women. As the wives of farmers, women's duties included cleaning, hauling water, gathering firewood, making clothes, preparing meals, tending to family food sources such as gardens, poultry, and livestock, assisting their husbands with the production of market crops as was necessary, and generating additional income through the sale of handicrafts and produce (Rollings-Magnusson 2000). Given the importance of women to farm operations, it is no surprise that early Saskatchewan farmer organizations displayed openness to women's participation and concern for women's issues; however, as we have seen, women were given little power within the agrarian protest movement. Further, the small number of women elected to leadership positions in agrarian movements or to the provincial legislature during this time period underlines the fundamentally patriarchal nature of the political culture of the young province of Saskatchewan. The maternal feminism of the province's early agrarian women's groups, which did not question the assumption that women should be confined to their roles as homemakers and wives, also illustrates the strength of Saskatchewan's patriarchal political culture during this time period.

Women and the Saskatchewan CCF (1933-1964)

In 1932, the UFC(SS) joined with the Independent Labour Party of Saskatchewan to form a political party that became the Saskatchewan section of the CCF. The Saskatchewan CCF platform for the 1934 provincial election demanded "equal pay for equal work irrespective of sex" (Farmer-Labor Group 1934, 2). This demand was mysteriously dropped from the Saskatchewan CCF platforms for the 1938 and 1944 provincial elections, however, and these platforms made no mention of women or women's issues. Instead, in the 1944 provincial campaign, the CCF stressed traditional family values and appealed to women in their role as mothers, promising that a CCF victory would mean employment for their husbands, education for their children, and medical care for their families (Sangster 1989, 99).

Unlike other provincial sections of the CCF and the agrarian movements out of which it grew, the Saskatchewan CCF did not have a women's section. Instead, it set up women's clubs at the local level that had no voting rights or delegate status for conventions. These clubs cooked and cleaned for meetings, performed secretarial work, went door to door at election time, and raised funds through bake sales, fowl suppers, and sock knitting. In the era before tax exemptions for political donations and in a party with no corporate financing, the voluntary organizational and fundraising activities of women were essential for the election of male CCF candidates in Saskatchewan.

In contrast to women's important organizational roles within the party, the Saskatchewan CCF presented only three women candidates during its time in power: Beatrice Trew ran twice, Marjorie Cooper ran four times, and Gladys Strum ran three times. Cooper won in each of her four attempts starting in 1952, and Strum joined her in the legislature for one term from 1960 to 1964. Both Cooper and Strum ran in the multiple-member ridings of Regina and Saskatoon, where the party had to select three candidates, making it easier for them to win the nomination and allowing CCF voters to vote for two men and a woman. Due to the gendered nature of secretarial work, Cooper was asked to serve as caucus secretary. Although she refused that assignment, she remained a maternal feminist who believed that women should contribute to society through their traditional roles as mothers and homemakers, and she did not criticize women's position in the party or the CCF government's inactivity on women's issues (Fenwick 2002). While Strum was a maternal feminist like Cooper, she was more outspoken than Cooper in her denunciation of women's subordinate position within the CCF; she lobbied for the appointment of a female cabinet minister. She was marginalized effectively within the CCF caucus, however, during her four years in the legislature (Taylor 1986).

The limited power of women within the Saskatchewan CCF was reflected in the CCF government's lack of awareness concerning women's issues during its time in power from 1944 to 1964. Throughout this time period, Saskatchewan CCF platforms during provincial elections never mentioned women. The CCF's 1947 Bill of Rights did not contain protection from discrimination based on sex although this was added a couple of years later at the behest of women in the party (Patrias 2006, 280-81). Moreover, during its first term of the government, the CCF passed legislation prohibiting married women from being hired by the Saskatchewan government in order to provide more employment for returning veterans; this legislation was also eliminated a couple of years later in response to women's opposition to it in the party. Besides increasing allowances for destitute mothers, the only real advances that 20 years of CCF government brought for

women was the passing of legislation securing "equal pay for equal work irrespective of sex" for women working in the civil service, and allowing women to drink in bars. It should be noted, however, that the moderate progress made by the CCF on women's issues was better than the record of the preceding provincial Liberal government in Saskatchewan from 1934 to 1944, which had completely ignored women's issues and not elected a single woman (Smith 1975).

It is clear that the overarching characteristic of the CCF's policies towards women, such as protection from discrimination, equal pay for equal work in the civil service, and legal access to alcohol in bars for women, was that these policies were based on the liberal feminist notion of formal equality where the state treats all of its citizens exactly the same. Several factors explain why the CCF took this approach to women's issues. As Saskatchewan came out of the Depression, the wheat economy began to improve because of the demand for grain generated by the Second World War. Related to this newfound prosperity was the appearance of labour-saving devices within Saskatchewan farm homes, such as running water, electric stoves, washing machines, and refrigerators, whose use was made possible by the CCF government's rural electrification and plumbing programs. These modern household appliances made women's lives easier on the province's farms, which made women's agrarian organizations less militant and farm women more content. Additionally, unlike other Canadian provinces, Saskatchewan women did not find increased employment during the Second World War because wartime factories were not located in the province and farmers were generally exempted from conscription. Accordingly, Saskatchewan women were slow to enter the workforce in the 1950s, and those who did work were generally concentrated in the traditional female profession of teaching as the postwar baby-boom created a large demand for teachers.

There was no intense pressure on the CCF government from Saskatchewan's women's groups to move forward on women's issues. During the CCF's time in power, Saskatchewan women's groups such as the YWCA and Homemakers' Clubs concentrated on community theatre, craft making, aid to British war victims, and development projects in the Third World instead of lobbying the provincial CCF government on women's issues (Saskatchewan Women's Institute 1988, 23-60). Further, as the example of Marjorie Cooper illustrates, most women in the CCF continued to subscribe to a maternal feminism inherited from agrarian protest movements, which did not strenuously question established gender roles within society or the party. None the less, Strum's assertiveness demonstrates that there were some CCF women who espoused a more aggressive form of maternal feminism that opposed the marginalization of women within the party. On the whole, however, the CCF era seemed to be a quiet one for women in Saskatchewan as

an emphasis on home, family, and traditional gender roles permeated the social, political, and economic atmosphere of the province (Leger-Anderson 2005, 1033-35). Indeed, the small number of women elected to the provincial legislature during this time period, as well as political parties' and women's groups' traditional ideas concerning women, illustrate that the patriarchal political culture of Saskatchewan was not fundamentally altered by the election of the CCF or its 20 years of government. Upon achieving power in 1944, the CCF, which was already a male-dominated institution, entered into the male-dominated institutions of the Saskatchewan state. The dominance of males within both the CCF party organization and state institutions controlled by the party while it was in government did not create an atmosphere congenial to the advancement of women's issues.

Women and the Saskatchewan NDP (1964 to 1982)

In 1965, the wives of two MLAs created a women's committee within the Saskatchewan NDP. The provincial executive appointed members of the women's committee, and it reported directly to the provincial executive. The activities of the women's committee included selling a centennial cookbook, holding annual women's conferences, and keeping track of food prices to allow NDP members of Parliament to critique the federal government on how inflation was hurting Canadian families. Women's role as mother/homemaker was continually stressed within the committee. At its first conference, there was a panel that was entitled "How to Develop Political Awareness in Our Teenagers," and at the second conference, the Saskatchewan NDP leader spoke to the women about the need for better consumer protection to shield families from undue hardship.

The federal government's Royal Commission on the Status of Women in 1968 was an important event for women's groups in Saskatchewan. The province contributed 32 official briefs to the commission. These briefs voiced concerns such as the poverty of single mothers, the marginalization of First Nations women, the lack of child care, the need for homemaker salaries, and the improvement of women's property rights (Norman 1997). Women's role as mothers was at the forefront of the submission that the NDP Women's Committee submitted to the commission (1968). The comprehensive document expressed the opinion that it is desirable for mothers to stay home to raise their children but recognized that a number of circumstances could arise that make this impossible. Thus, it argued that welfare allowances should be raised to "a sum adequate to maintain mother and children at home," and part-time work should be promoted for women with children. The submission advocated changes in legislation to improve women's

right to their husband's property upon his death, give women half ownership of their home regardless of whether or not they had made cash payments towards it, and expand the grounds of divorce to include "general marriage breakdown." It called for adequate sex education in school, birth control to be available to all women, and abortions only in cases of "rape, damaged fetus, and danger to the physical or mental health of the mother." The submission concluded by expressing the maternal feminist idea that women's special experience as mothers necessitates that, they participate in politics to counterbalance male perspectives. It stated that due to their role as mothers, women are "more interested in welfare, health and family matters in general. By lack of female representation in legislatures, on hospital boards, and city councils, these matters sometimes get less attention than they need." The NDP Women's Committee succeeded in getting Pemrose Whelan elected as a vice-president of the party, and the NDP unsuccessfully ran two women candidates in difficult-to-win ridings in the 1967 provincial election. The activity of the NDP women's committee did not, however, provoke the inclusion of women's issues within the 1967 provincial election platform, nor were women's issues included in the speeches of Woodrow Lloyd during his time as leader (Quiring 2004, 16-17).

A Saskatchewan Waffle section was founded in 1970, and it brought the American New Left's concern with women's liberation into the Saskatchewan NDP. The Saskatchewan Waffle manifesto critiqued the NDP for marginalizing women within party structures and argued that women were discriminated against, that they were treated as second-class citizens, and that their labour within the home was not paid or even recognized. As such, the Saskatchewan Waffle proposed to eliminate "all sexual discrimination in society" (1970, 6) through equal pay for equal work legislation, provision of free birth control and abortions, establishment of universal, public, and free daycare, and "recognizing the productive labour done in the home with a living wage" (1970, 6).

While the Waffle's candidate was defeated for the party's leadership, the Saskatchewan NDP 1971 election platform entitled a *New Deal for People* was none the less influenced by Waffle ideas. For instance, the platform contained a section on human rights that promised to enact a new Human Rights Code to "extend fair employment practices to prohibit discrimination because of sex, and to guarantee employed women a leave of absence for pregnancy" (NDP 1971, 20). This sentence on women was the first movement forward on women's issues in the CCF-NDP since the Douglas government inserted discrimination on the basis of sex into the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code and passed legislation guaranteeing equal pay for equal work for those working in the provincial government in the early 1950s. During the 1971 provincial election campaign, the NDP's new

leader, Allan Blakeney, recognized that women do not receive equal pay for equal work and face discriminatory employment practices, and therefore he promised to establish a provincial committee to examine the status of women in the province (Blakeney 1971).

Upon winning the election, the first moves that the Blakeney government made on women's issues were the passing of an amendment to the *Labour Standards Act* ensuring that an employer could not pay men and women different rates for "similar work performed in the same establishment under similar working conditions which requires similar skills, similar effort and similar responsibility" and giving the Women's Bureau in the Department of Labour the power to initiate its own investigations concerning pay inequities, leading to compensation for a number of women in the province (Saskatchewan Department of Labour 1975, 47). Despite calls from women's groups and the trade union movement for the government to adopt equal pay for work of equal value, the government did not move in this direction because it claimed that it was unable "to identify in a practical administrative way how to evaluate and measure work of equal value" (Snyder 2000, 125).

In 1973, the Blakeney government established a task force to study the recommendations of the final report of the federal government's Royal Commission on the Status of Women in order to discern which recommendations had been already implemented by the Saskatchewan government and which continued to be outstanding. While the task force noted that many of the commission's recommendations had already been implemented in Saskatchewan, it did identify a number of areas where more work was needed, such as employment discrimination based on marital status, appointment of women to government boards, marital property, daycare, and birth control (Saskatchewan Department of Labour 1973). The government appointed the Advisory Council on the Status of Women to devise policy strategies on the areas outlined by the task force.

The NDP's platform in the 1975 provincial election displayed a greater awareness of women's issues than its 1971 platform through commitments to improving marriage property laws, "further steps" to eliminate discrimination based on sex, and a program to provide equal opportunities for women in the public service (NDP 1975, 22). Upon its re-election, the government established a career development office to upgrade the skills of women already employed in the public sector, attract women to senior positions in government, and encourage the appointment of more women to government boards. The government replaced the Women's Bureau, which had been created by the Liberals in the 1960s, with the Women's Division, which performed the same functions as the bureau but had a greater focus on the continuing education of women and raising awareness of equal opportunity and rights for women. The government also legislated

that employers must provide 18 weeks of unpaid maternity leave to all female employees. Finally, the *Matrimonial Homes Act* was introduced to improve married women's control over a couple's farmland and property, thereby responding to a grievance that had existed in Saskatchewan since the First World War.

The Blakeney government was also forced to deal with the growing demand for abortions resulting from the federal government's easing of restrictions on abortion in 1969. In response, the Blakeney government simplified and rationalized the procedures for obtaining an abortion within Saskatchewan hospitals but maintained that "Our basic goal for abortions policy should be to reduce the demand for abortions by an active family planning program" (Saskatchewan Public Health Department 1973, 4). The Saskatchewan government did not call for the further liberalization of abortion laws, however, nor did it set up clinics that would facilitate access to abortion like the Parti Québécois government did in 1978.²

Under the daycare policy established by the Saskatchewan Liberal government in 1969, the provincial government created minimal criteria for licensing privately owned and non-profit daycare centres, gave out very small grants to daycare centres, and provided modest subsidies to low-income parents based on a means test. After pressure from within the NDP party and citizen groups such as the Saskatoon Daycare Development Committee, the Blakeney government provided more money for establishment grants and operating subsidies, but changed very little in the structure of government assistance to daycare except to increase parent control and favour non-profit centres (Martin 1995). Unlike other universal social programs, universal free daycare can be perceived to endanger the traditional family by enabling women to work outside of the home, and this seems to have been the reason that the Blakeney government did not move to establish a public system of universal free daycare. The government's logic was made clear in a debate over a motion presented by John Richards, the sole Waffle NDP MLA, to the Saskatchewan Legislature calling for the establishment of a public, universal, and free daycare system. No NDP member spoke in favour of Richards's resolution, and Gordon MacMurchy, the Education minister made it clear that the first priority for the government's daycare program was provision of daycare to single parents or parents whose income was "low and [where] the other spouse must work to make ends meet"; he went on to state that "in all possible cases people who have children should raise them too" (Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan 1974, 1048). Minister of Social Services Alex Taylor added that universal daycare would be an unfair subsidy for the rich (1050). Herman Rolfe, an NDP government MLA even argued that "the mother's place is in the home (1052)" while another NDP MLA Paul Mastoway went as far as to declare that universally accessible daycare "would really and truly promote family breakdown" (1053). Thus,

the Blakeney government's stance was that, unlike the universal and free provision of medicare, education, prescription drugs, or children's dental care, daycare was primarily a private family matter and the government should only provide financial assistance to reduce the cost of daycare for low-income parents.

As we can see, the Blakeney government illustrated a greater awareness of women's issues than the CCF government even if it made only moderate progress on women's concerns during its time in power. Further, the Blakeney government's performance on women's issues was vastly superior to that of the Thatcher Liberal government in the 1960s, which had created only a small women's bureau and a minimal daycare policy while generally eschewing feminist discourse. Despite its better record on women's issues compared to previous governments, the Blakeney government remained firmly committed to a liberal feminist ideology as evidenced by its measures to enhance legal equality for women, such as equal pay for equal work legislation and improved property rights. Moves towards substantive equality, such as free and public daycare, affirmative action with quotas, and significantly liberalized access to abortions were rejected, however. The only move towards recognizing that women had to be treated differently than men to ensure equality was unpaid maternity leave; however, it could be argued that even this measure was firmly liberal feminist in its intention to create more equal competition between men and women in the workforce by ensuring that women did not lose their employment due to pregnancy.

There were multiple reasons for the moderate moves forward on women's issues made by the Blakeney government. By the 1970s, women's participation in the workforce had increased dramatically compared to the CCF era. Indeed, by 1971, half of single women and 40% of married women in Saskatchewan were working outside of the home, including a growing number of farm wives (Grunding 1990, 185). The greater participation of women in the workforce made it necessary for the NDP government to reduce wage discrimination based on gender, ensure maternity leave, entrench women's property rights, and provide limited state support for daycares.

As a result of the organizing activity surrounding the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, a more militant women's movement emerged in Saskatchewan in the 1970s, pressuring the Blakeney government to be more aware of women's issues and challenging the patriarchal nature of Saskatchewan political culture (Norman 1997, 80-117). The Saskatchewan Action Committee on the Status of Women (SAC) was founded in 1973 and was a member of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. By 1975, SAC represented over 1,000 individual members and 91 different women's organizations (104). SAC was the first women's organization in Saskatchewan to break with the maternal feminism

and liberal feminism that had long dominated the discourse of the women's groups in the province. SAC espoused ideas that were more reflective of radical or socialist feminist ideologies, mixed alongside liberal feminist ideas. During the 1975 provincial election, SAC pressed for quota-based affirmative action programs for women in the provincial public service, expanded powers for the Human Rights Commission to initiate investigations on its own, and advocated for more resources for a Women's Bureau within the Department of Labour (*Regina Leader-Post* 1975). Throughout the Blakeney government's second and third terms, SAC pushed the government towards public and universal daycare, removal of gender stereotypes from school textbooks, equal pay for work of equal value, abortion clinics, educational programs concerning birth control, inclusion of sexual harassment within the human rights code, and improved services for victims of marital violence (SAC 1978; 1982). The Blakeney government's awareness of women's issues was also raised by the activity of the Waffle and the NDP women's committee before its election; however, once the NDP gained power, the NDP women's committee, which had always been made up of maternal feminists, were satisfied with the government's moderate advances on women's issues while the Waffle was marginalized within the party until it decided to withdraw formally from the Saskatchewan NDP in 1973.

Part of the Blakeney's government's moderation in regard to women's issues may have stemmed from the fact that it did not elect a single woman MLA, and the government's bureaucracy continued to be dominated by men. Not only did the Liberals and Conservatives run more women candidates in provincial elections than the NDP during the 1970s, but they also elected three women to the legislature from 1971 to 1981. The Thatcher Liberal government had also elected a woman during its time in power from 1964 to 1971. In contrast, the NDP ran only one woman candidate against a popular Liberal cabinet minister in the 1971 provincial election, three women in 1975 (two in winnable ridings and one in an unwinnable riding), and no female candidates in 1978.

The fact that women's issues disappeared from the NDP's discourse and platforms during the 1978 and the 1982 provincial elections may be an indication that the party was reacting to the persistence of Saskatchewan's patriarchal political culture. Indeed, the province's enduring patriarchal political culture was reflected in the few women elected to the provincial legislature during the 1970s. Further, an appeal to maintain traditional gender roles was an important part of the discourse of the Progressive Conservatives, who were the primary challenger to the NDP in the 1978 provincial election and who supplanted the NDP in the 1982 provincial election (Pitsula and Rasmussen 1990, 217-34). The Saskatchewan state apparatus remained male-dominated in the 1970s. The endurance of a patriarchal

political culture (although it was challenged by the SAC and the various women's groups that it represented) and the persistence of male-dominated institutions were undoubtedly important factors in encouraging the Blakeney government to adopt liberal feminist as opposed to radical or socialist feminist policies.

Women and the Saskatchewan NDP (1982 to 2000)

In 1982, the Progressive Conservative party, under the leadership of Grant Devine, won a landslide victory, not only removing the NDP from power but reducing it to only nine seats, which was its lowest seat total since 1934. Devine's Conservatives elected a record number of women to the Saskatchewan legislature in their 1982 victory and even appointed the first two women to cabinet in the history of the province; however, the election of women does not necessarily translate into the adoption of feminist policies if the women elected are not feminist. Indeed, the Conservative female MLAs were publicly anti-feminist, and several were members of a conservative women's group called REAL Women. The Devine government slashed daycare subsidies for low-income parents and daycare operating grants, while simultaneously creating a pension scheme for homemakers. While providing pensions for women doing unpaid work within the home could be considered a liberal or even radical feminist initiative, the combination of these two policies was meant to encourage women to stay at home and raise their children instead of using daycare facilities to support their entry into the workforce. The Devine government also eliminated the Women's Division within the Department of Labour in 1982, abolished the programs designed to promote women within the public service, and cut funding to women's shelters and rape crisis centres. The NDP's small caucus was openly critical of the Conservatives' abolition of these women's programs (NDP 1983a). While it was not within the constitutional jurisdiction of the provincial government to limit access to abortions, the Devine government did publicly oppose abortion and gave public funds to the Saskatchewan Pro-Life Association. On another note, in 1984 the Conservatives did create the Women's Secretariat as a free-standing agency reporting to the province's first minister Responsible for the Status of Women. The new secretariat provided research, policy analysis, and administrative support to government departments on matters relating to women.

After the 1982 defeat, the NDP Women's Committee was expanded into the Saskatchewan New Democratic Women (SNDW), which was recognized as an independent organization within the party's constitution and given delegates to provincial council and annual conventions, as well as a position on the party's executive. The SNDW even achieved the entrenching of gender parity on the

provincial executive and provincial council. On the whole, the SNDW displayed a liberal feminist outlook in its calls for such advances as equal pay for equal work in the public service and its refusal to make any specific recommendations in the area of abortions (NDP 1983b; 1985b). Indeed, there was still opposition to abortion within the Saskatchewan NDP party in the mid-1980s as illustrated by the formation of a committee of anti-abortion New Democrats who sought to make the prohibition of abortions a party policy.³ Reflecting the strength of the SNDW, the NDP ran 11 women candidates in the 1986 provincial election and elected 3 female MLAs. The NDP's platform in that election contained a section on women that was inspired by the SNDW's liberal feminism in its calls for pay equity in the public service, strengthening of the *Matrimonial Property Act*, and increased funding for daycare for low-income families.

After Blakeney's resignation due to the NDP's defeat in the 1986 provincial election, Roy Romanow won the leadership of the Saskatchewan NDP by acclamation. In his acceptance speech, Romanow promised to put women in positions of influence in his government (NDP 1987). Romanow appointed a Women's Advisory Committee to the Leader to encourage women to be involved in politics, created a fund to reimburse female candidates for the costs of their nominations, and set a target of having 33 women candidates in the next provincial election. Further, the NDP's 1989 policy commissions recommended pay equity and affirmative action programs in the public sector (NDP 1989); however, Romanow's leadership record from this time period is not spotless: a female NDP MLA claims that she was pushed out of caucus because of her feminist views when a young male lawyer successfully contested her nomination for the 1991 election (Smart 1992). The party also confirmed its opposition to free-standing abortion clinics that would offer abortions outside of hospitals, and women were not mentioned in the NDP's short platform for the 1991 provincial election.

The 1991 provincial election was a watershed for the representation of women in the Saskatchewan legislature as the percentage of female MLAs jumped from 8% to 18% (Carbert 1997, 156). While it fell short of its target, the NDP did run 14 women in the 1991 provincial election and elected 11, which was the highest number of women elected by any party in Saskatchewan history. Romanow went on to appoint four women to his first cabinet and the first female Finance minister in the history of Canada. Throughout Romanow's time in power, women consistently made up approximately 20% of the cabinet, the NDP caucus, and the legislature (157). Clearly, women, especially NDP women, had never been so well represented in Saskatchewan politics.

The Romanow government followed a Third Way social democracy that focussed on the maintenance of public enterprise for essential services, the attraction of external private investment as the principle means of economic development, the search for a consensus between employers and unions on labour code modifications, the rationalization of universal social programs, and the expansion of targeted social programs (McGrane 2006). In terms of women's policy, the Romanow government did not expand the Women's Secretariat into a full-blown Department of Women's Affairs as SAC had called for during the 1991 election (Draaisma 1991). While such departments exist in other countries, it should be noted that, as of the time of writing, no provincial or federal government in Canada has ever had a Department of Women's Affairs. Even though no quotas were set, the Romanow government enacted a policy to increase the number of women on government boards. It succeeded in ensuring that 44% of its appointments to boards were women, but the efforts of some female NDP MLAs failed to ensure guaranteed representation of women on newly created health district boards (Saskatchewan Women's Secretariat 1996; Carbert 1997, 169-70).

Under the Romanow government, both the Saskatchewan Public Service Commission and Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission created employment equity programs that made some modest progress during the 1990s. By 1999, 50% of the employees of the Saskatchewan public service were women, but only 35% of managerial jobs and 21% of designated non-traditional jobs were held by women (Saskatchewan Public Service Commission 2000). The Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission's employment equity program worked with Crown corporations, school boards, municipal governments, post-secondary education institutions, non-governmental organizations, and private companies to create employment equity plans to increase their hiring of women. Participation in the Human Rights Commission's employment equity program was voluntary, however, and just two private sector corporations had joined up by 2000. Under this program, 48% of employees within participating organizations were women by 1999, but only 35% of managerial positions were held by women (Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission 2000). It should be noted that both of these employment equity programs depended upon a system of goals to be strived for and not a system of quotas, and that they covered only 11% of the total provincial workforce.⁴

Following Third Way thinking, the Romanow government initiated programs that targeted specific groups of women instead of universal programs aimed at all the women in the province. The government attempted to increase the number of women in non-traditional jobs in the private sector through a grant to female doctoral students in the sciences, provision of specialized computer training for

women, and a program to encourage the training of women in skilled trades. In the area of justice, the government passed legislation to recognize sexual harassment as a threat to the health and safety of workers, created the Sexual Harassment Prevention Program, and developed an anti-harassment policy for all government employees. The NDP increased funding to programs to help victims of family violence and passed the *Victims of Domestic Violence Act*, which created emergency intervention orders to provide immediate protection for women against their abusers. The government also strengthened provisions to collect child support from parents who defaulted on their payments, created free infant care centres for single parents on social assistance who wanted to work, and established grants for single parents who wanted to pursue post-secondary education in lieu of student loans. Despite the growth of poverty within Saskatchewan's Aboriginal community, however, the Romanow government enacted no specific programs for First Nations women. Rather, First Nations women were subsumed within programs dedicated to either women or Aboriginals.

At the same time as the 1991 provincial election, the Conservative government held a plebiscite: 63% voted in favour of ending public funding for abortions. In response to the numerous anti-abortion protesters who showed up to his 1991 campaign events, Romanow had repeated that he personally opposed abortion but did not specify how the NDP would act if the plebiscite passed (O'Connor 1991). Once in power, the NDP government claimed that it was not constitutionally possible to follow the instructions of the plebiscite. While the government opposed the creation of free-standing abortion clinics and did not restore funding to the pro-choice organization Planned Parenthood, which been cut by the Conservatives, it did create a Women's Health Centre, which ensured reliable access to abortions in Regina; access to abortions outside of Regina remained contingent upon the approval of local doctors and hospital administrators. Following the Blakeney government, the Romanow government improved family planning programs in order to "reduce the incidence of unintended pregnancies in the province" (Saskatchewan Health 1993, 1).

The two largest women's issues facing the Romanow government were day-care policy and the question of pay equity. Despite the overall austerity of the 1992 budget, it did increase operating grants to licensed child-care centres by 21%, which was the first increase since 1986 (Saskatchewan 1992, 16-17). Similar to the Blakeney government the Romanow government, however, dismissed calls from the province's women's movement for the establishment of universal, free, and public daycare. Instead, under the Action Plan for Children, the government concentrated on focussing its improvements in child care on low-income and "at-risk" children. A report by the Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy depicts the

generally poor record of the Saskatchewan NDP government in the area of child care. The report found that the number of regulated child-care spaces in Saskatchewan increased by only 1.8% from 1992 to 2004 and that regulated child-care spaces in 2004 were available for only 4.9% of the province's children aged 0-12 (Friendly 2005). Evidently, the Romanow government did not move away from the Blakeney government's idea that, for all but society's poorest citizens, daycare was a private responsibility of the family.

Both the labour movement and the Pay Equity Coalition (formed in April 1991) had begun to lobby the NDP caucus before the 1991 election to obtain NDP commitment to legislation ensuring pay equity in both the private and public sectors (CUPE Saskatchewan Division Equal Opportunities Committee 1991; Pay Equity Coalition of Saskatchewan 1991). Unlike the Blakeney government, the Romanow government accepted the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. In response to continued pressure from the labour movement and the Pay Equity Coalition, the government adopted the Equal Pay for Equal Value Policy Framework, which required all government departments and Crown corporations to negotiate wage adjustments within a five-year period and jointly develop gender-neutral job evaluation systems with public sector unions. The Pay Equity Coalition and the labour movement continued to lobby for some form of pay equity legislation for the private sector but were unsuccessful in their efforts (Pay Equity Coalition of Saskatchewan 1999; Saskatchewan Federation of Labour 1997).

As we can see, similar to previous CCF-NDP governments in Saskatchewan, the Romanow government reflected a liberal feminist ideology, offering programs to aid women to enter non-traditional occupations, voluntary affirmative action programs, pay equity only for the public sector, little movement on liberalizing access to abortions, and daycare subsidies for low-income families as opposed to a system of free and public daycare. A common characteristic of all these policies is that they seek to establish equal opportunity for men and women in society and rarely recognize that women need to be treated differently in order to achieve equality. The one exception to this liberal feminist outlook may be the government's initiatives to combat violence and harassment against women, which recognize that women can be in a different position in male-female relationships than men are, physically and in terms of status; this allows abuse.

Several factors pushed the Romanow government to enact the policies that it did. By 2000, 46% of people in Saskatchewan's paid workforce were women, and there had been a substantial increase in the number of mothers working outside the home over the last decade (Saskatchewan Status of Women Office 2005b). Further, the education levels of Saskatchewan women had increased to the point where they were slightly more educated than the province's men, but women still

generally earned 25% less than men, were more likely to have part-time or insecure jobs, and remained under-represented in the areas of manufacturing, construction, agriculture, forestry, mining, and energy while being over-represented in the areas of health, social services, education services, accommodation, and food services (Saskatchewan Status of Women Office 2005a; 2005c). The increased participation of women in the Saskatchewan workforce under these conditions pushed the Romanow government to act on issues such as pay equity, sexual harassment in the workplace, limited affirmative action, and the participation of women in non-traditional professions.

The growth in the number of women in cabinet, the legislature, and the provincial bureaucracy began to alter the male-dominated culture of Saskatchewan political institutions, leading to more intense awareness and action on women's issues. Louise Carbert and Janice MacKinnon illustrate how female NDP MLAs worked hard to get the government to adopt the women's policies that it did and how these women politicians were generally satisfied with the government's direction on women's issues (Carbert 1997, 161-65; MacKinnon 2003, 260-63). At the same time, the Romanow government routinely disappointed the province's feminist groups with its policies concerning daycare, abortions, and pay equity only for the public sector. Several elements may have been responsible for the Romanow government's moderation. Certainly, the fact that Saskatchewan had the highest per capita debt and deficit in Canada when the NDP entered office prohibited the government from creating new and expensive social programs such as a universal, public, and free daycare system (Waiser 2005, 458). The NDP government's dedication to attracting external private investment may have worked against the establishment of pay equity and affirmative action in the private sector, since they could be perceived as driving up business costs. The liberal nature of the NDP's feminism before getting into power should also be taken into account. As we have seen, the Romanow government inherited a very cautious stance towards women's issues from the CCF and the Blakeney government, and its women's wing had developed a liberal feminist viewpoint prior to the 1991 election.

It should also be realized that the general weakness of the feminist movement in Saskatchewan reduced the pressure on the Romanow government to take aggressive stances on women's issues. During the 1990s, the SAC was centred mostly in Regina and had a small membership while most other Saskatchewan women's groups were concentrated on community organizing and did not lobby the provincial government. In spite of the election of several female MLAs to the provincial legislature, the weakness of Saskatchewan's feminist movement and moderate nature of women's policies of the NDP and opposition parties reflected

the continued existence of a patriarchal political culture in Saskatchewan during the 1990s. Indeed, through the analysis of Canada-wide polling between 1992 to 2000, Michael Adams found that the three Prairie provinces displayed the most patriarchal and traditional political cultures in Canada (Adams 2003).

Conclusion

Overall, Saskatchewan social democracy has a mixed record when it comes to policies concerning women and women's participation in political life. Despite openness to women's concerns and women's participation in early agrarian protest organizations, CCF-NDP governments in Saskatchewan made only moderate progress on issues of concern to women. Despite the Saskatchewan CCF-NDP's social democratic ideology in other policy areas, such as nationalization and the expansion of universal social programs, the party and the governments that it has formed have displayed a liberal feminist ideology in their discourse and actions concerning women. All three CCF-NDP governments, however, did have better records on women's issues than the Liberal and Progressive Conservative governments that preceded them.

My analysis confirms research noted in the introduction to this article, which illustrates that social democratic governments enact policies that are friendlier to women than non-social democratic governments. Besides increasing the representation of women in the Saskatchewan Legislature, however, the Third Way social democracy of the Saskatchewan NDP under the leadership of Roy Romanow did not produce significant gains for the women of Saskatchewan. Thus, my analysis is also congruent with literature that points out that Third Way social democracy does not represent a breakthrough for women. I do not go as far as some researchers who suggest that Third Way social democracy is no better than neo-conservatism when it comes to women's issues. It is clear that the Third Way social democracy under Romanow's NDP had a better record with women than the neo-conservatism of the Devine Progressive Conservative government during the 1980s.

The persistence of a patriarchal political culture and male-dominated political institutions within Saskatchewan that strong factors that mediated against the adoption of feminist stances by the Saskatchewan CCF-NDP; however, increased female participation in the provincial workforce, a greater number of female NDP MLAs, and the militancy of the women's groups outside the NDP and women activists within the NDP party organization encouraged the adoption of liberal feminist policies by the Blakeney and Romanow governments.

Thus, it would seem that the lesson from 100 years of Saskatchewan social democracy is that a militant women's movement outside of the party and strong women activists and female elected representatives within the party are needed to push social democratic parties towards liberal, and occasionally socialist and radical, feminist positions.

Notes

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1. For examples of liberal feminism, see the following: Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, John Stuart Mill, *On the Subjection of Women*, Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, and Naomi Wolf, *Fire with Fire: The New Female Power and How It Will Change the 21st Century*.
2. In 1978, the PQ government adopted a policy that stipulated that at least one hospital in each of the administrative regions of Quebec must create a clinic to offer abortions free of charge and that walk-in clinics may also offer abortions. See Diane Lamoureux, "Une victoire à la Pyrrhus: La lutte pour le droit à l'avortement" (1993, 171-98).
3. See the advertisement for the New Democrats Life Issues Committee in the *Commonwealth*, 25 September 1985.
4. This number was calculated by comparing the reports of the Saskatchewan Public Service Commission and the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission with Statistics Canada data on the total provincial workforce for Saskatchewan.

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