

Feminist and gender-neutral frames in contemporary child-care and anti-violence policy debates in Canada ^[1]

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Abstract

Pressure to make policy issues gender neutral, as in the cases of policy debates concerning child care and anti-violence against women, had initially been put onto public policy agendas by feminist advocates. The broader influence of neoliberalism and post-neoliberalism (also known as the social-investment perspective) in Canada has amplified this trend. Global trends toward neoliberalism encouraged less state involvement and reduced public spending on the welfare state from the 1980s into the 1990s, with detrimental effects on women's policy. Moreover, feminist women's groups and women's issues were increasingly labeled "special interests"; advocacy claims toward the state were routinely delegitimized by successive provincial and federal governments, although this trend was less pronounced under left-wing regimes than right-wing ones (Collier 2006; 2009). As Canada entered the new millennium, many social-policy researchers identified a renewed state interest in reinvestment in social programs to position the state better in a competitive global marketplace. This newer shift toward the "social-investment perspective" is alleged to have consciously erased gender from social policy debates, particularly in the child-care arena (see Jenson 2009).

The author of this article —Cheryl N. Collier, Associate Professor and Undergraduate Chair, Department of Political Science, University of Windsor— is also doing a closeup lecture series at the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy in Ann Arbor, Michigan on Monday March 14, 2016 entitled *Child care policy and advocacy in federal states: Ontario and Michigan in comparison*. Click here ^[3] for more details.

Region: Canada ^[4]

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