Feminist Organizations and Intersectionality: Contesting Hegemonic Feminism

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Abstract

This paper is a theoretical examination of the foundational ideologies of hegemonic feminism which continue to be contested by feminists engaging with intersectional frameworks and analyses both within the women's movement(s) and feminist organizations in North America. The paper additionally discusses the structures and processes of feminist collectives while drawing on the author's current research on Vancouver Status of Women.

Résumé

Cet article est un examen théorique des idéologies fondamentales du féminisme hégémonique qui continuent d'être contestées par les féministes qui sont engagées dans les structures intersectorielles et analyse les deux à l'intérieur de mouvement(s) de femmes et d'organismes féministes en Amérique du nord. De plus, l'article discute des structures et des processus des mouvements féministes collectifs en se basant sur la recherche courante de l'auteure sur la Condition féminine de Vancouver.

Introduction

Feminist organizations in North America are political entities that focus primarily on advocating for women's rights and equality for all women. Feminist organizations are diverse, organic, fluid, complex, and constantly changing across historical, geographical, political, economic, and social landscapes. Furthermore, the feminist organization also intersects not only with other women's organizations and the larger women's movement but also with other social movements including the peace/antiwar, Indigenous, anti-imperialist socialist, and students' rights movements. Therefore, feminist organizations find themselves responding constantly to both internal and external strengths and challenges while interacting with the complexities of their organizational life cycles.

Nancy Adamson, Linda Briskin, and Margaret McPhail (1988) examine the women's movement in Canada by exposing the contributions and limitations of First and Second Wave feminism. Feminism itself is not a unified political ideology but rather is categorized predominantly within the mainstream women's movement by different currents of feminism such as liberal, Marxist, radical/cultural, and socialist feminisms (Adamson *et al.* 1988; Sandoval 2004). There are also other feminist currents which have been marginalized within dominant feminist discourses, and these include Indigenous feminism, postmodern feminism, eco-feminism, and post-colonial/Third World feminism. It is imperative to acknowledge the multiple tensions, differences, conflicts, and divisions that exist historically across feminist currents as well as feminist organizations. Intersectionality as an analysis emerged in the late 1970s and was further developed in the 1990s from the works of Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) and Patricia Hill Collins

(2000) which challenged and further demonstrated the limitations of gender as a singular analytical category and entry point of analysis. Therefore, intersectionality largely derives from racialized feminists (Indigenous women and women of colour) directly contesting hegemonic feminism's investments in essentialism and exclusion. The contribution of intersectionality is that it centres the interaction between diverse positions of marginality and dominance as social processes while exposing how these processes become invoked within and across power relations. Intersectionality engages with discourses, identities, experiences and systems of domination/oppression as fluid, changing, negotiated, historical, locational, situational and diverse. This exposes the interactions of colonialism, patriarchy and capitalism and how such interactions are invoked, reinforced and contested.

Intersectionality constructs the category of "women" in "a variety of political contexts that often exist simultaneously and overlaid on top of one another" (Mohanty 2003, 32). Intersectionality moves feminist theorizing beyond one singular relationship of power, for example, patriarchy, in order to more fully account for the complexity of systems that shape the diversity of women's lived realities. It also carefully acknowledges the contradictions as well as the commonalities in women's experiences across time, geographies, and locations. Hence, an intersectionality framework examines the interconnections between systems of oppression and domination and how these intersect to produce specific experiences for the marginalized.

Hegemonic feminism has traditionally been referred to as the dominance of white Western, "north" or "First World" assumptions about what it means to be a feminist and what women need to be liberated. It is most often grounded in Second Wave Liberal feminist paradigms and de-emphasizes race, class and other intersecting positionalities. Chela Sandoval illustrates how hegemonic feminist scholars constructed typologies of feminism which "have fast become the official stories by which the white women's movement understands itself and its interventions in history" (Sandoval 2003, 80). Through time, feminists (particularly racialized feminists) who have historically experienced exclusions by and within the women's movement as well as within feminist organizations, demanded a more inclusive movement with a stronger intersectional feminist analysis. Hence, the women's movement witnessed challenges, tensions, and contradictions within hegemonic feminist discourses.

This paper provides a critical theoretical examination of the foundational ideologies of hegemonic feminism which continues to be contested by feminists engaging with an intersectional analysis both within the women's movement(s) and feminist organizations in North America. The paper additionally discusses the structures and processes of feminist collectives as organizations while drawing on data from my current research on Vancouver Status of Women.

As a racialized queer feminist studying feminist organizations, I find it responsible and responsive for me to position myself within the context of this paper. My engagement within the Canadian women's movement and feminist organizations in the last 12 years at the national, provincial and local levels contributes to a vision and investment in healthy and sustainable social justice movements. My involvement as staff, board member, collective member, and volunteer with the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, Vancouver Status of Women, the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, and the BC Coalition of Women's Centres have been the primary sites which have informed my understanding of feminist organizations in Canada. I value such transformative sites of social change while also recognizing their limitations and how I experience and exist in their life cycle temporarily and partially.

The Making of Feminist Organizations

Feminist organizations are distinct organizations because of their ideologies and values deriving from feminism. Feminism has traditionally been defined as the belief in the political, social, legal and economic equality of all women. According to Nancy Adamson *et*

al. (1998) and Terry Mizrahi (2007), feminist values focus primarily on equal rights and opportunity for women while recognizing the goal of empowerment. This section of the paper illustrates important ideologies and values which make organizations feminist while also problematizing these ideologies and values.

I refer to Mizrahi's feminist organizational principles as a framework to highlight the unique character of feminist organizations. Specific values and ideologies have traditionally been adopted by feminist organizations which make them distinct from other organizations. These include the interconnectedness of problems and solutions while recognizing that personal problems have political, cultural, and historical causes and solutions. Feminist organizations value creating a more democratic and egalitarian society by engaging in "the personal is political" and "sisterhood is global" ideologies. Additional values and principles which make organizations feminist include the commitment to consensus, cooperation, collaboration, and coalition building, while enhancing recognition and respect for diversity and differences (Mizrahi 2007).

Yet, within these broad parameters of commonality across diverse currents of feminism are extensive differences in political strategy. For example, differences emerge in regards to what visions constitute women's liberation, in understanding the roots of women's oppression, in setting priorities, and/or in identifying constituencies and allies. It is precisely not only differences but also exclusions and omissions which give rise to other forms of marginal, alternative and oppositional feminist consciousness (Ang 2003; Mohanty 2003; Sandoval 2003). Sandoval challenges hegemonic feminism's pretense of the homogeneous experience of woman by advocating for a differential consciousness which recognizes new and fluid, varying categories of locations and positionalities. In particular, differential consciousness represents "the variant, emerging out of correlations, intensities, junctures, crises" (2003, 89). In the United States, hegemonic feminism's history of racist exclusionary practices marks the bitterness and experiences of Third World women's shifts towards new feminist paradigms. A differential mode of oppositional consciousness reflects a mobility which transforms rigid borders to porous borders weaving between and among oppositional ideologies.

With the primary vision of achieving equality with white men, hegemonic feminism reinforces and sustains white heterosexual middle-class women's entitlements and equality at the expense of "Other" women and groups (Lee and Cardinal 1998; Sandoval 2003). Lee and Cardinal argue that English/Anglo Canadian nationalism has largely mediated the mainstream women's movement that has remained grounded in neo-conservative national narratives. These hegemonic nationalizing narratives crystallize a "national" feminist agenda, which marginalize certain issues and groups of people who do not belong to the imagined community. Furthermore, hegemonic feminism solidifies gender as the ultimate oppression and the only relevant entry point of analysis. It also refuses to engage in a feminist intersectional analysis of power relations by deemphasizing the interconnections and interactions amongst systems of power.

M.L. Fellows and Sherene Razack (1998) explain how hegemonic feminism has only reinforced the race to innocence while ensuring the practice of competing marginalities. They refer to the race to innocence as the process through which a woman comes to believe that her own claim of subordination is the most urgent and that she is not implicated in the subordination of other women. The race to innocence depends on the idea that the systems of domination regarding race, gender, age, sexuality, citizenship, and class are separate, which leaves the systems of privilege and subordination intact. Therefore, in order to disengage with the race to innocence, one must examine how multiple systems of power operate simultaneously and how they interact with each other. Furthermore, it is imperative to recognize and understand how these systems structure women hierarchically to condition our responses to each other.

Feminists' complicity in maintaining and reinforcing systems of power are often witnessed as painful and destructive moments in feminist politics.

Feminist theorists Gail Lewis (1996), Leslie McCall (2005) and Helen Meekosha (2006) emphasize the importance of intersectionality as a feminist framework and methodology because it reflects the interlocking and intersectional realities of women's lives.[1] By employing multi-pronged, multi-dimensional analyses and knowledge systems, intersectional frameworks allow us to challenge notions of binary thinking and essentialism. These vital feminist scholars have contributed significantly to the women's movement in North America and to feminist organizations by exposing hegemonic feminism's problematic, exclusive, and essentialized notions of woman, womanhood, women's experience, and equality, as well as the construction of the women's movement as "the" home for all women. These essentialized constructions derive largely from two specific and powerful ideologies of the early women's movement and hegemonic feminism: the personal is political and sisterhood is global.

Contesting the Personal is Political and Sisterhood is Global

The personal is political and sisterhood is global are foundational ideologies rooted within North American feminist organizations in the 1960s and 1970s that further distinguished feminist organizations from other organizations. I would argue that although these ideologies have contributed and strengthened certain aspects of feminist organizations, they are also precisely the crystallizing values of hegemonic feminism which continue to persist in feminist organizations to this present day in North America.

These two ideologies of the women's movement formed a powerful ideological core/nucleus reflecting hegemonic feminism within feminist organizations. It should not be underestimated how the ideologies of the personal is political and sisterhood is global have interacted with patriarchy, capitalism and colonialism to solidify powerful temporal and spatial discourses of entitlement, power, innocence and complicity which has shaped the character of feminist organizations. In particular, Nancy Adamson *et al.* (1988), Gail Lewis (1996), Chandra Mohanty (2003), and Sarita Srivastava (2006) have identified and challenged the limitations of the personal is political and sisterhood is global as distinct ideologies of feminist organizations.

Although the personal is political highlights the connection between women's individual experiences to the wider political contexts, it does so to the exclusion of "Other" women or rather at the privileging of hegemonic feminism (Sandoval 2003). The personal is political is rooted in the personal experience; therefore, the "woman's" experience was viewed as the only authentic guide to understanding and organizing around oppression (Adamson *et al.* 1988; Sandoval 2003). In particular, consciousness-raising groups were an organizational expression of the personal is political which focused on bringing women "together regularly in small groups to talk about their personal experiences and feelings" (Adamson *et al.* 1988, 202).

According to Adamson *et al.* "in the early years of the women's liberation movement the emphasis was on the similarities - a shared sisterhood - rather than the differences in politics" (1988, 61). Sisterhood as an ideology contributed to the women's movement with its mobilizing effect to uncover and react to the discrimination that women faced because of their sex. The idea of sisterhood asserted that womanhood itself formed the basis that united all women; it acknowledged that there is a common character to women's experiences and therefore a fundamental bond. Hence, it is precisely this "essentialized" bond or notion of sisterhood which robs women of their intersectional specificity, historicity, and locationality.

Women experiencing exclusion from the women's movement began to question "which women?", "whose personal?" and "whose experience?".[2] The rhetoric of sisterhood during the 1980s and 1990s began to be challenged as the movement recognized and began to articulate the

differences and contradictions within the movement. In particular, as discussed by Adamson *et al.* (1988) and Sandoval (2003), racialized feminists began to challenge white hegemonic feminism's omissions, exclusions, and silences regarding their concerns, issues, and struggles in relation to essentialized notions of the personal is political and sisterhood. Through these two ideologies, hegemonic feminism ensures the creation of greater power differences amongst women. Hence, women who benefit largely from hegemonic feminism and its narrow and exclusive struggle gain certain entitlements and priviledges at the expense of excluding "Other" women" (Adamson *et al.* 1988; Fellows and Razack 1998).

Srivastava (2006) explains the concept of the personal is political as largely focusing on feminist theories of emotion, care and therapy, as well as consciousness-raising practices. In many feminist organizations, the disclosure of personal experiences and emotions are central, expected, and rewarded. Srivastava (2006) refers to such disclosure as the "let's talk" approach and argues that it produces tightly controlled spaces for expression of power relations. Hence, expressions of the personal is political within feminist organizations can suppress knowledge and feelings of exclusion which deflect attempts at organizational change.

Srivastava suggests a "rethinking not only of the practices of emotion in organization but also the historical relations of power that prompted emotional resistance to discussions of race" (2006, 55). Most importantly, the dangers of the personal is political is the shift towards the personal and away from the political, while forming a historical framework for the production of knowledge about the Self and the Other. Srivastava further affirms that "not every emotion, everyone's pain, is freely expressed" (2006,76) because the let's talk approach assumes equal speaking positions and that all women involved would be hearing and speaking on the same terms. Hence, when assuming equal space for sharing, relations of power are not acknowledged within the personal is political methods of engagement.

Anti-racist feminist scholars, Ien Ang (2003) and Chandra Mohanty (2003), explicitly challenge and criticize notions of global sisterhood and its attempts to create a women's movement as the "home" uniting all women. Sisterhood's inability to accommodate different sets of power relations continues to be prevalent in feminist organizations that reinforce hegemonic feminism's ideologies of exclusivity. Mohanty criticizes the claim for universal sisterhood, as it produces dangerous assumptions about women "as a cross-culturally singular, homogeneous group with the same interests, perspectives, and goals and similar experiences" (2003, 110). According to Mohanty, sisterhood is global situates all women outside contemporary world history which further erases the effects of contemporary imperialism upon the lives of all women. Therefore, it becomes critical to situate women within the specificity of their historical and current lived experience politically, economically, and socially as this informs us of not only the similarities and differences but also the strengths and struggles amongst the category "women."

Mohanty (2003) argues for the temporality of struggle which disrupts and challenges the logic of linearity and confinements of European modernity, including hegemonic feminism, which has crystallized individuals as ahistorical and homogenous. The temporality of struggle is the "process of reterritorialization through struggle and [that] allows for a paradoxical continuity of self, mapping and transforming one's political location" (122).[3] The nonsynchronous temporality recognizes the self as discontinuous/fragmented, and demands to be historicized before it can be generalized into the collective vision. Similarly, Ang (2003) argues for a politics of partiality which affirms that the goal can never be entirely focused on achieving a common ground but rather towards creating a feminism based on partiality. Therefore, she rejects the politics of inclusion and the notion of feminism as the universal home. Her argument for a politics of partiality is helpful in recognizing the limits of hegemonic feminism while critically bringing to the forefront

difference without desiring a universalized feminism.

By critically examining these two ideologies of the women's movement, the personal is political and sisterhood is global, I demonstrate not only their inability to engage with difference and power relations across the category of woman but also their investments in reinforcing and sustaining dominance. For example, dominant forms of feminism arise when women's organizations engage in lobbying as a "unified group" in order to shift regressive policy changes. Such policy areas as well as the lobbying tactics (re)centre white hegemonic feminist strategies and issues leaving out or silencing the experiences and voices of "other" women marginalized both within and outside feminist organizations. Therefore, I propose that intersectional feminist frameworks, principles, analyses, and methods are more relevant to current debates and discourses within feminist organizations and movements. Furthermore, intersectionality provides the site of engagement within the mainstream women's movement and feminist organizations in Canada to interrupt dominant ideologies of hegemonic feminism.

I would like to conclude this section with Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond's (1997) critical deconstruction of the concept of equality as constructed within the mainstream women's movement.[4] She challenges feminists to rethink power, privileges, and entitlements built within this concept of equality as "sameness" and states:

> I do not see it as worthwhile and worthy to aspire to, or desire, equal opportunity with white men, or with the system that they have created. The aspirations of white men in the dominant society are simply not our aspirations. We do not want to inherit their objectives and positions or to adopt their world view. To be perfectly frank, I cannot figure out why non-aboriginal women would want to do this either. (1997, 72)

Turpel-Lafond exposes the gap of white women's ignorance and finds their concept of equality (sameness) to be insufficient for Indigenous women's struggles and identities and further affirms equality (sameness) to be an inappropriate starting point. Hence, I assert that the lesson learned is for feminist organizations to have the strength and courage to differentiate between solidarity and sameness with the understanding that one does not need to eradicate differences in order to create solidarity. Turpel-Lafond's contributions, along with Ang's politics of partiality and Mohanty's temporality of struggle, challenge feminists to envision alternative methods/forms/processes to create meaningful feminist organizations without centering whiteness or investing in hegemonic feminism.

Feminist Organizations and Feminist Collectives

Feminist organizations are sites where the feminist practice of social and political change takes place. According to Adamson *et al.* (1988) and Catherine Alter (2007), because feminists understood and experienced bureaucracy as an organizational form that is hierarchical, authoritarian and discriminatory, they developed structures which were alternative to traditional bureaucratic forms. Such oppositional and alternative structures would reject ways of organizing that were hierarchical, bureaucratic and competitive and would reflect the principles of sisterhood and the personal is political (Acker 1995; Adamson *et al.* 1988). Organizational structures are evaluated based on the construction of the division of labour, degrees of decision-making power, mechanisms to give feedback, and processes of collectivity. These organizational structures reflect choices regarding decision-making power distribution and the importance of organizational growth.

Feminist organizational structures are multiple and diverse. They range on a continuum from those that tend to be more bureaucratic to those that tend to be more collectivist. It is imperative that feminist organizations not be constructed within a binary of bureaucratic/collectivist but rather be acknowledged as shifting on a continuum throughout their organizational life cycles. I concur with Myra Ferre and Patricia Martin (1995) that we can no longer easily classify feminist organizations into the simple binary of bureaucratic or collectivist forms because

they often are a mixture of both elements in their structures and practices.

Furthermore, because of Canada's heterogeneous socio-historical, political, economic and geographical landscapes, a diversity of organizational structures is needed to create systemic political and social change. Within contemporary sites of feminism, there is an acknowledgement and deeper understanding that there is no idealized and one-size-fits-all feminist organizational structure. Therefore, by recognizing that different organizational structures provide specific and distinctive roles within the movement of which we are part, we have a deeper appreciation for the multiplicity of feminist organizations and the implications for invoking intersectionality across histories, locations, time and geography. As feminists our task is to recognize feminist organizations as organically transgressing and transforming under diverse climates and contexts. This part of the paper focuses explicitly on the organizational structure and process of the feminist collective. Feminist collectives tend to be more democratic and may also adopt particular bureaucratic principles in order to meet their mandates and deliverables to the larger community and/or funders. These organizations emphasize participatory and non-hierarchical principles in structure, decision making process, division of labour, and accountability (Alter 2007; Thomas 1999). They function by means of process while attempting to preserve collaboration among all members and equal attention to means and ends. These organizations also find themselves on a continuum of collectivity with different degrees and intensity of collectivity across the life cycle.

The feminist collective tends to engage in a shared division of labour, where all staff engage in direct service delivery. Additionally, decision making power is shared with the entire collective where the structure of Board of Directors or Executive Director is absent (Thomas 1999). Women participants working in such collectives report that empowerment of workers, increased commitment, and decreased turnover are the main strengths of such feminist organizations (Thomas 1999). Feminist collectives engage in democratic management by empowering staff to have a certain amount of control over their own worklife and workplace. This level of collaboration and participation allows for the staff to invest in the organization in a more sustainable manner. These organizations also attempt to share power and emphasize organizational process as well as outcomes, mentoring, and consensus decision-making. Additionally, these organizations increase efficiency by allowing day-to-day decisions to be made quickly by staff while critical decisions are made more slowly with feedback from the entire organization (Thomas 1999).

I would like to draw here upon my current research on Vancouver Status of Women (VSW).[5] This feminist organization's lifecycle demonstrates the changing decision making structure through time. In 1971 when the organization was created, it functioned with a Board structure with staff having limited input. By the mid 1970s, when additional funding became available and more staff began to be hired, the organization found itself revising its Constitution to include appointed employees as Board members with voting power. Hence, VSW continued to function as a Board with staff having decision making power until it became a Coordinating Collective in the early 1990s.[6] Currently, VSW continues to function as a Coordinating Collective, the main decision making body, which includes volunteer Coordinating Collective members and paid staff.

Consensus decision making processes are used during VSW Coordinating Collective meetings. Yet, within this feminist collective, the staff also functions as a collective who, based on capacity, may play a more or a less active role in providing proposals to the larger Coordinating Collective throughout the organizations history. Additionally, the volunteer Coordinating Collective members (non-staff) do not get directly involved with the everyday functioning of the organization such as service delivery, programming and division of labour, unless they are part of a committee. Therefore, as can be seen through this organization, VSW does not invoke all the

traditional definitions of a collective but does find itself on the continuum of collective structures, while drawing on bureaucratic processes as needed.[7]

Feminist collectives are constantly experiencing tensions which pull them towards either end of the spectrum: to become more bureaucratic or to become more collective. As these organizations engage in growth and respond to the demands of the community, they also may become more dependent on external funding sources. This dependency on outside funding sources results in a positive shift towards increased budgets and staff while decreasing staff burn-out. In the case of VSW, funders and financial institutions continuously requested a more hierarchical structure with an Executive Director who could be held accountable rather than a Coordinating Collective. As much as VSW resisted this pressure, at times, it had to invoke an administrative power within one position to satisfy funding and financial pressures.[8]

Janice Ristock (1991) explains that the feminist collective has been romanticized and constructed as ideal. She urges feminists to acknowledge it as a site of contradictions, confusion and frustration for many women involved due to power relations. Therefore, an important limitation of feminist collectives is its attachment to sisterhood is global by striving to create an idealized homogeneous collective identity. The consequences of this process of homogenizing crystallizes its structures as static and without context/history while reinforcing processes of exclusion. Additionally, Margaret Strobel's (1995) research has found feminist collectives to require a high level of intense participation. Therefore, those members who cannot maintain this intensity, particularly those with children or multiple jobs, are often excluded from organizational processes and leadership roles.

Further tensions or limitations which persist in feminist collectives concern leadership and authority. Traditionally, feminist collectives have been applauded for their assumed shared leadership and lack of authority. Yet, Ristock (1991) and Srivastava (2004) recognize the dangers of manipulation and inequality present in informal leadership sites such as feminist collectives. In the case of VSW, participants interviewed indicated that level of education, speaking in English without an accent, organizational memory, and more articulate Collective Members were more able to influence and manipulate the consensus decision making process.[9] Hence, it is critical that the collective as a whole as well as the individual collective members address power relations as they arise by engaging in critical organizational/self reflection in relation to the power being invoked, and how/when/why/who most benefits from the consensus decision making process.

While feminist collectives have strengths and weaknesses due to their processes and structure, they also can use their unique positionality to build capacity in order to interrupt and negotiate power relations. They may choose to have a greater capacity to further ensure that differences emerge and that they are named and articulated in order to build solidarity and foster alliances within/across collectives. Hence, by acknowledging that feminist collectives are not void of power relations and inequality, feminist collectives can be understood as sites with a greater potential to invoke important critical discussions of power and differences. The strength within feminist collectives lies largely in their openness, courage, and endurance to engage deeply in a responsible and responsive manner at those critical junctures of tensions and anxieties when power relations are invoked.

The Impact of State Funding

Joan Acker (1995) explains that as state funding became available, state agencies began to (re)define the conditions under which organizations could be funded. This has often resulted in shifting the organizational focus from confronting oppressive relations (structural change) to services focused solely on the victims of such relations (service delivery). An important struggle and tension experienced by feminist organizations is the dilemma and contradictory context of providing feminist services while receiving government funding

as this solidifies an ongoing relationship of power with the State. Acker recognizes that state support may be essential to the survival of feminist organizations but it simultaneously undermines the intended goal.

As also discussed by other feminist theorists, state relations bring about organizational demands which contribute to strained relationships and power relations both internally and externally to the feminist organization (Das Gupta 2007; Lee and Cardinal 1998; Metzendorf 2005; Ng 1990). These theorists demonstrate how government funding changes the culture of feminist organizations by shifting goals and priorities, as well as organizational structure, leadership, and decision making processes. In particular, feminist collectives, due to their nonhierarchical and collective structures, are often micromanaged by funders who require a certain type of accountability that is attached to bureaucratic leadership and authority.

Roxanna Ng's (1990) research examines how state funding confines and affects community organizations with a particular focus on an employment centre serving non-English-speaking and black immigrant women in an urban area. She explains that during the 1960s and 70s, the federal government created programs to provide funding to grassroots community organizations based on the theme of "citizen" participation. As also discussed by Jo-Anne Lee and Linda Cardinal (1998), this form of state funding (which targeted women, racialized, youths, and low income groups) can be seen as a method of social control. Ng highlights some of the tensions and difficulties which arise due to increased reliance on state funding. First, this employment centre witnessed a shift away from advocacy for immigrant women and towards increased services to employers. Second, increased labour intensive documentation and reporting delayed funding cheques and increased tensions between/amongst the Board and Staff. Such tension and conflicts pushed the organization towards a more hierarchical structure in order to meet the demands of accountability and effectiveness required by the funder. Ng emphasizes that "such new funding arrangements had rendered a previously egalitarian and more or less collective work organization inoperable and created a new form of organization within the center" (1990, 170).

Additionally, due to the impact of globalization and privatization in the last two decades, feminist organizations have witnessed regressive state funding shifts and the restructuring of funding programs. Many women's organizations witnessed downsizing, closures, loss of services and staff, as well as increased staff burnout. These cutbacks brought on by globalization and agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement have not only been detrimental for feminist organizations but especially more so for women depending on such organizations for services and support.

Conclusion

This paper contributes to the discourse and scholarship focused on intersectionality, hegemonic feminism(s), and organizational theory. I problematize the ideologies and values of feminism which have traditionally been at the centre of the mainstream women's movement and organizations. When examining these two dominant ideologies of hegemonic feminism, the personal is political and global sisterhood, intersectional feminist frameworks provide us with a deeper and more complete framework to expose such ideologies' reinforcement of power relations both within society as well as within organizations. As discussed by the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW), intersectionality can be transformative by effecting social change within organizations with the development, content and delivery of programs as well as in providing the analyses, designs and recommendations for public policies as well as internal policies (CRIAW 2006).

I recognize feminist organizations, including feminist collectives, as fluid and continuously changing over their organizational life cycle as they simultaneously engage with diverse elements of bureaucracy and collectivity. Intersectionality highlights feminist

organizations as also embedded in relations of power and privilege. Further research would be critical to study whether feminist organizations engaging in more collective structures and processes have a greater capacity to engage with power differences which arise internally and externally.

Do feminist collectives have a greater capability to invoke transformation by advocating for deeper complex political analysis and organizational reflexivity regarding power relations, differences, and exclusions? Feminist organizations are grounded within global structural forces of colonialism, imperialism, and globalization. In contemporary times, these forces are reflected within free-trade international agreements which aggressively dictate national policies of economic restructuring and affect those working in feminist organizations. This further invokes specific relations of power within/across feminist organizations as well as with funding agencies, members, donors, and other social movements. The impact of such a neo-liberal/conservative agenda upon feminist organizations challenges not only their resilience but more importantly their ability to contest regressive ideologies, including hegemonic feminist ideologies.

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Endnotes

1. Lewis (1996) illustrates Black women social workers' voices as an example of multivocality or simultaneity of discourse within their specific occupational workplace. She demonstrates the complexities and intersections which arise for Black women social workers as they navigate their lived experiences and positionalities under the supervision of whiteness. McCall (2005) introduces the concept of intersectionality as "the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formation" (1771). Meekosha (2006) argues for an intercategorical examination between racialized groups, disability groups and gender groups within the colonial and neocolonial Australian context.
2. Adamson *et al.* refers to Hazel Carby's article "White Women Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood," which states, 'of white feminists we must ask, what exactly do you mean when you say 'we'??' (1988, 19).
3. Mohanty's *temporality of struggle* can be connected to Sandoval's *differential consciousness* and Ang's *politics of partiality*, as they all speak to the partial and specificity of women's experiences and engagement with social change (Ang 2003; Mohanty 2003; Sandoval 2003). What is most powerful about Mohanty's analysis is that she brings to the forefront the groundedness of our specific, locational, historical, and intersectional engagement within and across feminist, anti-imperialist and anti-oppressive collectives and movements which anchor each one of us differently.
4. Turpel-Lafond (1997) explores the relationship between Indigenous women and the Canadian State by challenging the foundation of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. She affirms that this definition of "equality" as "sameness" should not be assumed to transcend all communities, especially Indigenous communities.
5. Vancouver Status of Women (VSW) is a feminist non-profit organization born out of the Royal Commission On the Status of Women in 1971. VSW's mandate is to work with women to ensure our full participation in the social, political and economic life of our communities in the profound belief that women's self-determination is a crucial step towards a just and responsible society.
6. Rare Books and Special Collections, University of British Columbia (RBSC UBC), Vancouver Status of Women (VSW) and VSW Archives.
7. VSW Archives: Annual Reports and Meeting Minutes.
8. VSW Archives: Meeting Minutes and Correspondence.
9. Interview data from Benita Bunjun's current PhD research on VSW.

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