

CHAPTER 1

Representing Women in Democratic Policy Processes

In this chapter, I seek to substantiate two key claims in the argument that social movement can represent marginalized groups. First, women's movements influence policy processes in significant ways. Second, in determining policy outcomes, this influence is at least as important (and in some cases more important) as the number of the women in the legislature, and therefore we ought to be examining multiple avenues of representation for women. I also elaborate on the conceptual bases for the argument that social movements represent women in a substantive sense, focusing on the nature of group perspective. I offer an account of group perspective that seeks to reconcile two critical insights in the representation of marginalized groups. On one hand, such groups are diverse and riven by internal conflict, crosscut by social axes of gender, race, class sexuality, and the like. On the other hand, group members sometimes seem to represent the broader group in some instances by speaking about their own experiences, which are nevertheless not shared by every member of the group.

Reconceptualizing Representation for Marginalized Groups

The literature on representation for marginalized groups has tended to focus on the question of whether women should represent women and African Americans should represent African Americans, that is, on the descriptive representation of these groups. Moreover, this literature has mostly focused on *legislative* descriptive representation. Descriptive representation in the legislature is an important aspect of representation for marginalized groups, but it is limited as an avenue of substantive representation. Indeed, in this chapter, I suggest that the idea that *individuals* can substantively represent groups merely through their persons or behavior is based on a problematic understanding of the relationship between individual experience and group perspective. I propose that group perspective is a *collective* product of social groups, developed through intragroup interaction.

Conceptualizing group perspective this way suggests that other avenues of representation (e.g., women's policy machineries and social movements) may provide substantive representation for marginalized groups. I illustrate this argument using an analysis of policy development in Canada, one of the most responsive governments in the world when it comes to violence against women. I then apply this argument in an examination of the impact of women's representation on policies to address violence against women in 36 democratic countries in 1994. Using OLS regression analysis, I find that women's policy agencies (e.g., women's commissions or women's bureaus) and women's movements provide more effective avenues of expression for women than the presence of women in the legislatures: in combination, they give women a stronger voice in the policy-making process. Thus, studies of representation for marginalized groups would do well to consider institutional changes and increased political mobilization as potential sources of political representation.¹ The point is not that individual bodies provide *no* representation but that bodies are limited as an avenue of *substantive* representation, and that multiple sources of representation should be considered and compared. The contributions of and interactions between modes of representation can then be more effectively evaluated (Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005).

Political scientists have developed an impressive body of work arguing that in order for historically marginalized groups to be effectively represented in democratic institutions, members of those groups must be present in deliberative bodies. In this chapter, I focus mainly on these arguments as they apply to women as a historically marginalized group.² However, I think that many of the issues I raise here are also relevant for other such groups, such as historically disadvantaged racial minorities and gays and lesbians.

There is an extensive literature examining the consequences and determinants of better representation for women and minorities in bureaucracies and legislatures.³ The majority of these studies conceptualize and operationalize representation as the presence or behavior of individual women or minorities in the bodies in question, although there is an emerging movement to question this equation.⁴ Many studies employ Pitkin's (1967) distinction between descriptive representation and substantive representation (or passive/symbolic and active representation).⁵ These studies tend to define both forms of representation in terms of the behavior or characteristics of individual legislators. Descriptive representation is defined as individual legislators "standing for" their groups.⁶ Substantive representation is defined as individual legislators having opinions or behavior favorable to the minority community or to

women (Tremblay 1998, 439; Cameron, Epstein, and O'Halloran 1996).⁷ This focus on whether individuals are present or how they vote stems from the idea that individual members of marginalized groups can stand and/or speak for the group as a whole. As I explain shortly, this assumption is problematic, and it obscures more effective means for the articulation of the group's perspective.

The Limits of Individuals as Spokespersons for Marginalized Groups

Political theorists argue that historically marginalized groups have a distinctive voice or perspective that is unlikely or unable to be articulated effectively in deliberative contexts from which members of those groups are absent. This distinctive perspective often differs from or conflicts with the perspectives of the dominant group. The group perspective, or set of shared concerns, derives from shared experiences and/or social position and is manifest in narratives or histories that members develop collectively (Mansbridge 1999, 2005; Phillips 1995; Williams 1998, especially 138–41; Young 1997).

Ideally, on this view, representation for marginalized groups should reflect the diversity of the group's membership and should not assume a false homogeneity of interest or identity (Phillips 1995; Mansbridge 1999, 2005; Dovi 2002). Substantive political representation requires political processes through which marginalized groups authorize and hold accountable those who speak for them (Phillips 1995; Young 1990, 2000). Finally, substantive representation requires the representation of the group perspective in such a way that the group's voice is articulated and heard in policy processes.

These works offer helpful accounts of when and why descriptive representation matters. But these arguments bring to the forefront a theoretical problem, a seeming tension or contradiction, that arises from two conflicting but powerful intuitions. On the one hand, women can, at least in some circumstances, represent women more broadly when they speak from their own experiences; on the other hand, women (like men) are a diverse group, riven by other social axes like race and class, and they sometimes have conflicting interests as women, so that there is a sense in which there is no singular "women's experience." Indeed, theorists of descriptive representation emphasize that they are not claiming that women or African Americans share a set of similar experiences or identities (Mansbridge 1999; Williams 1998). But if women do not share a set of similar experiences, in what sense do women in office represent women?

Despite their acknowledgment of intragroup diversity, theorists of de-

scriptive representation sometimes seem to argue that individual legislators can speak for the group by drawing only on their personal experiences. For example, Williams (1998, 141) suggests that when a legislator from a disadvantaged group speaks, “the needs she articulates are not hers alone, but the needs shared by members of the group she represents . . . In articulating the group’s perspective on behalf of her constituents, the representative does not need to take up the standpoint of an other; the perspective is hers *immediately*, although it is not the full expression of her individuality” (emphasis in original). Similarly, Mansbridge (1999, 645) argues that descriptive characteristics often act as a proxy for identifying shared experiences and that reflecting on these shared experiences provides a limited basis for representing the group. This method results in substantive representation when the person in question is in fact most similar to their constituents. When representatives do, in fact, share the experiences of their constituents, argues Mansbridge, “representatives engaged in introspective representation will reflect the policies their constituents would choose if they had greater knowledge and time for reflection” (646; see also Whitby 1997, 6). This is an important qualification, but as scholars increasingly emphasize differences among women (e.g., Crenshaw 1993; Collins 1998; McCall 2004), the extent to which women’s diverse experiences are shared by such descriptive representatives seems quite limited (Dovi 2002).⁸

If a group perspective resides complete in any individual from the group, including individual members of the group is sufficient to represent the group perspective. Epistemologically, any individual has the knowledge to articulate a group’s distinctive voice. This conclusion conflicts with the recognition of within-group diversity that these theorists explicitly recognize and affirm (Mansbridge 1999, 637–39; Williams 1998, 293). Even if a woman is typical in a statistical sense, as Mansbridge suggests, she cannot “speak for” women. If she is a white, straight, middle-class mother, she cannot speak for African American, poor, or lesbian women *on the basis of her own experience*, any more than men can speak for women merely on the basis of theirs (or at least, she can only do so in a very limited way). Moreover, marginalized group perspectives are not transparent to *individual* members of the group. As noted, these theorists see group perspective as a *collective* phenomenon, developed by the group. How can individuals come to have access to these collective phenomena on the basis of their own, relatively limited experience? The link between individual experience and knowledge of the group perspective appears to be a complex one that requires more elaboration.

Individual Experience, Group Perspective, and Representation

I propose an account of the link between group perspective and individual experience that seeks to reconcile these seeming contradictions. Group perspective is related to group members' individual experiences, but not in a direct, transparent way. A social perspective is a type of knowledge that groups have. It reflects the vantage point of the social position in which a group finds itself (Young 1994, 1997, 2000). Members of the group have the experience of being marked out by society as members of a particular class (Williams 1998). As members of the group, they confront obstacles and issues that others need not confront.

But individuals can rarely provide a complete account or analysis of the obstacles confronting the group without interacting with others from the group. The distinctive voice of marginalized groups flows from group organization and mobilization; it is a product of the interaction among members of a social group. Only a small part of this group perspective is reflected in the experience of any particular individual. The group perspective is created when individual members of the group interact with other members of the group to define their priorities.

Group perspective can be thought of as a puzzle of which each member of the group has a piece. The more pieces of the puzzle we have, the better picture we have. When additional pieces are very similar to existing pieces (the same color or texture), we learn little about other areas or features of the puzzle. The greater the diversity in our pieces is, the better idea we have about the different areas and parts of the puzzle. Moreover, when members of the group come together, they can compare their puzzle pieces, and after seeing the puzzle pieces of others, each person gains a greater understanding of the larger puzzle to which she or he holds a piece. Thus, the process of putting together the puzzle pieces is interactive rather than simply aggregative. One's puzzle piece likely gives one more information after interaction with others than before, but there is a point of diminishing returns: the last pieces are not as valuable as the first few.

It may seem as if this analogy suggests that interaction among women will produce agreement on the meaning or implications of the picture. But merely identifying similar obstacles or issues does not suggest that women will experience or interpret these phenomena in the same way. Like interpreting an abstract painting, viewers could have very different reactions to or experiences of the painting, although they could agree about the physical characteristics of

the work. Sharing a perspective on women's social position does not suggest agreement on the meaning of or political dynamics that produce that position.

Having said this, even when women have conflicting interests, the issues that divide them are strikingly similar. For example, middle-class and working-class women have conflicting interests in relation to the issue of wages for child care. The former would benefit from lower wages for child care, while the latter would benefit from higher wages for child care. But in both cases, it is *women* who have responsibility for child care, and it is *women* for whom the issue has the most serious consequences. The important thing is to note that all of these women confront the issue of the relationship between motherhood and work. What they share is not a list of policy proposals but more like a list of "women's issues."

Group perspective resides most fully in collective products, such as the agendas of coalitions of organizations, or in the issues identified in the body of newspapers, magazines, and other cultural productions where the group discusses its own issues and concerns. A group perspective is not as specific as a policy position or recommendation: it is more like an agenda of topics for discussion or a list of problem areas (Weldon 2002). Because social perspectives are developed through interaction among the members of a social group, no individual member *on her or his own* has a full understanding of the conditions that confront the group. Participating in group activities provides deeper knowledge of the issues and concerns that members share with others of their group. Individual members of the group cannot legitimately claim to speak for the group without having participated in such interaction, because they lack the epistemological bases (as well as the normative bases) for doing so.

Of course, interaction among women often involves conflict, and subordinated subsets of women often have difficulty getting their issues recognized as issues of importance by women who are more privileged. But debate among women makes these divisions themselves the topic of discussion, particularly when marginalized subsets of women can organize as such. For example, when women's organizations and activists from all over the world gathered in Beijing in 1995 for the Fourth United Nations Conference on Women, they pushed governments to attend to the way race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and other factors create additional barriers for women of marginalized subgroups.

Although this view of group perspective is consistent with theoretical arguments for the self-representation of marginalized groups, it undermines much of the empirical work on representation previously outlined. It suggests

that there is no reason to assume that the greater bodily inclusion of members of marginalized groups, in itself, should significantly increase their substantive representation. Small improvements can be expected, but significantly improving substantive representation for groups requires that representatives be able to articulate the group perspective. The individual alone cannot effectively articulate this perspective.⁹

Marginalized groups are poorly represented in most contemporary democratic policy processes because their perspectives are not equally reflected or considered in the policy process. Better substantive representation for these groups would provide mechanisms for the effective articulation of their distinctive perspective as a regular part of policy processes and would seek to eliminate barriers to the equal treatment of the marginalized group perspective in policy deliberations. Mechanisms for the articulation of these perspectives must attend to both the interactive nature of group perspective and the requirements of accountability and authorization.¹⁰

Women's Movements as Sources of Political Representation

I have already argued that the focus on representation by individual legislators has distracted scholars from examining other, more important avenues of substantive representation for marginalized groups. Women's movements provide an important but generally unexplored avenue of representation for women, another important mechanism for the articulation of women's perspectives (Dobrowolsky 1998; see also Vickers et al. 1993 on the representation of women's interests). This is not to suggest that women's movements are a perfect incarnation of "women's voice." Women's movement articulations can only ever be partial articulations of women's perspectives, because some subgroups of women are always dominated or excluded. But this is true of every grouping of women in relation to all women (Young 1994). More important, because women's movement activities provide an arena where women interact as women to define their priorities, women's movements are likely to come closer to articulating women's perspectives than is a disparate, unorganized group of women in the legislature.

Some scholars argue that it is not just the existence but also the autonomy of women's groups that is important for their success in influencing policy (Elman 1996; Busch 1992). An autonomous women's movement is a form of women's mobilization that is devoted to promoting women's status and well-being independently of political parties and other associations that do not

make the status of women their main concern. For example, if the only women's organizations are women's wings or caucuses within the existing political parties, the women's movement is not autonomous (Molyneux 1998). Autonomous organizations must be self-governing, must recognize no superior authority, and must not be subject to the governance of other political agencies.

Autonomous women's organizing improves women's ability to articulate their perspective. Organizations that are not mainly focused on women's concerns are more likely to adopt as priorities those "women's issues" that fit easily into the existing organizational agenda. When women's groups are only subsidiaries or wings of larger organizations, it can be difficult for them to make the case that considerable amounts of organizational resources should be spent on a "women's issue." Violence against women is an issue that is of concern mainly to women. As such, political parties, trade unions, and other political organizations may find it more difficult to adopt such an issue as a priority than to adopt other women's issues that can be subsumed under a universal category, such as old-age pensions, minimum wage, or family and medical leave. Thus, women's wings or suborganizations of larger organizations will have a harder time using organizational resources to articulate women's perspectives than will independent women's organizations that can directly translate women's issues into organizational priorities (Weldon 2002).

In addition, autonomous women's movements can improve the accountability of government bureaucrats in ways that nonautonomous movements may not. If the women's movement is entirely contained in the state, the ability to criticize government policy may be curtailed. Autonomous groups can challenge the existing order of priorities by drawing attention to issues that are not on the agenda. Thus, autonomous women's movements can improve the representation of women in the policy process.

Institutions as Sources of Representation

Another mechanism that has received little consideration as an avenue for representation is the creation of public agencies whose responsibility it is to provide an intragovernmental voice for particular marginalized groups. Many governments now have such offices. Most national governments, for example, now have a women's policy machinery, that is, a government body responsible for promoting the status of women (Mazur 2002; Staudt 1998; Stetson and Mazur 1995; Weldon 2002).

Perhaps one reason why these offices have not been more widely considered as avenues of representation is the concern on the part of some scholars that states are male-biased: they cannot be mechanisms for advancing women's rights, because "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (Lorde 1984; MacKinnon 1989). But feminist scholars have discovered that the relationship between public policy and women's status is far more complex than this view would suggest, not least because the degree to which governments promote women's rights varies over time and across nations (Mazur 2002; Htun and Weldon 2007; Banaczak et al. 2005).

Understanding why women's policy agencies can provide a mechanism for representation requires an understanding of the limitations that political institutions place on the individuals who fill particular positions within them. Policy outcomes, as noted, are not just a product of the legislators that enact them. They are shaped and implemented by the institutional structure in which they are formed. This institutional structure does not affect all policy ideas in the same way. As Bachrach and Baratz (1962) noted, every organized undertaking involves the mobilization of bias: the very creation of categories makes some issues and concepts salient and renders others irrelevant. The very organization of the administrative structure facilitates some policies and obscures or obstructs others. The organization of government, for example, tends to reflect the priorities of the dominant groups who defined the basic administrative categories, creating a sort of institutional bias in the structure of public administration, in favor of the issues important to historically dominant groups. In this way, institutional structures can also formalize and entrench the understandings of policies ("policy images") preferred by dominant groups (Baumgartner and Jones 1993). As a result, organizational priorities sometimes conflict with or obscure the interests of marginalized groups, making it difficult to propose or enact policies that further their interests. Without reform, the current structure of public administration tends to provide an unrecognized form of substantive representation for historically dominant groups, while blocking or stifling the articulation of the perspective of marginalized groups.

Such an institutional bias might affect women as a marginalized group in democratic policy processes. The current construction of administrative categories in most of the political institutions in question makes it difficult to address issues of concern to women. Policies addressing violence against women, the protection of reproductive freedom, and economic inequality between men and women usually require coordination among a number of major gov-

ernment departments. Government response to violence against women, for example, requires action in areas of policy as diverse as criminal justice, education, and income assistance. But these areas are usually the responsibility of a variety of different agencies, posing considerable coordination problems (Weldon 2002).

Because administrative structures tend to reflect the particular problems (and the understandings of those problems) that prevail at the time of their creation, most public administrative systems are designed to address problems other than women's issues. Moreover, traditional understandings of these problems tend to reflect the context of sexual inequality in which these bureaus were created (Staudt 1997). For example, in the United States, the official definition of unemployment excludes women who are looking for paid employment but cannot obtain work because they cannot find child care. The current mobilization of bias present in political institutions disadvantages women and their concerns, creating a sort of gender bias in the fundamental structure of political institutions.

Women's policy agencies are one way of creating state institutions that at least partially reflect women's perspectives. A women's policy machinery can focus on issues of concern to women in their entirety: one need not segment problems confronting women (e.g., violence) into their health aspects, criminal justice aspects, and so on in order to address them. Stetson and Mazur (1995, 288) argue that those agencies that have centralized, cross-sectoral approaches to promoting gender equality are the most effective. These agencies must be set up to coordinate women's policies in an authoritative manner, having the power to direct policy-making across a number of departments. This suggests that a subdepartmental desk in a low-ranking ministry is unlikely to be an effective mechanism for representing women in policy deliberations. Similarly, an agency with few resources will be unable to carry out the monitoring and analysis required. This suggests that to be effective in representing women, a women's policy machinery must have a degree of independence, some of its own resources, and positional authority.

The representativeness of the perspective articulated by women's policy agencies can be improved if the represented have the opportunity to comment on and critique the agency's proposals. Women's bureau consultations with women's movement organizations and activists can improve agency proposals. Examples of such consultations are advisory committees set up in both Canada and Australia whereby women's organizations had regular access to government officials. In addition, in Australia (and in Canada for a while),

there were regular meetings between political officials and women's movement activists to discuss a "women's agenda."

Where access is based on informal channels, it usually depends on good relations between women's movement activists and the individual bureaucrats. If consultation with women's groups is a formal part of the policy agency, access is likely to be more uniform across policy areas and over time. When formal, regularized channels for consultation exist and are part of the normal operation of government, it may be more difficult for new administrations (who may be hostile to women's groups) to shut women's organizations out of the policy-making process.

However, improving institutional capacity is not the same as providing the political will to address a problem. As Kathlene (1995) notes, gender mitigates "position power," that is, influence derived from one's position in the bureaucratic hierarchy: women obtain less benefit from powerful institutional positions than do men. Thus, as a prominent former bureaucrat in a women's policy agency in Canada explains, "Without external pressure, these structures have little hope of doing more than holding the fort or maintaining the status quo" (Geller Schwartz 1995, 57). In addition, providing mechanisms by which women's movements can be consulted will not be of much use if there is no one with whom to consult. This suggests that political support from external social movements is necessary to provide women's bureaus both the political pressure and input that is necessary to capitalize on improved institutional capacity. Thus, when women's policy machineries have positional authority and adequate resources, they can improve substantive representation for women by providing a mechanism by which women's distinctive perspective can be articulated and by providing some mechanism of authorization or accountability for women (through consultations with women's organizations). But this impact depends on the presence of a women's movement, and we should expect little in the way of direct effects.

Interactions between Sources of Representation

Distinguishing multiple sources of representation makes it possible to conceptualize interactions between these different sources and to theorize their combined impact on democratic political processes. Women's policy agencies provide an important avenue of representation for women, but this is only likely to have an effect on the policy process in the context of an autonomous women's movement. Strong, autonomous women's movements improve the

institutional capabilities of government in addressing women's issues. This magnifies women's voice inside government. When the women's movement is strong, the women's policy machinery has more influence with other government departments. Bureaucrats inside the women's policy machinery seeking to articulate women's concerns can point to public pressure from the women's movement. Thus, a strong, autonomous women's movement improves the representative function performed by a women's policy agency.

Conversely, women's policy agencies can strengthen women's movements. By providing financial support for organizing and independent research, women's policy machineries provide additional resources to women's organizations. In addition, by providing research support and opportunities for input on policy development, women's policy machineries can assist women's movement activists in publicly articulating women's perspectives. Thus, strong, autonomous women's movements and effective women's policy agencies reinforce one another in improving women's representation. This effect is interactive: each factor magnifies the effect of the other.

Women's Representation and Policies on Violence against Women

Although descriptive representation may have positive effects on the political process (e.g., improving the legitimacy of representative bodies or improving symbolic inclusion of marginalized groups), the argument that it significantly improves substantive representation has important weaknesses. Moreover, descriptive representation is rarely empirically compared with other modes of substantive representation, such as articulation of group perspective through social movements or through institutional reforms. Such a comparison reveals that descriptive representation in the legislature is a relatively ineffective way to ensure that policy outcomes reflect the perspectives of marginalized groups (although it may accomplish other important goals).

In this section, I examine the impact of different sources of political representation for women on policies to address violence against women. Violence against women is central to women's subordinate status: violence hinders women's efforts to achieve parity with men in the areas of employment, education, the family, and public life. Violence against women is consistently identified as an important issue in women's collective endeavors to advance their status: activists and governments from more than 180 countries have identified violence against women as an issue of literally vital importance.¹¹ This agreement reinforced the growing body of evidence that violence against

women in the form of sexual assault and wife battering is a serious problem nearly everywhere in the world (Heise 1994; Weldon 2002). Still, there is great variation among democratic governments in terms of their responsiveness to violence against women. Some governments undertake broad, multifaceted initiatives to address violence against women, while other governments do not even recognize the problem.¹²

Until very recently, despite the importance of this issue, there have been only a few systematic cross-national analyses of policy outcomes (Avdeyeva 2007; Busch 1992; Elman 1996; Johnson 2007; Weldon 2002). None of these studies investigated the question of the impact of women's representation on policies on violence against women.¹³ Thus, this policy issue provides an important but unexamined test case for examining the impact of women's representation on national policies of importance to women.

The institutional forms and policy outcomes affecting women vary most clearly across national contexts. The strength and other characteristics of women's movements also vary most clearly across countries. This suggests that a cross-national study of the impact of the representation of women on democratic policy-making may provide insights into the effectiveness of different modes of political representation for women that are difficult to discern when only a single national context is considered. In the remainder of this chapter, I provide, first, an illustrative comparative discussion of how policies on violence against women developed in Canada and other established democracies and, then, a statistical analysis of policy outcomes.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSIVENESS TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Violence against women takes a number of forms. This study focuses on two categories: sexual assault of women by men and battering of intimate female partners by males. Action on violence is an important indicator that women's perspectives are influencing policy-making, since it suggests that government is responding to the articulation of an issue of importance to women. Despite the many differences among the countries considered, similar features of the problem and the existing policy structure make it possible to identify a common set of needed actions to address violence against women. A cross-national data set developed in Weldon 2002 includes data on seven different aspects of government response to violence against women:¹⁴

1. Has there been any legal reform dealing with domestic violence?
2. Has there been any legal reform dealing with sexual assault?

3. Is there any national government funding for shelters for victims of domestic violence?
4. Is there any national government funding for rape crisis centers?
5. Are there any government-sponsored training programs for service providers?
6. Are there any government-sponsored public education initiatives?
7. Is there a central agency for coordinating national policies on violence?

Asking how many of these types of policy action a government undertakes provides a good measure of government responsiveness: a government that addresses more areas is enacting a broader, more multifaceted response. Although these seven types of policy action are important for different reasons, all seven policy areas are important for addressing violence against women.¹⁵ The seven policy areas are weighted equally: the indicator simply sums the scores (1 for each area in which policy action occurs, 0 for a lack of action) across the seven areas. This variable therefore measures the scope of government response, that is, the amount or breadth of government activity, rather than the particular substantive focus or quality of the individual initiatives (Powell 1982; Putnam 1993).¹⁶ This indicator does not measure which governments enact the policies that result in the greatest reduction of violence. Indeed, some of the policy measures considered here are aimed at raising awareness or serving victims, rather than at directly reducing the overall incidence of violence.¹⁷

The data set includes these seven aspects of national government response to violence against women for all stable democracies. The focus is on national government response because, in general, action by the central government, even if it is only providing funding to local areas, is a key symbolic indicator that the political community is seriously addressing a problem. Thus, even in federal systems such as those of the United States, Canada, and Australia, action by the national government vastly increases the importance given to the issue and the consistency with which it is addressed. In Australia, where some relevant areas of law are state responsibilities, the federal government has developed model laws and pushed for state adoption. Freedom House data are used to select stable, democratic countries for comparison.¹⁸ The data used are for 1994. See the appendix for a ranking of countries by number of areas addressed.

These data on government response are based on a variety of primary and secondary sources, including academic, government, and activist publications; materials from the proceedings of the Committee on the Elimination of All

Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); U.S. Department of State human rights reports; Human Rights Watch reports; and communications (emails, faxes, and letters) with activists and government representatives in the countries concerned. There are multiple sources for every country, and the sources for each country include at least one government source and one source independent of the national government.

Using this measure, the most responsive democratic governments are in Canada, Australia, and the United States, and the least responsive are in Botswana, Italy, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, and Venezuela. In 1994, the Nordic countries, where women have such an impressive presence in the legislature (between 25 and 40 percent), lag behind the governments of Canada, Australia, and the United States, where women are fairly poorly represented in descriptive terms (with women comprising about 10 to 20 percent of the legislature).

Looking at the process by which individual measures were adopted in Canada reinforces the sense that although the efforts of individual women can be important, it is not necessarily the number of women in the legislature that matters for the substantive representation of women in this area. After more than a decade of activism and lobbying by women's organizations, a series of important amendments (including a rape shield law) were adopted rather expeditiously in 1983. (Rape shield laws protect complainants of rape from a "second violation" as prosecutors probe their backgrounds and suggest—explicitly or implicitly—that sexually active women likely consent to all sexual activity.) Women's organizations were quite influential in getting attention to this issue, and a proposal from the National Association of Women and Law (NAWL), endorsed by the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), formed the basis for the amendments. Indeed, women's organizations had impressed many with their political strength during the constitutional reform process that led to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms adopted in 1982, and scholars agree that elected representatives perceived the women's movement as having considerable clout (Los 1994; Bashevkin 1998). Observers have noted that the minister overseeing the drafting, passage, and implementation of the measures (Jean Chrétien, a man) undertook a number of measures to ensure the success of the legal reform—investing resources in public education, special units in police stations across the nation, and similar measures. Reportedly, women's organizations and the minister worked closely throughout this process (Roberts and Gebotys 1992; Tang 1998). Indeed, in the years leading up to the passage of the amendments, the Secretary of State

Women's Program funded groundbreaking research on wife abuse that provided critical background and support for the 1983 measures (Weldon 2002).

The rape shield law was struck down in a 1991 Supreme Court decision. The minister of justice at the time (a woman and a conservative) quickly worked with women's groups to draft a new law. The resultant amendment is known as the "no means no" sexual assault law (Bill C-46). The process was undertaken by Canada's first female minister of justice, Kim Campbell, a member of the Progressive Conservative Party (a center-right party). Campbell held a broad set of hearings with women's groups on the subject of the bill, hearings that raised awareness and understanding of the issues surrounding sexual assault and built support for the feminist amendment that followed. Among other measures, the sexual assault law puts the onus for determining consent on the initiator of sexual activity. Previously, the burden was often on the woman victim of sexual assault to show she did not consent to sexual activity (Weldon 2002; Tang 1998; Roberts and Gebotys 1992).

In this process and in the development of policies on violence against women in Canada more generally, it is not the number of women in the legislature that figures prominently. The 1988 election did bring 12 additional women (including Kim Campbell) into office, increasing the proportion of women in the Canadian parliament from 13 to 18 percent. But the process of reform began much earlier and under the auspices of a male minister. In both instances, despite the varying sex and party of the ministers, the minister of justice appeared very supportive of and responsive to demands of the women's movement to act on violence against women (Roberts and Gebotys 1992; Vickers et al. 1993; Los 1994).

More generally, major expansions of policies on violence occurred when there was a relatively small proportion of women in government. Amendments to criminal law began in 1983; special initiatives funding shelters, training police, disseminating information, and aiming to prevent family violence were launched in 1986, 1988, and 1991 (Weldon 2002). The trend toward greater responsiveness toward violence against women appears to have preceded the increase in numbers of women and, indeed, to have begun in the early 1980s, when there were comparatively few women in public office even for Canada. (Women were less than 10 percent of the parliament, and fewer than 30 women were present [table 1].)

In Sweden during the same time period, in the 1980s, women's movement efforts to raise the issue of violence against women were suppressed and char-

TABLE 1. Women's Descriptive Representation in the Canadian Parliament and Developments in Violence against Women Policy, 1980–2001

Year and Party in Power	Number of Women MPs	% Women MPs	Developments in Violence against Women Policy
1980 Liberals (Center Left)	14	5.0	Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women publishes report on wife battering (1980) Status of Women Canada funds women's groups working on violence (1981, 1982) Amendments to criminal code (including rape shield law) (1983)
1984 Progressive Conservative (Center Right)	27	9.6	1986 first family violence initiative (FVI) launched
1988 Progressive Conservative (Center Right)	39	13.3	"No means no" sexual assault law adopted (1992) Canadian Panel on Violence against Women (1993, before election) Cuts to Secretary of State Women's Program begin 1986, continue through 2001
1993 Liberals (Center Left)	53	18	FVI is shut down (1994) Funding for shelters slows, is shifted to provinces (1995) Training for police officers in First Nations communities is undertaken (1994–98)
1997 Liberals (Center Left)	62	20.6	FVI reinstated Laws against female genital mutilation, trafficking, and sexual exploitation of children (including by Canadians abroad) take effect
2000 Liberals (Center Left)	62	20.6	Funding for shelters slows further Some increase in funding to Secretary of State women's program for preventive measures on violence against women (2001)

Source: Cool 2008; Weldon 2002a, 2004b.

acterized as divisive (Elman 1996). At that time, there were about three times as many women in parliament in Sweden as there were in Canada (96 women in the Swedish parliament in 1982 and 133 by 1988), constituting between 26 and 38 percent of total seats (IPU 2009). Indeed, legal reforms such as protective orders were adopted at least a decade later in Sweden (1988) than in the United States and the United Kingdom, where they were in initial use in the late 1970s (and where there are many fewer women in the legislature) (Elman 1998).

These brief stories suggest that whether or not public policy addresses women's substantive interests in addressing violence against women depends on more than just having the issue raised by the women's movement (as it was in both Canada and Sweden), although that seems to have been the catalyst for government response in the stable, democratic countries (Weldon 2002). It also depends on more than number or proportion of women in government: the larger number of women in government in Sweden (even under a labor government) did not make that government more responsive to women's movement demands regarding violence (Elman 1996). In addition, measures to address violence against women were adopted under both left and right governments in Canada. Similarly, in the United States, the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (VAWA) was adopted unanimously by the House of Representatives: no member of either party voted against it.

Indeed, in Canada, where governments adopted the most expansive policies on violence most quickly, these policies seem to be the product of an unusual relationship between the state and the women's movement. The state strengthened, supported, and responded to a women's movement that nevertheless remained autonomous. This strong and autonomous women's movement benefited from the resources and political support of a powerful set of agencies dedicated to raising women's status. This state-movement relationship provided a powerful mechanism for the articulation and substantive representation of women's perspectives on violence. In what follows, I define and operationalize these terms and specify exactly how I see this influence obtaining (Weldon 2002).

WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS AND POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

I argued earlier that autonomous women's movements provide an important avenue of representation for women. A women's movement is a kind of social movement (Tarrow 1998; Beckwith 2000). A social movement is a form of political organization in which membership and action is based on a shared sense

of purpose and/or identity, aimed at changing social practices or prevailing power relations (McBride and Mazur 2008; Meyer et al. 2005; Tarrow 1998). Women's movements are those social movements in which women make up the membership and leadership of the organization. In this chapter, I examine only those women's movements aimed at furthering women's status or undermining patriarchy, that is, feminist women's movements (Beckwith 2000; Mazur and Stetson 2008).

The vast majority of nations in this study had active feminist movements by 1994 (Weldon 2002).¹⁹ As noted, scholars of feminist movements and public policy have argued that the autonomy of such movements is key to determining policy influence. Feminist movements can be coded as autonomous if they have an organizational base outside political parties, unions, and other political institutions. They must also be independent of organizations that do not make the condition of women their primary concern. Autonomous women's organizations are not subsidiaries, auxiliaries, or wings of larger, mixed-sex organizations. Data on organizations was taken from published historical accounts of these women's movements and encyclopedias of women's organizations (Weldon 2002).

In addition to gauging the autonomy of women's movements, we need some sense of whether they are strong or weak. Movements might be independent but have little impact on the attitudes or awareness of the broader public. Strong women's movements can command public support and attention, while weaker movements have trouble convincing others that their positions and opinions are important. Such strength is indicated by the size and number of protest activities, the degree of support expressed for feminists in opinion polls, the degree of support for women's organizations, the diversity and membership of women's organizations, the proliferation and diversity of women's cultural institutions (e.g., women's festivals, newspapers, concerts, etc.), and so on. Given what we know about democratic policy-making, it seems likely that strong women's movements will influence policy outcomes more than weak ones, but strong movements do not *always* influence policy outcomes.²⁰

Although it is notoriously difficult to construct accurate measures of women's movement activities across national contexts (Beckwith 2000), there is considerable convergence among experts' assessments of the relative strength of women's movements (i.e., the Swedish women's movement is considered to be relatively weak, while the U.S. women's movement is considered relatively strong) (Elman 1996; Gelb 1989; Kaplan 1992; Bergqvist 1999; Ran-

dall 1987; Nelson and Carver 1995; Stetson 1997; Stetson and Mazur 1995; Norris 1987). Movements are coded as strong if they are described by expert observers as strong, influential, or powerful; as mobilizing widespread public support; and so on. Comparative and country-specific accounts of women's movements explicitly assess the strength of women's movements over time and/or relative to other countries, relying on multiple data sources, including size and frequency of demonstrations; public support for the women's movement, as expressed in public opinion surveys; the proportion of women belonging to women's organizations; the proliferation of feminist organizations, bookstores, magazines, and the like; and the frequency with which women's movement activists are consulted in the media and in other public deliberations.²¹ Where the women's movement is both strong and autonomous according to these criteria, the country is coded 1, and where either strength or autonomy is absent, the country is coded 0 (see table A1 in the appendix).²²

WOMEN'S BUREAUS AS A FORM OF POLITICAL REPRESENTATION FOR WOMEN

I have already argued that women's bureaus can provide a form of political representation for women, especially in combination with an active, independent women's movement. Women's bureaus likely play an important role in the area of policies on violence against women. We would expect women's policy machineries to improve the political representation of women when they have (1) formalized channels of access for women's organizations and (2) the independence and resources needed to formulate and implement aspects of a women's agenda. If the women's policy agencies in the 36 stable democracies in this study are categorized according to these criteria, only 8 of the 34 agencies actually meet them (the agencies in Australia, Canada, Costa Rica, Netherlands, Belgium, Venezuela, Portugal, and Germany). Countries are coded 1 on this variable if they meet both conditions, 0 if they do not.²³

THE INTERACTION BETWEEN WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

As I have argued, a women's policy machinery does not, on its own, guarantee any government response to violence against women. Rather, the interaction of the apparatus with a strong, autonomous women's movement results in better representation for women in democratic policy processes. Where such women's movements interact with effective policy machineries, we should see greater responsiveness to violence against women. This interactive effect can

be captured by using a multiplicative term (*strong and autonomous women's movement* \times *effective women's policy machinery*) in the regression analysis.

REPRESENTATION BY WOMEN LEGISLATORS

I have argued that alternative modes of representation were more important than descriptive representation in the legislature in improving policy outcomes for women. What measure of women's legislative presence should be used in making this case? Some accounts claiming a substantive impact of descriptive representation have argued that women legislators should only be expected to speak or act for women after the proportion of women passes a threshold or tipping point, usually thought to be between 15 and 30 percent (Grey 2006; Bystydzienski 1992; Thomas 1994). As the proportion of women reaches 10 or 15 percent, women legislators feel freer to express their distinctive concerns. However, they may still not be sufficiently numerous or powerful to be able to diffuse their concerns throughout the legislature. This is more likely to occur when women regularly comprise a greater proportion of the legislature, say 35–40 percent (Thomas 1994, 154). As Thomas (1994) observes, it is possible that the proportion of women constituting a critical mass varies over time and location; Grey (2006) argues further that the proportion must vary across contexts and over time. Nevertheless, Thomas argues, “the concept that greater percentages of women legislators will lead to a diffusion of their perspectives throughout the governing body is sound. And the issues of special concern to female representatives . . . will permeate legislative bodies as women's representation is closer to parity” (154). This implies, I think, that we would expect a greater proportion of women legislators, especially a proportion of 35 or 40 percent, to be associated with greater policy responsiveness to violence against women.²⁴ In contrast, I have argued that, in itself, a greater number or proportion of women (even the presence of a critical mass) in the legislature would not have a consistently large effect on government responsiveness to violence against women.

THE PROPOSED MODEL

In general, then, the interaction between strong and autonomous women's movements and institutional structure produces better representation in the policy process, which is here measured by responsiveness to violence against women. We might also expect strong and autonomous women's movements to have an impact independent of this interaction, since such agencies are not

necessary for women's movement influence. We would not necessarily expect such an independent effect from women's policy agencies. In addition, the number of women in the legislature does not determine responsiveness to violence against women. Level of development and culture are thought to be fundamental factors influencing politics and policy.²⁵ I control for these factors using dummy variables to measure level of development, region, and dominant religion (the latter two as proxies for culture).

Analysis

I employ OLS regression to examine the association between different sources of political representation for women and responsiveness to violence against women. Multivariate regression analysis can be used to examine whether (and how strongly) each of these modes of representation is associated with more government action on violence against women (table 2). Scope of government response is coded from 0 to 7, depending on the number of areas of policy action that a national government undertakes. If a mode of representation produced better policy outcomes for women, we would expect the mode to be associated with governments addressing an increased number of additional areas.

REPRESENTATION BY WOMEN LEGISLATORS

As expected, there is no linear relationship between proportion of women legislators and government responsiveness to violence against women (table 2, model 1). More generally, a critical mass effect is not visible in this policy area. Of those governments where women comprise more than 30 percent of the legislature, none have addressed more than four policy areas (see table A1 in the appendix). Moreover, among those governments that have been the most responsive to violence against women (i.e., that have adopted five or more policies), the percentage of women in the legislature varies from 6.4 to 21.2 percent.²⁶ It may be that individual feminist women are important in getting policies passed as policy entrepreneurs. Indeed, it may be that the presence of at least one woman is a necessary condition for policy development. But there is no linear relationship between the overall proportion of women in the legislature or in cabinet and government responsiveness to violence against women. This finding is robust using various specifications of the proportion of women, or the number of women. It also holds up when the analysis uses robust standard errors (not shown).

WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

The presence of a strong, autonomous women's movement is more strongly positively associated with scope than is the proportion of women, with standardized betas of .50 and .00, respectively (table 2, model 1). Controlling for level of development, the presence of a strong and autonomous women's movement is associated with about one or two additional areas of policy action on violence against women ($B = 1.90 \pm 0.55$). This supports the argument that the existence of strong, independent women's movements improves women's representation in the policy process more effectively than does increasing women's presence in the legislature.

TABLE 2. Regression Coefficients; Dependent Variable = Scope of Government Response to Violence against Women, 36 Stable Democratic Countries, 1994

Model	Independent Variables	<i>B</i>	S.E.	Beta	<i>T</i>	Sig.	<i>R</i> ²
1	Level of development	1.20	0.64	0.30	1.87	0.07	0.37
	Strong and autonomous women's movement	1.90	0.55	0.50	3.44	0.00	
	Percentage of women in legislature	0.00	0.02	0.00	-0.02	0.98	
	Effective women's policy machinery	0.45	0.66	0.10	0.68	0.49	
2	Level of development	1.09	0.54	0.27	2.03	0.50	0.43
	Strong and autonomous women's movement	1.39	0.59	0.36	2.33	0.02	
	Effective women's policy machinery	-0.86	0.96	-0.19	-0.90	0.37	
	Effective women's policy machinery × strong and autonomous women's movement	2.33	1.27	0.42	1.82	0.07	
3	Level of development	-0.28	1.43	-0.07	-0.20	0.85	0.61
	Strong and autonomous women's movement	0.80	0.67	0.21	1.21	0.24	
	Effective women's policy machinery × strong and autonomous women's movement	2.30	1.34	0.43	1.71	0.10	
	Logged number of reps	0.01	0.42	0.04	0.17	0.87	
	Region—Africa	-1.12	1.84	-0.14	-0.60	0.55	
	Region—Asia	2.31	1.48	0.34	1.56	0.13	
	Region—Latin America	-0.88	1.68	-0.18	-0.53	0.61	
	Region—North America	2.44	1.23	0.3	1.99	0.06	
	Region—Oceania	1.22	1.25	0.18	0.98	0.34	
	Dominant religion—Protestant	0.00	0.65	-0.01	-0.06	0.94	
Dominant religion—Other	-2.30	1.30	-0.47	-1.70	0.08		

Note: I report statistical significance as a matter of interest, but I consider this set of countries to be a complete set of stable democracies (i.e., a population), and I am not employing sampling techniques.

S.E. = standard error; Sig. = significance.

WOMEN'S POLICY AGENCY

The presence of an effective women's policy machinery is not associated with government responsiveness to violence against women (table 2, model 1). This may seem to contradict the hypothesis that these institutions have an effect on government responsiveness to this issue. But I argued earlier that the policy impact of these institutions depended on the presence of a strong and autonomous women's movement and that we should not expect to see an independent effect. If this argument holds, a term capturing the interaction between effective women's policy agencies and strong and autonomous women's movements should be strongly associated with government response to violence against women and should explain more than either term alone.

INTERACTION EFFECTS

An indicator representing the interaction of a strong, autonomous women's movement and the presence of a women's policy machinery (one that provides access and resources) is a very strong predictor of government responsiveness to violence against women (table 2, models 2 and 3), being associated with more areas of government action than either of the two parts alone (model 2). The interaction of a strong, autonomous women's movement and an effective women's policy agency is associated with about two additional areas of policy action ($B = 2.33 \pm 1.27$) (model 2). This association seems to hold even controlling for level of development, region, and religion (model 3). In sum, then, strong, independent women's movements and effective women's bureaus interact to provide an effective mode of substantive representation for women. Indeed, in the area of policies on violence against women, cross-national data suggest that women's bureaus and women's movements together are more effective at securing policy action than are large numbers of women in the legislature.

Conclusion

The literature on representation for marginalized groups is currently focused on whether individuals in the legislature can represent diverse social groups. I argue that although individuals can provide a partial or limited articulation of group perspective, group perspectives are best articulated in those forums where members of marginalized groups interact to formulate their distinctive concerns. This suggests that legislatures, as currently organized, may not be the

only (or best) place to examine whether representation of marginalized groups is occurring. Group perspectives can be articulated by social movements or even by government agencies. Political institutions, I have argued, tend to reflect the social perspectives of the historically dominant groups that created them, thereby embedding a bias toward these groups in the very structure of public administration and providing a type of substantive representation for these groups. Institutional reforms to remove or mitigate these biases can improve representation for marginalized groups.

Discussions of substantive democratic representation, then, should consider multiple sources of political representation. Considering a number of modes of representation makes it possible to compare different modes of representation and explore interactions between them. In this study, the interaction between modes of representation appears to be critical. The interaction between women's movements and institutional structures is more important for understanding policy responsiveness to violence against women than is the proportion of women in the legislature.

I am not arguing that individual members of marginalized groups in legislatures provide no representation. Indeed, the presence of such representatives can have important symbolic and substantive effects on policy processes. The question is whether it is the only or best avenue for such representation, because the literature on representation for marginalized groups often seems to treat it as such by focusing on it to the exclusion of other avenues. But descriptive representation in legislatures is limited as an avenue for providing substantive representation. Although it may be true that "descriptive representation by gender improves substantive outcomes for women in every polity for which we have a measure" (Mansbridge 2005, 622), it does not follow that the presence of more women (or a larger proportion of women) in the legislature always means better representation. For example, in France, the proportion of women in the legislature decreased during the key period of policy innovation on violence against women (Weldon 2002, table 4-1); the same was true in Indonesia and South Africa (Htun and Weldon 2010b); in Israel, an increasing number of women in the Knesset has not led to greater policy action for women, in the view of leading feminist activists (perhaps because there are more women in conservative parties now and because the most feminist members of the Knesset were voted out) (interviews with Israeli feminists, 2007); and an analysis of women's representation in Belgium similarly shows that increasing the number of women in the legislature did not result in greater substantive representation for women (Celis 2008). So even if an increased

women's presence in the legislature improves representation for women under some circumstances, this does not mean that it is the best avenue for substantive representation or that the presence of more women in the legislature will always improve substantive representation for women.

Of course, as noted, social movements and women's policy agencies are also limited in terms of substantive representation: some women feel excluded or dominated in women's movements, and lines of accountability are unclear. Women's policy agencies are characterized by similar exclusions and weaknesses. Nevertheless, examining multiple sources of representation provides a more complete picture of the possibilities for—and limits on—influence in democratic policy processes.

This analysis, then, adds to the growing body of research pointing to the importance of thinking more broadly and in more nuanced ways about possible mechanisms of representation for women. It is becoming increasingly clear that an overemphasis on descriptive representation in the legislature has obscured other important, unexamined avenues for representation, ignored the way different avenues of representation interact, and resulted in a tendency to overlook the institutional context (Weldon 2002; Childs 2006; Mansbridge 2003; Poggione 2004; Wolbrecht and Hero 2005). Exploring the relationship between these multiple avenues of representation and public policy suggests many new avenues for research (Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005). For example, it may be that individual women legislators are more likely to promote women's perspective when they participate in women's movements or at least belong to women's organizations (Carroll 2003; Sawyer 2004; see also Costain 1998). Swers (2002) has argued that political party and political context determine whether women in the legislature represent women (see also Poggione 2004). This analysis did not examine the influence of political party, although studies of violence against women have suggested that political party is a poor predictor of support for measures on violence. In the United States, for example, VAWA has enjoyed bipartisan support for years. In Canada, as noted, significant reforms of rape law were undertaken under both left and right governments. Still, party might be more important for other issues of importance to women. Last, scholars of gender and politics are increasingly emphasizing the complexity of the relationship between gender and other, crosscutting axes, such as race, class, and sexuality (McCall 2005; Hancock 2006, 2007; Smooth 2007; Beckwith 2005a; Weldon 2006, 2008). I try to explore some of these issues further in later chapters.

More generally, this analysis shows the value of examining the structural

conditions in which policy is made (Ashford 1978; Bobrow and Dryzek 1987; Duncan 1995; Giddens 1982; Walby 1990). Examining the social order, the patterns of political inclusion and exclusion established by institutions and norms, is important for understanding democratic policy-making (March and Olsen 1989). Understanding the impact of such patterns, I have shown, is key to understanding whether and how social groups are represented in democratic policy processes. Thus, the study of women and politics and of democratic policy-making more generally should focus as much on political structures such as institutions, social movements, and other macrolevel phenomena as it does on individual-level variables and characteristics.